



North Dakota House of Representatives

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COMMITTEES:

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Good morning, Chairman Longmuir, Vice-Chair Fegley and Members of the House Committee on Political Subdivisions. For the record I am Representative Jayme Davis. I work for the people of District 9A in Rolette County which includes the International Peace Gardens, the Turtle Mountain Reservation, and south past the town of Rolette which is where I reside.

It is my absolute honor to help bring to you today, Senate Concurrent Resolution 4002 that would designate Dr. Denise Lajimodiere as Poet Laureate of North Dakota.

Dr. Lajimodiere is an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwe. She is an artist through and through. She is an exquisite painter, quilter, fancy shawl and jingle dress dancer, and has brought back the precontact traditional Ojibwe art of Birch Bark Biting. She is also an Ojibwe and Cree language keeper. With all of those wonderful attributes, what I am here today to speak on is her gift of writing.

Dr. Lajimodiere was born and raised in Belcourt, ND on the Turtle Mountain Reservation up until her family relocated to Oregon when she was 10 years old. It was at this time she began writing poetry and continued through high school. She was first published in the Franklin High School's anthology "The Conceited Scribbler".

Dr. Lajimodiere returned to North Dakota in 1972 to complete her teaching degree at the University of North Dakota and went on to complete her Master and Doctorate degrees from the University of North Dakota.

Some of Dr. Lajimodiere outstanding credits and accomplishments include:

- Being named the Decree Associate Poet Laureate by North Dakota poet Laureate, Larry Woiwode
 - Mr. Woiwode once said, "Denise was one of my fastest-moving students I've had in my thirty years of conducting poetry workshops. Once she found the fountainhead of form, essential to all of life, her poetry came alive and every week she had a new and better poem. It's no surprise she has an excellent book published."
- Is the editor of the Turtle Mountain Teen Writers book of poetry titled "Heart of the Turtle"
- Has had four books of poetry published
 - *Dragonfly Dance*
 - *His Feathers Were Chains*
 - *Bitter Tears*
 - *Thunderbird*
- Published a children's book called *Josie Dances*

- Has had a widely renowned book published called *Stringing Rosaries: The History, The Unforgivable, and the Healing of Northern Plains American Indian boarding School Survivors*. Which you may see referenced during a television show this fall.

Dr. Lajimodiere published works have received the North Dakota State Library Association Notable Documents Award, Independent Book Publishers Benjamin Franklin Award, Independent Press Award, and Midwest Book Award.

Dr. Lajimodiere was the invited poet along with the National Poet Laureate, Joy Harjo for the National Endowment for the Arts Big Read Program, which is a partnership between the National Endowment of the Arts and Arts Midwest.

Today, Dr. Lajimodiere is being requested from all corners of the nation as the lead expert on American Indian boarding schools and has given numerous television, radio, podcasts interviews and has been the keynote speaker at a number of conferences. Including as a guest Lecture at Verizon, National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts, National Native American Boarding School Healing Conference, Northern Great Plains History Conference, and the Midwest Law Enforcement Administrative Support Conference.

It is for all these accomplishments and more that I request a DO PASS on Senate Concurrent Resolution 4002 that would designate Dr. Denise Lajimodiere as the Poet Laurate of North Dakota.

With that I stand for questions

Miigwech, Philamayayapi, Thank you.