



May 3, 2023

Chair Omar Fateh
Omnibus Higher Education Conference Committee
3219 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Gene Pelowski
Omnibus Higher Education Conference Committee
491 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: College Access and Student Support in Higher Education Budget (HF2073/SF2075)

Chair Fateh and Chair Pelowski,

The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage supports investments that would expand access to higher education for Black students and provide the necessary support structures for their success. Higher education institutions in Minnesota and around the United States are marked by racial disparities in college admissions, enrollment, financing, and graduation rates.

Our collective inability to meet the needs of Black students and other students of color leads to underrepresentation of students from these groups at our colleges and universities. This problem is compounded by the dearth of diversity leadership in these institutions. Black professionals are underrepresented among higher education academic faculty and administrative leadership. **Our Council requests your continued support for measures that increase college access and student resources, including the following provisions in the Omnibus Higher Education Finance and Policy Bill (HF2073/SF2075):**

- Minnesota Commitment to Higher Education Act
- Emergency Assistance for Post-Secondary Students
- Expansion of the Hunger Free Campus Grants Program
- Grants for Expectant and Parenting College Students
- Increase of the Living and Miscellaneous Expense Allowance
- Increase Teachers of Color Act 2023
- Working Group on Post-Secondary Student Basic Needs

Thanks for your consideration. And thank you for your leadership and partnership on issues of access, equity, and student support in higher education.

Sincerely,

Linda Sloan | Executive Director
Theodore Rose | Legislative and Policy Director
Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage

The Minnesota Legislature empowered the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage to ensure that people of African heritage fully and effectively participate in and equitably benefit from the political, social, and economic resources, policies, and procedures of the State of Minnesota. Generally, the Council is charged with the responsibility of:

- *Advising the Governor and the Legislature on issues confronting People of African Heritage;*
- *Advising the Governor and the Legislature on statutes, rules, and revisions to programs to ensure that Black people have access to benefits and services provided to people in Minnesota;*
- *Serving as a liaison to the federal government, local government units and private organizations on matters relating to People of African Heritage in Minnesota;*
- *Implementing programs designed to solve problems of People of African Heritage when authorized by statute, rule or order; and*
- *Publicizing the accomplishments of People of African Heritage and their contributions to the state.*