

## Testimony in Support of House Bill 1545

Honorable Chairman Beltz, and Committee Members, for the record my name Collette Brown, Representative from District 9 which includes the TMBCI and SLT on behalf of Spirit Lake Nation Chairwoman Lonna J. Street

My name is Lonna J. Street, and I am the Chairwoman of the Spirit Lake Nation. I express my strong support for House Bill 1545, which proposes renaming "First Nations Day" to "Indigenous Peoples Day" in North Dakota.

The term "Indigenous Peoples" is widely recognized and encompasses all Native American tribes and communities. Adopting "Indigenous Peoples Day" aligns North Dakota with a growing national movement to honor the rich histories, cultures, and contributions of Indigenous peoples. This change not only acknowledges the diverse Indigenous communities within our state but also promotes inclusivity and respect for all Native peoples.

Across the United States, numerous states and municipalities have transitioned to recognizing "Indigenous Peoples Day" in place of or alongside other observances. This shift reflects a broader commitment to honoring Indigenous histories and addressing past injustices. By adopting this designation, North Dakota joins a collective effort to celebrate and respect Indigenous cultures and contributions.

Within our state, there has been a growing call from tribal citizens and advocates to make this change. Recognizing "Indigenous Peoples Day" resonates deeply with our communities and reflects a commitment to inclusivity and respect for all Native peoples. This change is not merely symbolic; it represents a step toward greater understanding and unity among all residents of North Dakota.

House Bill 1545 presents an opportunity for North Dakota to honor its Indigenous communities appropriately and align with a national movement that recognizes the importance of Indigenous contributions to our society. I urge the committee to support this bill, demonstrating our state's commitment to inclusivity, respect, and the celebration of all its people.

Thank You

Lonna J. Street  
Chairwoman  
Spirit Lake Nation