

HENNEPIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 14, 2024

Chair Melissa Wiklund, Health and Human Services Committee
2107 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave. W
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Wiklund 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. The next stage of our transformation in Children and Family Services will be guided by a strategic plan shaped by many voices within, across, and outside our system. Countywide, we're operationalizing our disparity reduction strategy with services shaped by our community's voice and decisions driven by data.

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.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Irene Fernando
Board Chair

Irene Fernando, Chair
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