

February 8, 2021

Honorable members of the North Dakota House Human Services Committee,

My name is Adam Fortwengler. I've lived in Grand Forks for nearly 11 years after growing up on the Grand Forks AFB. I'm currently a resident of District 42.

I am writing in strong support of HB 1488, which would create a truth, healing, and reconciliation commission to begin to address the historically and present abusive and traumatic relationship between colonizing forces (e.g., the State of North Dakota) and the five Indigenous nations on whose land we live upon. The commission would provide a platform for individuals, families, and Tribal Nations to testify about the historical and present-day trauma and suffering they've experienced due to the actions and inactions of the state.

It would enter their stories into record and give a voice to the far-too-long ignored. It would study the effects of this trauma and eventually provide the beginnings of actions to address these damages. It could be the first steps to healing, both for Indigenous individuals and communities, and for the relationships between the state and the five Tribal Nations. HB 1488 would also set the stage for an annual peace summit at the International Peace Gardens – a wonderful setting for vital work.

I implore you to listen to the testimony of our Native brothers and sisters today on what a truth, healing, and reconciliation commission would mean and accomplish. It's well past due that we begin addressing our historical injustices perpetrated against Indigenous people and communities in the name and benefit of the State of North Dakota.

Please vote "do pass" on HB 1488. Thank you.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Fortwengler', with a stylized, cursive script.

Adam Fortwengler