

## *Testimony for the Senate Education Committee*

Senate Bill 2304

Andrew Alexis Varvel

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Chairman Schaible and Members of the Committee:

My name is Andrew Alexis Varvel. I live in Bismarck, District 47.

This bill is well intentioned. The histories of indigenous people of this country ought to be taught in the public schools. The reason why I rise in opposition to this bill is because I do not think this legislation is the best way forward.

This bill constitutes legislative micromanagement of the curriculum, with far too much specificity about what gets taught to children in class.

This bill creates a bad precedent where other political interests may stuff their own four week pet projects into the social studies curriculum.

This bill creates a privileged position of accreditation for federally recognized tribes to control what gets taught throughout North Dakota.

This bill states that there is “the Native American story”, which implies that there would be only one story – as if Arikara and Lakota historiographies of the events of 1823 were identical. Furthermore, the phrase “the Native American story” promotes a segregationist outlook which presumes that there is a discrete entity of “Native American” when the historical record recognizes blurred edges of cultural identity.

This bill does not include a fiscal note to represent expenditure in curriculum development.

Down the road, North Dakota should consider mandating a separate course on North Dakota history to be taught in the seventh grade. Such a course would necessarily include over four weeks of indigenous history, and would follow the lead of the State of Texas.

To sum, please give SB 2304 a **DO NOT PASS** recommendation.

Thank you. I welcome questions from the committee.

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