

Capital Investment Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
Saint Paul, MN 55155

March 15, 2021

Dear Chairman Lee, Vice Chairwoman Murphy, and Colleagues,

On behalf of Indigenous Roots, I am writing a letter to support Funny Asian Women Kollektive's efforts to build an Asian American Center for Media and the Arts (AACMA). I've known the two of the co-founders of FAWK, Saymoukda Vongsay, May Lee-Yang, and Naomi Ko for over five years and believe that their work individually and collectively as FAWK (Funny Asian Women Kollektive) has been a powerful and positive impact on our AAPI communities and beyond.

As a Co-Founder and Co-Director of Indigenous Roots Cultural Arts Center, I know firsthand the significant importance of culturally relevant and accessible spaces in our neighborhoods, city and state. In just three years, Indigenous Roots has provided thousands of hours in accessible space for artists, organizers, youth and elders to the point where we have had to unfortunately turn folks away sometimes due to availability. For this reason, an Asian American Arts Center on the East Side would greatly meet the high demand for culturally relevant spaces and amplify the voices of AAPI community members.

I think that FAWK's vision to build an Asian American art center will greatly impact the East Side, St. Paul, and Minnesota. The East Side needs more performance, gallery, and studio spaces for artists and for community to gather. An art center would not only benefit the East Side culturally but also economically. This art center would also impact St. Paul and the greater state of Minnesota because there is currently not a centralized hub for Asian American artmaking. This space can be both an incubator of new work and a place where others learn from each other. Lastly, it is more important now than ever to have support community projects that are led by women leaders and leaders of color who are already doing work on the ground.

We fully support FAWK's endeavor toward a new building and hope you do as well.

Sincerely,

Mary Anne Quiroz

