

Rev. Doug Mitchell
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I am writing to support legislative appropriation for African American-focused HomePlace S.F. 1691/H.F. 1777. This bill appropriates funding to support the development and implementation of an African American-focused health and healing program HomePlace aimed to improve access to culturally centered healing and care during pregnancy and the postpartum period, with the goal of improving maternal and child health outcomes. It seeks to allocate \$1 million in fiscal year 2026 from the general fund to the commissioner of health for a grant to the Birth Justice Collaborative to strengthen and implement the program. The purpose of the funding is to strengthen culturally centered care during pregnancy and the postpartum period, addressing disparities in maternal and infant health. Birth Justice Collaborative would submit a report to the commissioner of health by December 15, 2026, or within 12 months of receiving the grant, detailing program outcomes and recommendations for future funding and expansion. The allocated funds would be used by 2028.

As the Associate Pastor for Faith in Action at Westminster Presbyterian Church in downtown Minneapolis from 2001 to 2017, I worked very closely with Rev. Alika Galloway, Co-Pastor of Liberty Community Church on many different projects. The church always does deep social science research into any issue they are addressing and comes up with creative solutions, HomePlace is one of these solutions. It addresses the serious, ongoing problem of racial disparities in negative health outcomes during pregnancy and in the postpartum period.

I fully support funding for S.F.1691/H.F. 1777.

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