



1 April 2024

Senator Melissa Wiklund
Chair, Health & Human Services Committee
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 1100

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Health & Human Services Committee,

The Birth Justice Collaborative is writing to request your support of SF 4807, a grant for Chosen Vessels Midwifery Services to support culturally relevant breastfeeding and lactation education in Minnesota's African American community.

Breastfeeding rates in Minnesota are racially disparate across socioeconomic status and education level. The stigma surrounding breastfeeding in the African American community persists today because of the harmful and traumatic impacts of slavery and racial inequities in the United States. The impacts of history are still visible today as lactating people in African American community continue to report higher barriers to reaching their breastfeeding goals.

The benefits of breastfeeding are undeniable. People who breastfeed not only strengthen their parent child attachment but experience lower risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and postpartum depression. Babies who are breastfeed have bolstered immune systems and are less likely to suffer from sudden infant death syndrome, diabetes, obesity, and respiratory illnesses.

The Birth Justice Collaborative urges you to join us in supporting SF 4807, to support culturally responsive lactation and breastfeeding education in Minnesota's African American community.

Please contact Corenia Smith at corenia@collectiveactionlab.com with any questions, concerns, or for more information about the Birth Justice Collaborative.

Thank you,

The Birth Justice Collaborative

Cultural Wellness Center,
Division of Indian Work,
Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center,
Native American Community Clinic,
Liberty Northside Healing Space
University of Minnesota Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach Engagement Center.