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April 18, 2023

Chair Aisha Gomez
Minnesota House Taxes Committee
453 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Gomez and Members of the House Taxes Committee:

As the Director of Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood, I am writing in support of the proposed Minnesota Child Tax Credit and in appreciation for including a Child Tax Credit in the House Omnibus bill.

Saint Paul Promise is an educational partnership that puts children in the Frogtown, Rondo, and Summit-University neighborhoods of Saint Paul on the pathway to college and career success. We take a proactive and preventive approach to the education opportunity gap by focusing early in a child's life. We partner with parents and caregivers, early learning providers, three elementary schools, and many community-based organizations in the Promise Neighborhood to deliver programming and reach families.

Our programs focus early on in a child's life and consider the conditions of their whole family and community. Working in partnership with parents and caregivers, we address economic and developmental factors contributing to their children's academic success to help minimize or even remove barriers to overall family success - thus, allowing our scholars the opportunity to show up in school ready to learn and succeed.

Knowing what is good for our families is good for our scholars, Saint Paul Promise supports the proposed Minnesota Child Tax Credit as this direct investment in our families' potential can play a critical role in enhancing the impact of our programming. Combining our direct program delivery with such systemic change aimed at reducing and removing conditions of poverty can substantially dismantle racial disparities across economic and educational opportunities in Minnesota. Such a transformational, evidence-based investment can support organizations like ours striving to improve families' financial stability and life prospects.

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When asked about the potential of such an investment, one of our parents, currently participating in our fellowship program with her six-year-old, two-year-old, and littlest due May 26, shared it best.

COVID changed many lives, including ours. One positive from that time was that there were many forms of relief made available to keep folks like me afloat. As someone who has always worked really hard and then received that check in the mail [the federal expanded child tax credit], I was shocked since it was so unexpected. But it felt awesome, like I was finally getting compensated for all the invisible work I had been doing to hold everything together and keep my family safe during that challenging time. I used that money to cover many expenses - necessary things like groceries, gas, and household items - that had piled up with me being out of work and the kids being home. Now, if something like that were to happen again, in this case, I'm at a place where I could use the money to probably let go of being on benefits [MFIP and SNAP] all together and instead use those dollars in a way that isn't so disincentivizing and restrictive. Instead, I'd use it to save a bit every month, take the older boys out for good grades and good behavior, and prepare for the baby coming home to get our family off to a good start.

This perspective illustrates one of the many stories we hear from our families on how a direct investment in their capacity could change the odds for themselves and their children.

On behalf of our Promise Neighborhood families, scholars, and staff, we thank you for joining Governor Tim Walz in prioritizing creating a Child Tax Credit to combat child poverty in our state. We urge you to keep fighting for this strong, transformational piece of legislation to remain in the final tax bill so we can deliver on the promise of opportunity for all of Minnesota's littlest learners together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tiffany Scott Knox". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tiffany Scott Knox
Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Director