



# North Dakota House of Representatives

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## COMMITTEES:

Human Services  
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Chairman Heinert, Vice Chair Schreiber-Beck, and Members of the Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to introduce House Bill 1536, a bill that builds upon the work this legislature began with Senate Bill 2304 in 2019. Senate Bill 2304 established the requirement that Native American history be included in North Dakota's K-12 curriculum. It was an important and necessary step in ensuring that our students receive a complete and accurate education. However, as we often see in policy, passing a requirement is only the first step. Implementation requires resources, support, and follow-through. That is what House Bill 1536 seeks to accomplish.

We recognize that our teachers and schools have limited capacity to take on new curriculum mandates without proper support. Teachers must be trained in how to teach Native American history accurately and effectively. Schools must have access to high-quality, state-approved materials that reflect the history, culture, and contributions of North Dakota's Native nations. Without this, Senate Bill 2304 is simply a directive without the infrastructure to make it successful.

House Bill 1536 appropriates \$1.5 million to the Department of Public Instruction to ensure that this curriculum is not just a line in the law but a reality in our classrooms. This funding will be used to:

- Develop and refine curriculum materials in collaboration with tribal leaders, educators, and curriculum experts to ensure accuracy and cultural integrity.
- Provide teacher training so that educators feel prepared and confident in presenting Native American history in an engaging and meaningful way.
- Supply educational resources—textbooks, digital materials, and multimedia tools—to schools across the state, ensuring all districts, including rural and underfunded schools, have what they need to succeed.
- Establish oversight and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the curriculum is implemented consistently and effectively across North Dakota.

This is not about adding new mandates or burdens on schools and teachers. This is about fulfilling the promise we made in 2019—ensuring that when we ask our schools to teach Native American history, they have the tools, training, and resources to do it well. It is essential that all students, Native and non-Native, learn about the history, governance, and contributions of the Indigenous nations who are the first peoples of this land. By providing proper curriculum and training, we eliminate misinformation and gaps in knowledge that have persisted for far too long.

Second, this is about improving educational outcomes. Research shows that when students see their own heritage reflected in the curriculum, they perform better, have higher engagement in school, and are more likely to graduate. This benefits our entire education system and strengthens our workforce by increasing student success.

Third, this is about honoring our commitment as a state. North Dakota is home to five federally recognized tribes, and many Native American students are educated in our public school system. These students deserve an education that recognizes and values their history. But more than that, all North Dakotans benefit from a more complete and accurate education that fosters understanding and unity.

I want to emphasize that this bill is not about rewriting history—it is about teaching the full history. The passage of Senate Bill 2304 in 2019 was bipartisan, passing the Senate with a vote of 44-0 and the House with 76 votes in favor. That overwhelming support showed that North Dakota recognizes the importance of including Native American history in our education system.

Now, we have a responsibility to make good on that decision by giving schools what they need to implement it effectively. It's important that we back our good governance. We have a law on the books, and we must ensure that it is properly funded and executed.

Additionally, this bill is about educational freedom and excellence. It ensures that local schools are not left scrambling to figure out how to comply with the law but are instead given the resources they need to implement this curriculum successfully. It supports teachers by equipping them with the best materials and training available, ensuring they are set up for success rather than being left to navigate this on their own.

Finally, this bill is a smart investment. I know I don't need to tell you but will say it for the record - when we invest in education, we invest in North Dakota's future. Providing a more complete education strengthens our state's workforce, improves community relations, and ensures that our students graduate better informed, better prepared, and better equipped to contribute to society.

Chairman Heinert, Vice Chair Schreiber-Beck, and members of the committee, House Bill 1536 is the natural and necessary next step in fulfilling the intent of Senate Bill 2304. This is about following through on the commitment we made in 2019. This is about supporting teachers, improving education, and ensuring that our students receive the full and accurate history they deserve.

I urge you to vote in favor of HB 1536 so that we can move forward together in strengthening North Dakota's education system.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.