

Senator Melissa Wiklund
Health & Human Services Committee
Minnesota Senate Building | Room 1100
St. Paul, MN 55155

April 8, 2024

Dear Chair Wiklund and Committee Members,

I am writing to you today in support of SF 4992 and SF 5171, bills to establish planning grants for improved perinatal health care and services in African American and American Indian communities.

For too long there have been significant racial disparities in perinatal health and care as cited by countless studies by many organizations, including the National Institute of Health. It is my hope that these bills would provide grant funding to establish dignified, culturally conscious healthcare to expecting parents and families and promote traditional healing and wellness, as studies have shown that increasing culturally responsive care at the point of care interrupts the racial disparities in birth outcomes.

As a pastor and faith leader, I am grateful that our legislature has focused so much on caring for vulnerable groups, and it is my hope that this committee will continue that work by addressing the shocking disparities in Minnesota's maternal health outcomes. I urge the legislature to empower these families and positively position them for healthy pregnancies and deliveries by receiving the care they need.

Thank You,

Jim Cochrane
Chaska, MN