

**HB 1369**

**GOOD AFTERNOON, MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE.**

**MY NAME IS KEN HALL.** I am married to Cara Currie-Hall who is in attendance. Our daughter has been in the public education system within North Dakota, and in the private education system.

I am a proud member of the Three Affiliated Tribes. The Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara people.

I want to acknowledge that we are here on the Original Territory of the Great MHA Nation.

**EDUCATING PEOPLE IS A CHALLENGE.** As we evolve as a Community and Nation, we are joining in a shared vision for a thriving country that is building generational leaders.

2020 was an unusual year and it changed everything. What appeared to work in the past no longer exists and our schools had to find new ways to educate our children. Our children had to learn new ways to receive instruction. Parents became an integral part of the team to support the new educating methods and formats. We set up an office with desks, cabinets, chairs and helped create spaces for exercise routines for online Phy Ed classes. We took lunch breaks and time outside [when we were all in lockdown].

**AS A TRIBAL LEADER** we held our discussions in these legislative processes with you, the Legislators, and together we shared our views on appropriation and designation of tax monies.

As you know, we arrived at an "Agreement" on the sharing of Tax Revenues between the MHA Nation and the State of North Dakota in the current Oil and Gas Tax Agreement.

Chairman Mark Fox provided a State of the Tribal Nations Address on January 6, 2021 in the House Chambers. He shared that back in 1999-2000 that the 5 Tribes of North Dakota generated a Positive Impact to on the state's economy which was two billion dollars. In 2012 the Economic Study, MHA Nation generated more than Three Billion Dollars Annually.

As a parent, former Tribal Leader of the MHA Nation, Land and Mineral Owner, Tax Payer in the State, a return on contribution solution could be us creating an "option". An option of where and how we want our children educated.

The MHA Nation is very fortunate and has a rich natural resource that has greatly benefited our people, our Nation and our State. But not everyone receives a monthly royalty in fact about 70% of our enrolled members of the MHA Nation does not receive a dime from the oil activity unless the Tribe gives out distributions.

While serving on the Tribal Business Council we would receive numerous financial requests for the tribe to assist families with children that wanted to attend non-public schools. Many families could not afford the tuition that was necessary for their children to attend a school of their own selection.

As leaders, we must not limit or restrict opportunities, instead, we must create them.

[A HISTORICAL EXAMPLE of legislating one option for an education is the Native Americans.]

**CHIEF DRAGSWOLF**, MY GREAT GRANDFATHER WAS A LEADER OF COURAGE AND BRAVERY. At 6 years old he wanted so badly to be a Warrior that he took his bow and arrow and went hunting. He killed a Wolf and then dragged it back to the village and was parading around. The Elders saw that and named him Dragswolf.

Dragswolf did grow up to be a Great Leader who would successfully lobby in Washington D.C. to fund a Day School on the Reservation, so the children could be with their families. It was the Shell Creek Day School.

We believe that all children are sacred and should have an opportunity to receive a quality education.

IN THE BISMARCK PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM one out of four children come from families that live below the poverty line.

There are over three hundred fifty [350] children that are homeless in the Bismarck community.

SPIRIT LAKE NATION has identified over 30 children that are homeless on their reservation.

We can do better. We must do better.

No child should be left behind.

**HB 1369 is a starting point to bridge the gap.**

**I AM HERE TODAY TO SPEAK IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL 1369.**

History tells us that Chief Dragswolf led a remarkable life, that he was a Warrior taking part in his first warparty at age 12, and a politician who captured the admiration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In 1938 he received a Peace Medal from President Roosevelt.

As his descendent I am here to work together, to find solutions together, for our shared futures.

I support all families to be able to give their children the best possible education and the best opportunity to succeed in a school setting.

They say it takes a village to raise a child and if there ever was a moment for us to work together it is now.

In the Spirit of Partnership and Mutual Respect, let me close with a quote from another great leader, Chief Sitting Bull **“Let put our minds together to see what we can do for our children.”**

I can answer any questions you may have at this time.

Ken Hall