

Senator Melissa H. Wiklund
Chair, Health and Human Services Committee
Minnesota Senate

March 28, 2023

Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee.

My name is Hafsa Farah and I am in support of S.F. 2503 of the Skin-Lightening Products Public Awareness and Education Grant Program.

I am a junior at Edina High School and I have graduated from the Young Women Wellness and Leadership Initiative led through Beautywell.

During my experience at school, I have witnessed and experienced offhand comments about how a dark skin student would disappear in the dark when lights were turned off to watch a movie. How kids are constantly told to not wear bright colors because they have dark skin, which makes the color look ugly on them. How they are constantly being compared to mud on the floor because it has become so normalized in many communities to dislike darker skin.

When youth are constantly told that their skin is not beautiful, it drives them to seek out skin-lightening products. These products harm the users and those around them. It harms not only their physical health but also their mental wellbeing.

I believe that all youth should have the opportunity to learn about the effects of skin lightening as I have. Youth, such as myself who benefitted from the Young Women Wellness and Leadership Initiative, can gain knowledge through this bill that helps them dig up the roots of colorism, the cause of skin lightening, in their communities. By learning to accept and love their skin, they reject skin-lightening products that are detrimental to their physical and mental health.

Thank you for your time.