

House Bill 1536

Human Services Committee, Rep. Robin Weisz Chairman

Monday, January 23, 2023

Testimony presented by Scott J Davis

Good morning, Chairman Weisz and members of the Committee. My name is Scott Davis, I am the former Executive Director of the ND Indian Affairs Commission. I post I held for 12 years. Today I represent the Turtle Mt. Band of Chippewa here in North Dakota.

The last 10+ years a lot work has been done between the North Dakota Tribes a number of State Agencies. This would include the State Court Systems, The ND Supreme Courts, District Courts and Tribal Courts. Also, various Tribal and State and County agencies have played key roles during that time in making sure the American Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is followed when a court decision is made regarding a Native American Child.

Basically, what this Bill does is secure in State Law the already established legal processes being done in our State Court Systems.

Like many of you in this Committee, I am always against Federal Government overreach when it comes to our State Rights and especially when it comes to the long withstanding relations between our State and Tribes.

The State of North Dakota and the 5 Tribal Nations have done a lot of work in establishing a good system of shared communications, polices and committees that already address ICWA in our State. We do not need the Federal Government to establish another One Size Fits All law that does not fit our State nor our Tribal Nations.

It is important that we continue to build upon an already established process and support HB 1536.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony and I'd be happy to answer any questions.