

## Greetings

Community based organization, Village Arms has partnered with Sen Champion and Rep Agbaje to re introduce the African American Family Preservation Act, SF 843, HF 1151. This bill would work to address the racial disparities that exist at every point of contact for Black families involved with child protection.

This is a long standing, egregious and well-documented issue that plagues the state of Minnesota. African American children remain 3 times more likely than their white counterparts to be *reported* to child protective services. African American and children of 2 or more races are *removed* from their home at a rate 3 and 5 times higher than their white counterparts. In addition, African American children are the highest population of children moving from child protection to *juvenile detention*.

This Act will not only stop the arbitrary removal of children from their homes but would also strengthen families and save the state money. This Act would work to address disparities at every decision point while providing guidance and oversight to child protection staff.

MN pays upwards of 25k per child to place him/her in foster care while family preservation/in home services costs just 5k. The perpetual clogging of our child protection system with children that are not at risk of harm (of the 15k children separated from home, 9% is due to physical abuse and 2% sexual abuse) has exhausted the state's resources.

The cost to the state is exponentially more than it would be to support a NON -ABUSIVE family that may just be struggling with issues related to poverty. Research shows us that children fare better both short and long term when left with their own families. We have an obligation to ensure child well -being by preserving their familial connections!

We urge you to support this bill and keep African American families safely together.

Thank you for your time and service,