

Madam Chair/ Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I humbly seek your support of Concurrent Resolution 4002, designating Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere, citizen of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, as Poet Laureate of the State of North Dakota. It is my great honor to speak with you, today.

My name is Dr. Kathy Brock Enger. I am a colleague and friend of Dr. Denise Lajimodiere's. Dr. Lajimodiere and I taught together at North Dakota State University from 2006 to 2011.

I've served the citizens of North Dakota for a total of 15 years, first at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine as a clinical librarian at the Southeast Clinical Campus at the Veterans Administration in Fargo and subsequently at North Dakota State University, first as Social Science Librarian, then as a doctoral advisor and professor in the School of Education.

Both North Dakota State University and The University of North Dakota hold a special place in my heart and Dr. Lajimodiere's. We served as professors at North Dakota State University, and we were also conferred our Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Education -- Educational Leadership -- from the University of North Dakota. I would like to publicly record my gratefulness to the Citizens of North Dakota, today, for employing Dr. Lajimodiere and me at North Dakota State University and for educating us at The University of North Dakota. A special note of gratitude to The University of North Dakota for the National Teacher Corp. program in Belcourt, North Dakota, which graduated American Indian teachers, starting in the 1970s. Dr. Lajimodiere's service to North Dakota began as an educator over 40 years ago. It is fitting that the state would honor her for her long-standing dedication to the State of North Dakota by naming her Poet Laureate of North Dakota.

Most recently, Dr. Lajimodiere has been interviewed by over 100 news organizations worldwide for her acclaimed book, *Stringing Roseries* (2019), which brings to light the atrocities experienced by a generation of Native American children attending boarding schools across the United States.

While Dr. Lajimodiere is a recognized scholar, poetry and art are critically represented through her many books of published poems.

A citizen of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, Denise Lajimodiere is first and foremost a poet. Her poems are beautifully written with compassion,

insight, and a sorrow. Through her work, we come to understand the joy of loving relationships and the deep anguish experienced by beloved family members and friends growing up as Native Americans. Denise sensitively characterizes stories of the Anishinaabe people she loves. Her poetry opens one's heart to the timeless voices of art.

Her published poems are found in the following titles:

*Josie Dances* a children's book published by the Minnesota Historical Society

*His Feathers Were Chains*

*Dragonfly Dance*

*Thunderbird Poems*

*Bitter Tears*

As I read Denise's work, I am brought to tears; yet, experience joy at the same time. As I read, I see the steady light in Denise's eyes and hear her gentle laughter. I see a woman who loves this place and has found refuge at the center of the North American continent.

Denise Lajimodiere is a true artist. Exquisitely museum quality, Denise's birch bark biting art is practiced by few in North America. She reintroduced jingle dancing to Turtle Mountain and has won numerous prizes over her fifty-five years of Pow Wow dancing. The beadwork on her many jingle dresses is her own. I am encouraging Denise to donate her poetry, beadwork, dresses, and birch bark biting to The North Dakota Museum of Art, which will be a true legacy to the State of North Dakota.

This moment is the time to designate Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere as Poet Laureate of North Dakota. It is time. The time is now. This is your legacy. This is your opportunity.

Thank you for your time, for your thoughtfulness, and for your service to the citizens of this Great State.