

April 30, 2021

RE: Support for Omnibus Workforce and Business Development Finance and Policy Provisions

FROM: Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage
Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs

TO: Senator Pratt
Senator Rarick
Senator Draheim
Senator Housley
Senator Eken
Representative Noor
Representative Ecklund
Representative Olson
Representative Hamilton
Representative Berg

Dear Members of the Jobs/Labor Omnibus Bill Conference Committee,

The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (CMAH) and the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs (MCLA) offer our strong support for the provisions in the Omnibus Workforce and Business Development Finance and Policy Bill (SF1098/HF1342) listed below. While all Minnesotans are coping with economic uncertainty, the economic and health crises of the COVID-19 pandemic have worsened racial disparities and the impacts of these disadvantages in our communities. Minnesotans of African and Latino Heritage are facing unique challenges that require targeted legislation.

We would like to thank the Conference Committee for consideration of funding and policy proposals that seek to respond to the ways structural economic challenges are experienced by African Heritage and Latino Minnesotans as well as other communities of color. The omnibus responds to four key economic problems facing our communities:

- **High unemployment, irregular employment, and low wages**
- **Inadequate worker protections that lead to dangerous working conditions and job instability**
- **Insufficient finance capital for business enterprise development**
- **Want of the workforce skills necessary to drive economic ingenuity and mobility**

Specifically, we want to highlight our support for the following provisions in the bill:

1. **\$50M Small Business COVID Support Grant Program**
2. **\$10M Grant Program to Increase Access to Child Care**
3. **\$10.6M Grant Program for Community-Based Business Development Services, including at least \$4M to fund and support women of color entrepreneurs**
4. **Prioritization of BIPOC Communities in the Delivery of Workforce Development Services**

- 5. Microenterprise Development Program**
- 6. Removing Barriers to Employment Grant Program**
- 7. Innovative Employment Solutions Grant Program**
- 8. Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefit Insurance Program**
- 9. Unemployment Insurance Eligibility for Youth Workers, Senior Workers, and School Workers**
- 10. Earned Sick and Safe Time**
- 11. Emergency Rehire and Retention**
- 12. Essential Workers Emergency Leave**
- 13. Safe Workplaces for Meat and Poultry Processing Workers**

The above provisions will allow Minnesotans of African and Latinx heritage and other communities of color to recover and thrive in the face of the unique economic and social challenges we face. CMAH and MCLA urge you to support these provisions and thank you for your leadership in considering these issues.

Sincerely,

Linda Sloan
Executive Director
Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage

Rosa Tock
Executive Director
Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs