



SPIRIT LAKE TRIBE

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February 4, 2025

Testimony in Support of HB 1535 – The Feather Alert System
Chairwoman Lonna Street, Spirit Lake Tribe

Thank you, Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Lonna J. Street, Chairwoman of the Spirit Lake Tribe. I write to you today in strong support of HB 1535, the Feather Alert System.

Too many of our Native people have gone missing, and too many families are left without answers. Right now, Spirit Lake still searches for our missing—Jemini Posey, Isaac Hunt, and others whose names deserve to be spoken. But this isn't just about Spirit Lake. Every one of our surrounding Tribal Nations—Standing Rock, Turtle Mountain, Three Affiliated Tribes, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate—has lost someone. Families across our communities live with the pain of not knowing if their loved ones will ever come home.

When our people go missing, their names may fade from the news, but they never fade from our families and communities. Each day, we continue to search, to hope, to pray. The Feather Alert System is more than an emergency notice—it is action. It means that when a Native person goes missing, law enforcement and communities move quickly, because time can be the difference between bringing someone home or another unsolved case. It means no more families left searching alone, no more waiting for help that comes too late.

We have seen how effective alerts can be. In a recent Silver Alert in North Dakota, young people found the missing elder just in time; much longer, and it may have been too late. We need that same urgency, that same “just-in-time” help for our Native people. This system will make a difference. This system would have made a difference last year with our missing loved ones. However, I write about today. Today, you can choose to play a historic, unprecedented role in making a lasting difference.

Our people have always looked out for one another. We were raised to listen, to act, to protect. This bill follows that teaching. It gives our missing a voice. It gives families hope. It also says you are our neighbors, and you care too.

This is not just policy. It is kindness, support, and respect. It is doing what is right. Passing this bill means standing with Native families, it means being our friends, and it means making sure that no more mothers, fathers, or children are left to wonder if enough was done.

I urge you to pass HB 1535, and I thank you for working with us in bringing hope for our future.

Let's bring our people home.

Lonna J. Street

Chairwoman
Spirit Lake Tribe