

House COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday 03/09/2021

SB #2304

Dosha.

GOOD AFTERNOON, MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE.

MY NAME IS KEN HALL.

I am married. My daughter has been in the public education system within North Dakota, and now in the private education system.

I am a proud member of the Nueta, Hidatsa, Sahnish Peoples, also known as Three Affiliated Tribes. The Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara people.

I want to acknowledge that we are here on the Original Territory of the Great MHA Nation.

I come from a long line of Chiefs and I am the great grandson of Chief Dragswolf, the last Chief of the Hidatsa People. As his descendent I am here to work together, to find solutions together, for our shared futures.

As we evolve as a Community, a State, and a Nation, we are joining in a shared vision for a thriving country that is Building Generational Leaders.

We cannot teach our children “North Dakota Studies” without first teaching our children about the Five Sovereign Tribes of North Dakota, that have occupied these lands for thousands of years. The Original Peoples of the Land. The Host People.

We also cannot teach our children “U.S. History” without teaching our children about the American Indians of this country. The First Nations People. There are currently 574 U.S. Federally recognized Tribes throughout the United States of America.

To quote the late Billy Graham, who was considered America’s Pastor, ***“The American Indians have contributed more to the culture, life, and diet to America than anyone realizes.”***

Another well known Evangelist / Leader said we must try to understand the First People, Recognize the First People, and then get behind the First People.

We are living in changing times and we are standing at the crossroads. Everything has changed. This Bill is not about you or me, it is about our children, our grandchildren, and the generations to come.

This Bill will create an obligation and opportunity for the public and non-public education systems to provide culturally appropriate and accurate information to all students in North Dakota. It’s about all North Dakotans learning about American

Indians, with a particular emphasis on the 5 Sovereign Tribes right here in North Dakota.

According to the National Education Association (2010) more than 93% of American Indian Students attended rural or urban public schools that are off reservation. There have been some improvements in the last 30 years in American Indian Education that should be celebrated. The number of American Indian Students enrolled in college and earning postsecondary degrees has doubled in the last 30 years. (NEA 2010)

There are a few models that exist across our country in particular the state of Washington, Montana, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and New Mexico just to name a few. Montana is a leader in education in many respects.

The Montana Constitution requires a quality education for all Montana citizens and guarantees educational opportunity for all students regardless of their geographical location, economic status, or heritage.

However, Montana is particularly notable across the country for having a constitutional provision that recognizes the rich cultural heritage and vibrant history of American Indians through the educational system. This provision is known as **“Indian Education for All.”**

North Dakota is a population of over 700,000 people and everyone knows each other. We can be a positive model for the rest of the country.

Going forward.

“As North Dakota goes, so goes the Nation.” Pastor Lenny Hernandez.

Let us take our first steps, together, today.

We are a resilient people despite colonization, trauma, poverty, and social injustice, we have successful students, community members, and leaders that are making a difference.

To close, I am asking for your support and your vote to give Senate Bill #2304 a do pass.

Maacagidaac. [Thank you.]

I am prepared to answer any questions?

Ken Hall