

March 18, 2025

**RE: Office of the Foster Youth Ombudsperson Appropriation**

Dear Rep. Kotyza-Witthuhn and Members of the House Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee,

The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (CMAH) is pleased to offer our strong support for the funding and appropriations for the Office of the Foster Youth Ombudsperson under HF2009 (Hanson). This initiative is crucial for ensuring foster youth have a dedicated, independent resource to voice their concerns, protect their rights, and navigate the complexities of the foster care system.

Foster youth face numerous challenges, and the establishment of this office will provide them with an invaluable advocate, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs met. By funding this office, we take a proactive approach to addressing systemic issues, improving services, and holding providers accountable.

CMAH urges continued support for HF2009 (Hanson) and the allocation of necessary funds to ensure the success and effectiveness of this office. It is a vital investment in the future of foster youth, ensuring they receive the support they need to thrive.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. We remain committed to supporting efforts that advocate for the rights and well-being of foster youth.

Sincerely,

**Linda Sloan** | Executive Director

**Lolita Davis Carter** | 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.