

March 22, 2022



Representative Jennifer Schultz, Committee Chair  
Human Services Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives

Dear Representative Schultz:

**My name is Julie Sjodal, I am the Chief Executive Officer of St. David's Center**, a nonprofit organization with a mission to build relationships that nurture the development of every child and family. We provide a range of critically needed services to over 4,000 children and families across the Twin Cities metro area. A major focus of our organization's work is providing parent support and mental health services for children and families that have faced significant challenges throughout their young lives. One of the populations we have served includes children who need out of home placement in licensed or relative foster care. Along with a number of providers in the community, St. David's Center is eager to provide support to the relatives who take on the role and responsibility of foster parenting while children need care.

**I am writing today to ask you and the House Human Services Committee to support HF4217** – a bill which supports the development of grants to recruit and support BIPOC community members who become foster families, while incorporating additional language that prioritizes kinship caregiving.

This bill will provide grant opportunities for organizations to help family members who so courageously step into the role of parenting nieces, nephews, and grandchildren at a time when life is so uncertain and scary, not only for the children but for the whole family. If families are supported, the likelihood of maintaining a safe and stable placement for children is much higher.

We urge you and the Human Services Committee to support this bill.

With gratitude for your leadership and service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Sjodal". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie Sjodal  
Chief Executive Officer