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FOUNDATION

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February 23, 2022

Senator Melissa Wiklund
Chair, Health and Human Services Committee
1200 Senate Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Wilder Foundation African American Babies Coalition and Projects (AABC), I am writing in support of SF1680 to establish a family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) grant program to promote children's social-emotional learning and healthy development, early literacy, and other skills to succeed as learners and to foster community partnerships that will help children thrive when they enter school.

The almost year-long pandemic, coupled with recent civil unrest, has had a disproportionate negative impact on BIPOC families. This has intensified trauma for these families, and for those who are trying to meet their needs; families find themselves facing challenges associated with housing, transportation, health, violence, and sexual safety. As trusted partners, Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) providers are in a position to help children and families cope with that trauma.

At AABC and Projects we know that much work remains to be done to addressing the systems and practices that contribute to this preventable crisis. We believe SF1680 is a critical step in the right direction to improve maternal health outcomes knowing when maternal health improves infant health outcomes are also improved.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Keisha Mitchell

Program Manager, Wilder African American Babies Coalition and Projects (AABC)

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