



North Dakota House of Representatives

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Representative Collette Brown

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COMMITTEES:

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February 3, 2025

Chairman Klemin and committee members, for the record my name is Collette Brown, District 9 Representative which encompasses the TMBCI and Spirit Lake Tribes.

Imagine the heart-wrenching fear of discovering that a loved one is missing—the uncertainty, the panic, and the desperate hope for their safe return. Now, imagine facing these emotions with limited resources, inadequate support, and without a system designed to quickly mobilize communities and law enforcement to locate your loved one. This is the reality for many Indigenous families across our nation. But there is a solution: the Feather Alert System.

The Feather Alert System is a critical tool designed to address the disproportionate rates at which Indigenous people, especially women and girls, go missing or are victims of violence. Like the AMBER Alert system used for abducted children, the Feather Alert would rapidly disseminate information through media, highway signs, and digital platforms, enlisting the public's help in locating missing Indigenous individuals.

Consider the success of AMBER and Silver Alerts. These systems have saved countless lives by quickly mobilizing communities. The Feather Alert would do the same, honoring the lives and dignity of Indigenous people while fostering a sense of collective responsibility and awareness.

Opponents may argue about costs or administrative burdens. However, the cost of inaction is far greater measured in lost lives, broken families, and communities left in perpetual grief. Implementing the Feather Alert System is not just a logistical decision; it's a moral responsibility.

I urge you all to support the creation of the Feather Alert System. As a public official and a tribally enrolled member of the Spirit Lake Tribe HB1535 is needed; as ND legislators we have an opportunity to have an effective collaboration between tribal, state, and federal agencies so that we can help all citizens of North Dakota spread awareness and stand in solidarity with our ND Tribes. Together, we can create a society where every missing person matters, every family receives the support they need, and no one is left searching alone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.