

Good morning, my name is Representative Lisa Finley-DeVillie. I'm testifying in support of House Bill 1252. The creation of the Tribal Health Care Coordination Fund addresses the critical lack of adequate health care services in rural reservations areas. Many tribal communities face significant challenges in accessing necessary care and have to travel to surrounding areas to access the quality care that's needed in sometimes life or death situations. This fund will help close those gaps. By aligning the distribution of funds with federal care coordination agreements, it ensures that these resources are directly tied to the needs of each tribal nation. Additionally, this bill provides tribes with the ability to determine where health care funding is directed, giving each tribal nation the ability to meet the specific needs of their communities.

The bill's requirements for annual reports and independent audits are a safeguard for tracking and reporting of how the funds are used, providing transparency and accountability, ensuring that funds are used effectively to improve health care services. Tribes will be required to submit annual reports detailing the use of the funds and provide an independent audit every two years, with the option to conduct audits more frequently if desired. These measures help ensure responsible management of resources, while still allowing tribes the flexibility to make decisions that best serve their populations.

This bill is a critical step toward improving health care access and outcomes for tribal communities, and I urge the committee to give a do pass on House Bill 1252.