

February 22, 2021

RE: Please support sustaining and growing our mental health workforce HF 1268

Dear Distinguished Members of the Minnesota Legislature:

I am writing to you to express support for HF1268. As a community leader who has spent the past 20 years working to address racial disparities in Minnesota, I believe strongly that the work of the African American Babies Coalition not only brings immense value to our community it serves as an example of innovative, culturally-grounded, community-driven change efforts.

We have more than enough data to tell us that Black Minnesotans continue to fair poorly on nearly every measure of quality of life in our state. These disparities often begin the womb. Building culturally grounded solutions that support the health and well-being of African American families and their babies can prevent disparities before they begin.

I have had the opportunity to partner with and support the African American Babies Coalition (AABC) for over a decade. During that time, I have witnessed again and again the power of following the leadership of community. By building change efforts by and for community, AABC not only impacts those who are receiving services or support, it builds networks of leaders who experience the power of creating change in their community.

I appreciate you taking the time to consider this important piece of legislation and ask that you support HF 1268 in order to help give more of Minnesota's children and families the healthy beginning they deserve.

Thank you,

Kirsten M. Johnson
Co-Founder
Courageous Change Collective