7 April 2024

Senator Wiklund
Chair, Health and Human Services Committee
MN Senate Building, Room 2107
95 University Ave W
St. Pau, MN 55155

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee,

The Birth Justice Collaborative is writing to request your support of SF 5171, a bill to administer a planning grant for the creation of an African American-focused Homeplace model that provides the community with a culturally centered space that promotes healing and wellness during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

Health disparities in Minnesota have persistently impacted African American families and Minnesota's Maternal Mortality Report shows that African American birthing people are overrepresented in pregnancy-associated deaths. Most cases of maternal mortality occur between 6-weeks and one year after the pregnancy; Minnesota's Maternal Mortality Review Committee determined that 100% percent of these deaths were preventable if the patient had access to adequate pre- and post-delivery services and preventative care.

An African American-focused homeplace addresses Minnesota's maternal health disparities by providing 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.

The Birth Justice Collaborative urges you to join us in supporting SF 5171, to begin the planning of an African American-focused Homeplace model to empower families and positively position them to support the healthy growth and development of their children. 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