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March 01, 2023

**NATIVE, Inc.**  
**Testimony in Support of HCR 3022**  
**House Education**

Chairman Heinert and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lorraine Davis. I am the Founder and CEO of two Native American-led community-based organizations called, NATIVE, Inc. and the Native American Development Center.

I stand in support of HCR 3022.

At the start of the 1900s, students in schools began forming student athletic associations. Eventually, school officials across the nation decided they had to either eliminate athletic contests between schools or exercise responsibility and authority for controlling them. The latter was considered more feasible, and the school association was adopted in ND in 1959. It is now, 2023, and it doesn't appear that the North Dakota High School Activities Association (NDHSAA) has exercised its full authority to control these activities.

NDHSAA states its purpose<sup>1</sup> is to contribute to the education of high school boys and girls of North Dakota by:

1. Administering a program of interscholastic activities, clinics, contests, and festivals among its member schools. Elevating the standards of good sportsmanship and encouraging growth in good citizenship, not only of high school students but also of all others who come in contact with the school activities.
2. Protecting member schools, students, and personnel from exploitation by special interest groups.
3. Encouraging pride in scholastic achievement as a fundamental basis for a well-balanced activities program.
4. Supplementing the dramatic, literary, music and physical education programs of the schools and giving due emphasis to those tendencies which promise best to promote the mental and physical health and social well-being of all students.

The NDHSAA Code of Conduct<sup>2</sup> states its purpose is to elevate standards of Good Sportsmanship and to encourage the growth of responsible citizenship among the students, member schools, and their personnel.

<sup>1</sup> North Dakota High School Activities Association Mission Statement. <https://ndhsaa.com/about/mission-statement>

<sup>2</sup> NDHSAA Code of Conduct. <https://ndhsaa.com/administrators-coaches/code-of-conduct>

The NDHSAA Minimal Behavior Expectations for Regular and Post-Season Competitions<sup>3</sup> are as follows:

Contesting schools shall each have an authorized faculty representative present who shall be responsible for his/her school's participants, students, and fans throughout the contest. Spectators must wear clothing that covers the entire torso. Those who do not comply or who wear clothing that is vulgar, obscene or in some other way inappropriate, as determined by school/tournament personnel, will be removed from the facility if they do not cooperate with this behavior expectation. The use of appropriate language is expected at all times. Profanity, negative chants, trash talk, name-calling, personal attacks, or other acts of disrespect are unacceptable and must be immediately addressed by school/tournament administrators. Any attendee ejected from an NDHSAA tournament venue will be banned from the venue(s) for the remainder of the event. Respect the game/contest. Under no condition shall anyone other than the members of the official squad enter the playing surface. No one may interfere with the contest in any way.

I, and any other reasonable person, would expect that the NDHSSA would have the same level of intolerance and expectations toward spectators performing racist behaviors just as seriously as they would with those mentioned in their minimal behavioral expectations. This is personal to me as it is to most, if not all of us, who are parents with ethnic backgrounds. I hope to see to it that our children do not ever have to experience this type of ignorance again. All North Dakotans (and South Dakotans) need to improve accountability standards in societal excellence by expanding worldviews beyond their own. This behavior is deeply embedded into mindsets and within our societal culture from generation to generation. This is a window of opportunity for our leaders to make a moral stance and address an overdue societal issue and adopt a value of morality and accountability standards in societal excellence.

I, respectively, ask this committee to pass HCR 3022 and to consider requiring the NDHSAA, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, and other parties involved to create and implement a policy that creates respect for people of color and their ethnic heritages through professional development requirements for school leaders and staff and through cultural sensitivity education to middle and high school students and their parents through partnerships between public schools and ethnic community-based organizations in hosting community engagement and learning opportunities.

Thank you for your time.

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<sup>3</sup> NDHSAA Behavior Expectations. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vSVI14lt8Vpuwz8i8DCJ-Jmon3faGYelShvvw4oYfJO6js44DmwJAqzbBjOduDTubfwDkAJs4QOnkb2/pub>