

“Good morning Senator Maye Quade and members of the committee”
My name is Angela Moore Smith. I’m am the Senior Program Associate for the American Babies Coalition and Projects also known as AABC. I am responsible for the recruitment for our community trainings as well as communication and media. I am also a local community resident, former early childhood educator of 10 years, wife and mother of four year old twins. I am here today in support Senate File 1274. The provisions in this bill would help AABC to continue to build capacity in, train, educate and improve practices among black, indigenous, and persons of color during pregnancy and post-partum.

AABC began in 2005 with the mission of addressing Black and Brown families’ awareness of healthy brain development. This begins after gestation, during delivery and post-partum and throughout a child’s life. AABC’s work is centered in prenatal care, social determinants of health, focused awareness of parenting, and reducing the education and economic gaps in the black, and brown community. AABC is working to create an equitable health care system that has the capacity to provide culturally responsive care, so that black, indigenous and families of color can thrive.

We have developed in the past two year’s added work to our responsibilities. This includes the development of three training curriculums, culturally responsive focused trainings for health care workers, community members and families, provide health care and university customized staff and public trainings, action lunches, summits, forums, and advancement gatherings. We have piloted and created two early childhood libraries sites to promote early literacy and nighttime bonding with care givers and children, partnered in creating

and distributing a My Baby and Me Building Baby Bag for postpartum mothers and newborns, contributed material for the Women Economic Stability ACT (WESA) and continued media as well as hosted an annual 2 day Black and Brown Birth Conference with for over 175 people.

Black, indigenous and communities of color face persistent health disparities in birth outcomes, infant mortality, and child development stemming from lack of access to high quality – culturally sensitive prenatal, delivery and post-partum care. Research shows that in MN (according to the March of Dimes) in 2021 1 in 10 babies was born preterm. (9.6 live births) 1 in 14 babies (7.2% of live births) was low birth weight and in 2019 299 infants died before reaching their first birthday, in infant mortality rate of 4.5 per 1,000 live births. During 2017-2019 the mortality rate (per 1000 live births) in MN was highest for American Indian & Alaska Native Infants at (11.5) followed by (8.5) for black infants, 6.3 for Asian/ Pacific Islanders, and 5.9 for Hispanic infants compared to a 3.6 for white infants.

Voting in favor of this bill will help in AABC's work to help mothers of color have better access to referrals for specialist and other resources and services that they need, increase access to high quality services in communities of color, help us to assist clinics and hospitals in providing trainings so competency keeps building (and not just the bare minimum), help to train hospital administrators in prioritizing black indigenous, and mothers of color, provide healthcare and child care providers with access to the best science evidence to guide their care.

Last but not least. This bill will help us help us to meet our long goal and mission:" for the disparities in prenatal, birth and early childhood

outcomes for black, indigenous, and babies of color in the state of MN **to reduced or eliminated.**

AABC and Projects are intended as a vehicle for easy access to guide mindfulness, and a safety net with an opportunity to design innovative tool's to help the community thrive. We are proud of our connected based work and hope you will join us in our work to be extended and implemented.

“Thank you, Senator Maye Quade and members of the committee, I urge you to vote in favor of Senate File 1274 our director Sameerah Bilal- Roby and I am happy to answer any questions that members might have about AABC and Projects.