

Minnesota Strong

S.F. No. 3812
Section N, Equity Bill

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Presenter: Sharon Smith-Akinsanya | CEO, *Rae Mackenzie Group (RMG)*

Minnesota can be a great place to live, work, and play for all.

But our reputation has taken a hit causing talent, businesses, and graduates to leave at record rates. Our region needs the state's help to invest in a marketing and messaging campaign to attract people here and retain those we already have. We need to tell our story in an authentic way.

Our neighboring states are already investing in marketing that could lure talent away from Minnesota.

The states of Wisconsin, South Dakota, and Iowa are investing resources geared toward making their regions more attractive to prospective residents, and it's working.

Wisconsin

Investing in Millennial Marketing: **\$10M**

South Dakota

Investing in Workforce Marketing: **\$35M** (routed through the Department of Tourism)

Iowa

Investing in Last-Dollar Scholarship: **\$23M** (ensures college students can learn trades of in-demand jobs in IA)

It's important for MN to do a national campaign to rival that of other states in the Midwest. I am proposing we invest **\$15.2M** in a national campaign to maintain our competitive edge. As part of this overall campaign, we're requesting for **\$3M** to be allocated toward marketing to African American audiences—Black businesses, Black communities, Black talent—in authentic ways to begin to change the MN narrative. Culturally specific, targeted marketing works. We've done it before.

Minnesota Department of Health - #CovidInBlack Campaign

The State of MN hired Rae Mackenzie Group to create marketing campaigns for the African American community to make sure they were effective in their efforts to get the entire state to understand the importance of social distancing, testing, and ways to stay safe during the pandemic. As a result of the campaign, other Communities of Color were engaged and received the information as well.



For our region to maintain our competitive edge, we must make a value statement to the entire nation that Minnesota cares about ALL of its residents and give prospective residents a reason to take a second look at us. We have to be bold and intentional in our messaging to attract people back to our state to live, work, and start businesses.



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Rae Mackenzie Group (RMG)

Rae Mackenzie Group (RMG) is an internationally acclaimed, award-winning diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) marketing firm. RMG works with Fortune 500 companies, non-profits, and top employers including U.S. Bank, Make-A-Wish® America, Minnesota Timberwolves and Minnesota Lynx, Summit Academy OIC, Andersen Windows & Doors, Thrivent, Midco, Minnesota Department of Health, Best Buy, Target, Children's Minnesota, Minute Media, Polaris, University of Minnesota, and more to help them better position themselves in the marketplace to build stronger relationships with top Talent of Color.



Sharon Smith-Akinsanya



Sharon Smith-Akinsanya is the CEO and Founder of Rae Mackenzie Group (RMG), an internationally acclaimed, award-winning diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) marketing firm. She has more than 20 years of experience advising CEOs and companies with her Leading Out Loud methodology encompassing DEI procurement, recruitment, corporate sponsorships, social responsibility, leader positioning, communications, and more.

Her second book **COLORFULL: Competitive Strategies to Attract and Retain Top Talent of Color** unlocks the secrets for creating workplaces that consistently attract, develop, and retain Professionals of Color with actionable strategies supported by first-hand interviews with Fortune 500 CEOs and CHROs.