



705 Raymond Ave. #100
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55114
Tel: (651) 641-6199 www.TakeActionMinnesota.org

RE: Support for H.F. 660

February 9, 2021

Madame Chair and committee members,

TakeAction Minnesota is a grassroots organization representing 55,000 individual Minnesotans in every county in the state and 22 organizational members. We advocate for racial, gender, and economic justice at the local, state, and federal level. We are writing in support of H.F. 660.

Racial disparities in health care outcomes are the product of racial disparities in income, wealth, healthcare access, institutional racism and more, but they are also the product of disparate care and treatment. Minnesota has some of the worst disparities in maternal health and morbidity.

TakeAction member Megan Boyle of St. Paul is a woman of color with a chronic medical condition. Five years ago, while pregnant, she took extra care to stay healthy, but at 39 weeks she was informed that she would have to be induced on the first day of her 40th week to be assured of a healthy delivery. She was scared, and felt she was not given enough information or warning, but, she says, "I also felt that I shouldn't question my doctor. I agreed to be induced, but my body wasn't ready. My daughter, Imogene, got stuck in the birth canal and had to be delivered via emergency c-section, and was born with a scrape and a lump on her head due to her rough entry into the world."

Megan had a long recovery at the hospital and at home. She did not take the heavy pain medications that had been prescribed to her because a pharmacist told her they would leak into her breastmilk. A week after getting home, just before Christmas, she told a visiting nurse she was experiencing pain. The nurse was concerned it could be an infection but the on-call doctor who returned her call told her it was just the lack of pain medications.

3 days later, Megan developed uncontrollable chills, followed by extreme heat. Her thermometer read 107 degrees. "I couldn't believe that was right but I knew I was the sickest I'd ever felt in my life. I told my husband that he needed to call 911. He froze. We hadn't even gotten our medical bills yet, and an ambulance ride would be another expense." They debated, but he did call, and the paramedics confirmed that Megan had become septic and needed immediate care. They are also still paying down \$10,000 in medical debt from the complications.

Complications of pregnancy and childbirth can happen to anyone, but they happen disproportionately to people of color, sometimes with devastating consequences. Megan got treatment in time but she is left to wonder if her pain, and her desire to labor without induction, were dismissed more easily due to the color of her skin.



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Through training and research H.F. 660 would begin to give Megan and other people of color better maternal and birth outcomes and more reason for confidence in the caregivers and care systems they depend on.

Please support H.F. 660,

Sincerely,

Kenza Hadj-Moussa

Director of Public Affairs

TakeAction Minnesota