



# VOICES & CHOICES for children

9 April 2024

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

The Voices & Choices for Children Coalition focuses on developing strongly engaged cultural communities of learning, organizing and advocacy for their, input, and impact in shaping more equitable practices and policies that will support better outcomes for children of color and American Indian children prenatal to 8 years old across the state.

We are reaching out to request your support for **SF 4992** and **SF 5171** in the Health & Human Services Committee. Both bills work to address disparities in Minnesota's maternal health outcomes and to improve access and utilization of culturally appropriate perinatal health care and services in the African American and American Indian communities.

**SF 4992: American Indian-focused Birth Center planning grant**

A replicable American Indian birth center will empower the American Indian community by providing a dignified setting that centers their cultural needs and promotes traditional healing and wellness. Studies have shown that increasing access to culturally responsive care interrupts the racial disparities in birth outcomes, at the point of care.

**SF 5171: African American-focused Homeplace Model planning grant**

An African American-focused homeplace will provide a safe space of health and wellness for expecting parents and families to heal, learn about and access perinatal care, lactation support, nutrition education, wealth-building, and to be in community during the postpartum period.

I urge you to join the Voices & Choices Coalition, in supporting **SF 4992** and **SF 5171**, to empower African American and American Indian families and positively position them to support healthy pregnancies and deliveries in their communities.

Thank you!

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