



OFFICE OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY ATTORNEY

John J. Choi

January 11, 2023

Re: *Support for HF55: Office created for missing and murdered Black women and girls*

Esteemed Members of the Public Safety Finance & Policy Committee:

For generations, Black women and girls have suffered disproportionate levels of serious violence, as far too many have gone missing, with their families left without answers nor accountability for the people who have harmed them. While there may be numerous societal and systemic factors that have contributed to and enabled this, it is clear that we have failed to invest sufficient resources to help prevent, support, and respond to serious violence against Black women and girls. It is high time for us to correct this injustice.

In 2021, the legislature took an important step in creating the Missing and Murdered African American Women (MMAAW) Task Force and I laud its members for the hard work they did to examine the causes of this violence and provide recommendations to prevent it in the future. Now, it's incumbent upon the legislature to act to implement those recommendations, outlined below:

- *Fund housing and other spaces and resources to serve African American women and girls.*
- *Develop effective culturally appropriate trainings and professional education for professionals including peace officers, prosecutors and victim services representatives.*
- *Recruit and hire more African American staff including peace officers, prosecutors, and victim services representatives.*
- *Establish an office to support missing and murdered African American women and girls*

HF 55 is an important step in that direction. I commend Representative Ruth Richardson for her leadership to advance racial justice in authoring it. I encourage you to pass this bill to provide an infrastructure and dedicated resources to combat this unacceptable history of disparate treatment and outcomes, and ensure this issue finally gets the attention it requires. Black women and girls in Minnesota deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

John Choi  
Ramsey County Attorney

345 Wabasha Street North, Suite 120 • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-1432  
TELEPHONE: 651-266-3079 • FAX: 651-266-3015

