

Acknowledgement of harms done is the first step towards a healthier, more equitable future, and I believe this bill is an important step in addressing the generational and ongoing struggles of our state's tribal nations. I am a white person that grew up in the Bismarck Public School system and yet I learned next to nothing about the true history of Indigenous people in our country and in our state. Over this past year, I have spent a significant amount of time educating myself on these issues, and to say I have been horrified is an understatement. Our ancestors' treatment of Native people was selfish and cruel, and we have done next to nothing to acknowledge that. Even more so, North Dakota's reservation communities continue to have a proliferation of violence, particularly against Native girls and women, health and education disparities, food deserts, and so on. These are sovereign nations whose rights are guaranteed in treaty law, yet those rights are often not upheld as we saw in the case of the Dakota Access Pipeline. Our treatment of Native people is a great shame held by our state. This bill will be a vital step in lifting that shame and beginning to acknowledge the harm that has been and continues to be done. More than that, it will offer real solutions and a way for these nations and the state to move forward in a more healthy and equitable relationship. It is important to me personally that I address and seek to rectify the harm done by my ancestors who came to this state that became my beloved home. I hope you join me in doing the same by supporting this bill.