

RE: SUPPORT A CULTURALLY COMPETENT MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

Dear Distinguished Members of the Minnesota Legislature:

I am writing on behalf of the undergraduate social work program at St. Catherine University in support of the mental health uniform service standards bill which seeks to require on-going education and professional development in the area of culturally-appropriate treatment and services of all mental health providers in Minnesota. Given the recent events in our state and country when it comes to serving our citizens of color, a bill like this is one step forward in making reparation for the centuries of inequity and harm perpetrated. Our communities of color deserve competent practitioners who fully understand the barriers they are facing when it comes to navigating a world full of whiteness. We must remove the barriers practitioners of color face as they strive to complete their education in an effort to serve as social workers, counselors and therapists. As social work educators, we have had the pleasure of working with our future workforce. The students learning to become social workers in our program at St. Catherine University, especially our students of color, who not only attend school full-time, complete unpaid internships, work full-time and care for their families, but also contribute to our social justice mission and teach their faculty and their classmates about the world and what service to others can really look like. Their perspective is invaluable and their contribution to our profession is imperative. Your support of this bill will go a long way in reforming the society we live in. You will help to make it anti-racist. You will be standing up for what is right and will be ensuring our historic discrimination is not our future discrimination.

We fully support the items described in this bill from improved access to supervision, loan forgiveness, and a state sponsored task force to examine efforts to provide a more culturally competent mental health workforce. We strongly urge your support to invest in strengthening our mental health system for all Minnesotans by investing in our workforce.

Thank you,



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