

Family Refuge Village
Testimony in favor of the
Minnesota African American Family Preservation Act SF 843, HF 1151

Senate Author- Bobby Joe Champion | House Author- Esther Agbaje

Greetings:

The Family Refuge Village Council is concerned with the negative and disparate impact of child protection interventions on African American children and families in Minnesota. We agree with the goals of the Minnesota African American Family Preservation Act SF 843, HF 1151 to:

- Protect Children and Strengthen Families
- Reduce the Overall Cost of Child Welfare Services and Out of Home Placement
- Reduce Law Enforcement and Judicial Systems Costs for Intervention
- Improve the Mental Health and Social Functioning of African American Children
- Improve the Child Protection Department's Efficacy

The Family Refuge Village Council is comprised of Shiloh Temple International Ministries, Minnesota Association of Black Social Workers, Well Spring Second Chance Center, child welfare professionals, educators, mental health providers and others. As representatives of the African American faith and professional communities we are aware of the deficiencies in the current child protection system. We believe that we can do better for our community, better for our families, better for our children and better for our future. The dollars currently invested in the broken child protection system should be redirected and invested in the children and families impacted by poverty and the pipeline to disenfranchisement and deficit-based outcomes.

We believe that there is an urgent need to pass the Minnesota African American Family Preservation Act and create a framework for operationalizing an infrastructure that moves us beyond perpetual child welfare service provision. The present system lays the groundwork for subsequent generations of African American children to be traumatized and wounded in the name of protection.

We want more for our community and we believe that the Minnesota African American Family Preservation Act will establish a framework of transformative partnerships between the State of Minnesota and African American communities. The priority focus will be on the health and wellbeing of our children and families. The Family Refuge Village Council will work in collaboration with the developers of this legislation and others to support the passing and operationalization of the Minnesota African American Family Preservation Act.