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California Hawaii

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June 29, 2023

The Honorable Senator Bradford
1021 O Street, Suite 7210
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 673 (Bradford) - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Bradford,

On behalf of the California Hawaii State Conference of the NAACP (NAACP CA/HI), representing 57 branches, and 23 youth units statewide, I would like to express our support of Senate Bill 673 (Bradford). SB 673 will authorize a law enforcement agency to request the Department of the California Highway Patrol to activate an "Ebony Alert" concerning Black youth, including young women and girls, who are reported missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances, at risk, developmentally disabled, or cognitively impaired, or who have been abducted. Black women and girls are at increased risk of harm and make up a disproportionate percentage of all missing people. In addition to making up a disproportionate percentage of all missing people and receiving fewer media coverage, Black women and girls are at increased risk of harm.

Missing children have become more publicized in the United States over the past two decades, which has resulted in nearly 98% of these missing children being located. While this is promising, there are severe racial disparities in the statistics of those still missing. According to data from the 2019 United States Census, people who are Black or African American make up 13.4% of the United States population. However, nearly 40% of missing persons are people of color. The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation report on human trafficking also found in a two-year study of human trafficking incidents across the country, 40% of sex trafficking victims were identified as Black women.

NAACP CA/HI's principal objective is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of minority citizens in California and eliminate race prejudice. According to the National Crime Information Center's (NCIC's) Missing Person and Unidentified Person Files for the 2021 operational year, 177,500 Black adults and children were reported missing. One problem with the AMBER Alert system is the strict criteria a case must fulfill for the message to be broadcast. If these guidelines are not met, an AMBER Alert cannot be issued, and the child is labeled a runaway. Because of these criteria, many missing Black children have been pushed aside. Black youth are disproportionately classified as "runaways" compared to their white counterparts, who are classified as "missing" and do not receive the Amber Alert. In cases where the child is mislabeled as a runaway, fewer resources are allotted to their safe return. For these reasons, NAACP CA/HI proudly supports SB 673 (Bradford).

Respectfully,

Taneicia R. Herring

Taneicia R. Herring
Government Relations Specialist

cc: Chair and Members, Assembly Committee on Emergency Management

