

**Testimony of Robert Bird Horse II**  
**In support of House Bill 1536**

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Robert Bird Horse II. I am an enrolled member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and I spent my K-12 years in the Bismarck Public School system, when there was only one version of history taught. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 1536 and the proposed funding to the Department of Public Instruction for the creation of a K-12 Native American history curriculum. I stand before you today with over a decade of experience in the field of education, five of those years instructing students in my Native American Studies class at Mandan High School.

Through my experience, I can attest that there is a great need for a statewide initiative for Native American History curriculum development, teacher training, and educational resources. In a state like North Dakota, rich with Native American history and culture it is vital that we accurately recognize the tribes that have been here for centuries.

Minnesota's "Indigenous Education for All" and the Oceti Sakowin standards in South Dakota have given ownership of history and curriculum back to the tribes, ensuring that the information is historically and culturally accurate. HB 1536 will help establish a new perspective of Native history in North Dakota, one that empowers both native and non-native students with our tribally centered stories, traditions, values, and history.

Working within the public school system, my colleagues recognize the value and support the need for teacher training and professional development in Native history. This is an area in which educators would benefit from knowing exactly how to integrate Native American history and culture into their curriculum.

Securing adequate funding to develop this curriculum is critical to ensure effective development and implementation. Today's technology offers us a unique opportunity to enhance the delivery of this curriculum and create an upstream solution for rural schools that struggle with lower budgets and limited resources; it will enable teachers to create interactive lessons through access to contemporary indigenous voices, virtual field trips and storytelling to engage learners in innovative ways while building cultural bridges.

I also support the measures outlined in HB 1536 that demonstrate a commitment to transparency, accountability, and collaboration. It takes the collective effort of a community, including educators, families, leaders, and neighbors to shape a child's future and ensure that all learners have the knowledge and support to thrive. Additionally, the regular reporting requirements to legislative management provides essential oversight to

ensure that progress is tracked, feedback is gathered, and the program is refined to meet the needs of students and teachers.

House bill 1536 presents a meaningful step toward honoring the history of Native Americans in North Dakota and ensures all students receive a well-rounded education. I respectfully ask the committee to give this bill a do pass recommendation. Thank you for your time and consideration.