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Sponsor Testimony on SB 18

Chair Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 18. This bill would establish Cardiovascular Health Awareness Day during Black History Month on February 14th, and transform the way heart health is perceived in our communities.

The statistics driving this bill are sobering: Black Americans are 30% more likely to die from heart disease than non-Hispanic whites. Behind every statistic is a family, a story, and a future we can change. That's why Senate Bill 18 isn't just another proposal, it's a commitment to our community's health and longevity.

If passed, this bill would align our state's heart health awareness efforts with Valentine's Day, creating a powerful connection between celebrating love and protecting our physical hearts. Let me share some practical ways we can show real love to ourselves and our families:

Just as we monitor our bank accounts, we must also monitor our blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar regularly. These numbers tell the story of our heart health.

Second, we can make movement a celebration, not a chore by starting with just 10 minutes of walking, dancing while cleaning, or taking the stairs. Remember, every step counts toward that goal of 150 minutes of activity per week.

Third, we can transform our plates. Our ancestors knew the value of fresh, wholesome foods. Let's honor that age old wisdom by filling half our plates with vegetables, choosing whole grains, and reducing processed foods.

Fourth, manage stress. In our busy lives, we often forget that mental health affects heart health. Take breaks, get enough sleep, and stay connected with family and community.

Finally, we can promote heart health by scheduling regular check-ups. Preventative medical care isn't a luxury - it's a necessity. Know your family history and the warning signs of heart problems.

By supporting Senate Bill 18, we're not just creating another awareness day - we're proposing a catalyst for change in our communities. We're aiming to write a new chapter in Black history, one healthy heart at a time.

This bill represents more than just a date on the calendar. It represents our commitment to changing the statistics and creating a healthier future for our families, our community, and generations to come. Because love isn't just about the hearts we draw - it's about the hearts beating in our chests.

Together, we can change these statistics. Together, we can write a new story. Together, we can show that real love starts with a healthy heart. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.