

March 9, 2022

Chair Jamie Becker-Finn
House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law
Re: HF 3972 (Richardson)

Chair Becker-Finn and Members,

The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage supports HF 3972 (Richardson) because this bill will improve Minnesota's capacity to advance racial equity in access to organ transplantation.

The national donation and transplant community has been concerned about the problem of racial disparities in access to organ transplants at least since the 1980s. Still today, differentials in access to transplantation and in posttransplant outcomes are deeply predicated on social determinants such as race, income, gender, and geography. Individuals who self-identify as persons of African descent and who are eligible to receive an organ transplant tend to be underrepresented in the waitlists for transplantation. Those Black patients who are fortunate to get on the list also have a higher waitlist mortality rate compared to Whites. Finally, Africans and African Americans are also vulnerable to unequal posttransplant health outcomes, including higher risks of posttransplant mortality.

House File 3972 responds to the preceding set of problems by establishing new state requirements for enforcing nondiscrimination and equity in access to organ transplants. The bill contains the following key provisions:

- **Prohibits racial discrimination in evaluation, listing, referral, treatment, and other transplantation and post-transplantation medical practices;**
- **Prescribes that health care providers and other practitioners must modify their practices to ensure that transplantation-related counseling, coverage, and treatment are available to qualified individuals, on one hand, and that qualified individuals are not denied these services because of the absence of auxiliary aids and support systems, on the other hand;**
- **Requires that health care providers, organ procurement organizations, and others must comply dually with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Minnesota Human Rights Act.**

Our Council welcomes this proposal to align our practices of organ transplant access and allocation with our principles of civil rights and equal protection in Minnesota. Last year the Minnesota Legislature passed a Health and Human Services Omnibus that protects individuals who have a disability from discrimination in access to organ transplantation. We are very happy to see that your committee is considering this next step in equity and organ transplantation. Thank you to Rep. Richardson for carrying this bill, and thanks to your committee for reviewing it. Please support HF 3972.

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.*