



Dear Chair Schultz and Committee Members,

for [HF4217](#):

- As a former child protection social worker in South St. Louis County and Founder and President of Family Rise Together, I understand how kinship placements are vital in the cultural identity of the child(ren), family connectedness, and continued connection to community. Foster parents and kinship caregivers play a vital role in caring for children who are unable to remain at home.
- As community-based foster care organizations, we know firsthand that supporting our foster parents to provide excellent care *includes* recruitment of foster parents who are reflective of the communities and culture of the children receiving care.
- It is important that we both continue to increase our support for kinship caregivers and our wider foster care system – as we see outlined in HF4217.
- HF4217 is a critical investment in the important work of building a foster care system that supports children and families.
- HF4217 is a great investment in recruiting foster families who share the values of the children who they are caring for, who understand the need for training to understand the historical context and the trauma that the current child protection system has done to black families in this country is vital. Our community-based agency understands the need to train, educate and promote community involvement in developing materials to train staff and community.

Sincerely,  
ChaQuana McEntyre, President  
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