

HENNEPIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Chair John Marty, Finance Committee
3235 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave W
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Marty and Committee Members,

Thank you for your consideration of SF 716. We are grateful to Senator Champion for carrying this important legislation and urge your support.

Several years ago, Hennepin County made historic investments and systems changes in our child well-being work. We have seen the positive impact that our Parent Support Outreach Program, TeenHOPE Program, Connect for School Success, and other prevention-based programs have on families. However, racial disparities still exist within our systems which is why we partnered with Village Arms for an important pilot aimed at producing replicable strategies to support the stability and security of African American families. The data from this pilot show that these upstream preventative measures support families, reducing the need for county intervention. Overall, African American children and families who participated in the pilot had better outcomes than those that did not. Pilot cases outperformed comparison groups in nearly 60% of measures – none of the children that participated in the pilot had a re-entry into foster care, and all of the children in the pilot who reunified did so in less than 12 months (outperforming comparison groups by nearly 20% and 40%).

The African American Family Preservation Act is a critical step to reduce the shameful racial disparities Minnesota continues to see in our child protection system and we are eager to continue this work.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Irene Fernando
Hennepin County Board of Commissioners

Irene Fernando, Chair
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