

HENNEPIN COUNTY

ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

01/12/23

Representative Kelly Moller

509 State Office Building

St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Moller and Members of the Public Safety Committee,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my support for HF 55, which establishes the Office for Missing and Murdered Black Women and Girls. I would also like to express my gratitude to Rep. Ruth Richardson for being a tireless champion for legislation that seeks to protect Black women and girls at the state legislature.

The Missing and Murdered African American Women Task Force details what many already know: Black women and girls have long been disproportionately subject to violence. This is an urgent matter, as the task states, "Black women are murdered at a rate 2.7 times higher than white women." The report goes on to say that while Black women comprise less than 7 percent of the population, in 2020 they were 40 percent of domestic violence homicide victims. These statistics are shocking. While no one should ever be the victim of violence, the disproportionality of the violence against women in the black community should compel public safety officials to direct resources toward preventing this harm. For this reason, I write today to wholeheartedly support an office created to address this public safety crisis.

As Hennepin County Attorney it is my job to protect everyone from violence, especially those from communities who are often overlooked and underserved. I support this legislation because it will help us carry out this mission by creating a state-level office dedicated to protecting black women and girls. The office will advocate for additional state resources to address disparities faced by Black women and girls who have experienced or are experiencing homelessness, violence or systemic neglect. The office will do this by developing comprehensive and ongoing anti-racist training and education (our staff will attend) and sharing data with our office to use to successfully prosecute violent crimes against Black women and girls.

Thank you again for this opportunity to express my support for this legislation.

Sincerely,

Mary F. Moriarty

Hennepin County Attorney