

Chairman Davison, Vice Chairman Meyer, and members of the Government and Veterans Affairs Committee,

My name is Maura Ferguson and I live in District 18. I am writing this from a personal perspective and not on behalf of either of my employers. I am writing to urge you to issue a "Do Pass" on SB 2316 so that the state of North Dakota will officially recognize First Nation's Day on the second Monday of October each year.

In 2019, I was honored to work with community members in Grand Forks to honor Indigenous People's Day. In all of my years living and working in Grand Forks, I have never seen the council chambers so full as it was that day. The University of North Dakota shortly followed suit, and in the early months of 2020, I testified alongside other caring community members at the Grand Forks School Board, who also voted unanimously to recognize Indigenous People's Day.

This action in Grand Forks has been both a way to foster healing for our Indigenous residents while also educating many on the true history of Indigenous people in our country. As a mother of three children, it was a huge learning experience for them for two reasons. One, they were able to learn more about our **true** history and rightfully honor Indigenous people who were treated so terribly by the colonizers who committed mass genocide against them. Second, they saw firsthand how communities can work together to right past wrongs and intentionally set a pathway for healing moving forward. My third grade son was SO proud of our community on Indigenous People's Day 2020, when I was fortunate to be able to hear him gleefully tell his class how he stood with his community to urge our City Council to make the right decision regarding this important holiday.

We are fortunate to have our state enriched by the Indigenous residents who call North Dakota home. I urge you to issue a "do pass" on SB 2316 to make things right and give respect where respect is due.

Thank you for your time and consideration.