

Testimony in support of SB 2316

Greetings Government and Veterans Affairs Committee Members,

I am submitting written testimony today in support of SB 2316 proposing a date change of First Nations Day as observed in the current North Dakota Century Code. I wish that I could present my testimony directly, but as a teacher my priority is providing instruction to my students.

This bill is about changing the date in the Century Code in the State of North Dakota and I see this is a positive step towards bringing North Dakota in line with other states and cities all around the nation. While we do already honor our Indigenous citizens on First Nations Day, our date is out of sync with the rest of the country, including our neighbors South Dakota and Minnesota. As a college instructor and the daughter of a longtime elementary educator I know the importance of a holiday. Not necessarily because teachers need the break (though often we do), but because holidays mark days of significance--opportunities for learning and growing.

The power of a holiday comes from the unity of recognition. Think of Halloween or Christmas, special days that we in this country and in places all around the globe universally recognize. First Nations Day is not nationwide, or global even (at least not yet), and it is not intended as a replacement for federally recognized holidays. However, unity in celebration is part of respecting and celebrating a holiday properly. The day that states and cities around the country are unifying behind is the second Monday in October. I hope that this committee will recommend that SB 2316 pass and unify North Dakota in our celebration of First Nations Day.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Dunlap

District 32