

Chair Richardson and members of the committee
Re: HF 1376

I write on behalf of the Board of Black Men Teach. This board has among its member one current and two former metropolitan area school district superintendents, a university president, college provost, and a number of senior executives from companies such as Accenture, Best Buy, Bank of America and Coca-Cola Enterprises - all who care about our growing population of racially and ethnically diverse children and their preparation for the future. As a group we have dedicated untold hours of our time and tens of thousands of personal dollars to increase the number of Black male teachers in our schools. We know from experience that Minnesota's tiered licensure system creates alternative pathways to the classroom for needed, talented teachers. Approving HF 1376 as it is currently written will not only close this pathway, it will cause current teachers of color, many whom rely on these alternative pathways and licensure processes, to lose their positions.

HF 1376 would reverse years of work to reform Minnesota's broken teacher licensure system, and would be detrimental to Minnesota students who can't afford to lose teachers from diverse backgrounds. We should be supporting and developing promising educators, not putting up barriers and pushing them out.

While the bill proposes some positive changes, this sweeping bill does much more harm than good. It would close pathways into the teaching profession, reduce teacher retention (especially for educators of color and other shortage areas), and harm our state's efforts to further diversify the workforce.

The previous teacher licensure system has not worked at either supporting the development of teachers of color NOR in the development of teachers with demonstrated ability to close the success gap between white and Black and brown students. It is obvious to us that taking Minnesota back to the way we have always done things - a system dominated by traditional training methods and seniority-based advancement - will not change Minnesota's dismal outcomes. We must shift our thinking to research-backed approaches. One cannot be for increasing the number of teachers of color in Minnesota and for HF 1376 at the same time. We urge you to reject it as written.

Sincerely,

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