



March 3, 2022

Chair Carlos Mariani
House Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform Finance and Policy
Re: HF 2849 (Richardson)

Chair Mariani and Members,

The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage writes in strong support for HF 2849 (Richardson), which establishes an Office for Missing and Murdered Black Women and Girls. We believe that missing and murdered women and girls is a crisis in the African Heritage community that has not been adequately addressed.

Last year, our Council supported legislation that created the Task Force on Missing and Murdered African American Women during the 2021 regulation and special sessions. We partnered with the Office of Justice Programs in the formation of the Task Force during summer 2021. We have supported the Task Force's critical discussions and investigative work on the problem of reducing and ending violence against Black women and girls in Minnesota. The establishment of an office specifically dedicated to preventing violence targeted against Black women and girls is the next logical step of this important work.

The new Office created by HF 2849 will use evidence-driven methods to help develop and improve our state's knowledge, policy, and public safety practices vis-à-vis the crises of violence against Black women and girls. Maybe most important of all, HF 2849 provides that the intellectual and personnel resources of the new Office must be inclusive of the voices and values of Black women and girls themselves. Our Council believes that these provisions will help advance human rights, women's rights, and violence protection in our community and justice systems in Minnesota. Thank you to Rep. Richardson for her leadership on this legislation. We encourage all committee members to support HF 2849.

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.*