



**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People**

Minnesota/Dakotas Area State Conference

P.O. Box 6472 – Rochester, MN 55903-6472 – (507) 358-8820

Saturday, May 1st, 2021

Dear Representatives and Senators of the Public Safety & Judiciary Conference Committee:

The NAACP Minnesota/Dakotas Area State Conference is writing this letter to express our strong support for the governor's budget request to increase the Minnesota Department of Human Rights' (MDHR) investigative capacity. MDHR has been a great partner to the NAACP under Governor Tim Walz and Commissioner Rebecca Lucero. We would like to state our unequivocal support for their efforts to address Minnesota's historically persistent disparities, and strongly urge the legislature to consider the governor's \$991,000 budget request for MDHR as essential funding. Minnesota is regrettably home to some of the largest racial disparities for African Americans in our country, which have in part arisen from decades of systemic discrimination. In fact, as the Minnesota Human Rights Act states, "discrimination threatens the rights and privileges of the inhabitants of this state and menaces the institutions and foundations of our democracy." It is our deep hope that the legislature will uphold these words – originally written by the 65th Minnesota legislature in 1967 – and fully support the enforcement and implementation of the civil rights of all citizens in Minnesota.

As a state we are reckoning with what public safety, police reform, and criminal justice truly means to us as Minnesotans. In the remaining weeks of this legislative session, we have a moral imperative to include civil rights in this conversation. Writing from the perspective of the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization, our six local NAACP branches (out of more than 2,400 across our country) in Duluth, Mankato, Minneapolis, Rochester, Saint Cloud and Saint Paul, cannot operate effectively--staffed with volunteers--unless the Minnesota Department of Human Rights is fully and effectively staffed and resourced with professionals, who can provide assistance, training and resources throughout Minnesota. The legislature must recognize that any public safety and judiciary omnibus bill must include civil rights with the governor's funding proposal for the Department of Human Rights.

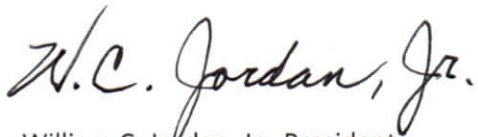
When joint conference committee budget targets are released, we call on the Public Safety and Judiciary Conference Committee to match the governor's funding request for MDHR. We commend the Minnesota House of Representatives for including some added capacity to MDHR's budget in their omnibus bill. The remaining weeks of this session are an opportunity for both the House and the Senate to demonstrate their full commitment to civil rights.

With the eyes of the nation glued on the State of Minnesota in the wake of the recent deaths of unarmed citizens, the US Justice Department auditing our largest police department, and the non-violent civil protests that has sprung up around the world in the wake of the death of

George Floyd, Minnesota needs to set a strong civil rights example. A well-funded MDHR is one of the clearest signals that our state legislature could send at this important juncture in history.

Please accept our sincere apologies for the informality of sending this letter via email; we did feel it warranted given the lateness of the hour. Also, do not hesitate to contact me directly if you have any questions or would like to discuss the particulars of this letter of support with us.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W.C. Jordan, Jr." in a cursive, flowing script.

William C. Jordan, Jr., President  
NAACP Minnesota/Dakotas Area State Conference

Cc: Yusef Mgeni, Vice President and Public Policy Chair, NAACP Minnesota/Dakotas Area State Conference  
Wale Elegbede, President, Rochester Branch NAACP  
Angela Rose Myers, President, Minneapolis Branch NAACP  
Richard Pittman, President, Saint Paul Branch  
Classie Dudley, President, Duluth Branch NAACP  
Maurice Staley, President, Mankato Branch NAACP  
Denise Fale, President, Saint Cloud Branch NAACP