



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

April 9, 2025

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

The Birth Justice Collaborative is writing to express our gratitude for your decision to invest in strategies that will improve birth and health outcomes for babies, their mothers, caregivers, and families in African American and American Indian communities in Minnesota. Improving access to healthcare and community support allows for more people to have healthy pregnancies and provides newborns with stability needed to develop strong relationships with their caregivers and to grow up healthy.

Thank you for including the following provisions in the SF2669 omnibus bill:

MA Coverage for Birth Services Provided at Home (HF96 / SF1113)

Access to labor and delivery hospitals has decreased significantly across Minnesota, but the demand hasn't changed. The cost of care is too high to maintain in less populated regions of the state. In Greater Minnesota, where access to perinatal care is limited and inconsistent, home birth providers offer critical prenatal and postpartum care to their private-paying clients. This provision will allow home birth providers to serve more Medicaid clients who choose to give birth in their homes, by increasing the reimbursement amount of their supplies to 70% of a hospital's facility fee for an uncomplicated vaginal delivery.

Grant to Birth Justice Collaborative for African American Focused Homeplace Program

The Homeplace model works to improve maternal and child health outcomes through culturally centered community-based healing and care. Homeplace stands as a beacon of what is possible when policy centers community voice, dignity, and culturally rooted approaches to health and well-being. This \$500 thousand investment represents more than funding—it is a commitment to addressing racial disparities in maternal health and affirming the importance of culturally specific models of care. Homeplace will continue to drive meaningful impact for Black mothers, birthing people, and families in our state.

Family Supportive Housing Grant Program (HF1644 / SF1732)

Stable housing is critical for the healthy growth, development, and well-being of young children. Research shows that experiencing homelessness as a child is disruptive to critical early brain development and can lead to negative health, education, and behavioral outcomes. Supportive housing allows families to stay together and provides children with a secure environment to build healthy relationships with their parents and caregivers—the foundation that all future learning is built upon.

Please join the Birth Justice Collaborative in continuing to advocate for these provisions as a strategy to improve health outcomes and support healthy births in African American and American Indian communities, across the state of Minnesota.

Sincerely,

The Birth Justice Collaborative

Akhmiri Sekhr-Ra, Cultural Wellness Center,
Louise Matson, Division of Indian Work,
Rev. Dr. Alika Galloway, Liberty Northside Healing Space,
Ruth Buffalo, Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center,
Dr. Antony Stately, Native American Community Clinic,
Makeda Zulu, Urban Research & Outreach-Engagement Center, University of Minnesota