

Representative Ruth Richardson

403 State Office Building

St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Richardson:

On behalf of the membership of the Minnesota Association of African American Physicians (MAAAP), I am writing in strong support of HF 4161. The MAAAP is a statewide chapter of the National Medical Association (NMA), the largest and oldest national organization representing African American physicians and their patients in the United States and the leading force for parity and justice in medicine and the elimination of disparities in health. The NMA has clear policy directed to improve the maternal and birth parent health in the Black community

Despite Minnesota consistently ranking as one of the healthiest states in the nation, Minnesotans of color experience significant race-based disparities in income, employment, housing, education, and health. Black maternal health is in a state of crisis. Compared to white counterparts, Black birth parents in America are three times more likely to die from pregnancy or childbirth-related causes than white individuals, with pregnancy-related mortality ratios of 40.8 and 12.7 deaths per 100,000 live births for Black and white people respectively. Annually in the United States, over 11,000 infants die on the day that they are born, and 20,000 babies aged 12 months or younger die each year. Nationwide, 15 percent of babies born are Black-yet the make up roughly 30 percent of the babies who die in the first year of their life. Infants who are born to Black women die at over twice the rate of those born to white individuals.

In Minnesota, the maternal mortality rate for non-Hispanic Black women is 2.3 times higher when compared to white mothers. Minnesota’s infant mortality rate is one of the lowest in the US, but the burden of infant mortality is not shared equally with the most striking disparities between babies born to Black women and babies born to white or Asian women.

The members of the Minnesota Association of African American Physicians, therefore, strongly support HF 4161. This new law would be an important step to eliminate barriers such as affordability and access to healthcare improve health outcomes for women and their babies, especially the Black community that has a high rate. Sincerely,

Dionne Hart MD, DFAPA, FASAM

President

Minnesota Association of African American Physicians

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