

Legislative Testimony for the Parents of Renzo Bull Head in Support of HB 1535

[Introduction]

Good morning, esteemed members of the committee. My name is Roxy Leaf, and I stand before you today as the mother of Renzo Bull Head, an enrolled member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. As you may know, Renzo has been missing since March 16, and we have been tirelessly searching for him. We are here today to express our unwavering support for HB 1535 and to advocate for a system that can potentially save lives like Renzo's.

[Personal Impact]

As a family, we are in the midst of a nightmare. Renzo is not just a statistic; he is a son, a brother, a fiancé, and a friend. He is a dedicated college student, pursuing a welding degree and contemplating a career in the military, inspired by our family's longstanding tradition of service. With over 68 individuals reported missing in North Dakota—and ¹⁴ of them being Indigenous—this is not just our family's tragedy; it is a community crisis.

The current reality is that when Indigenous people go missing, it often takes too long for alerts to be issued, resulting in lost opportunities for timely intervention. With the Feather Alert notice system outlined in HB 1535, we could have activated an alert the moment Renzo was reported missing. This legislation represents hope—not only for our family but for countless families who may find themselves in similar situations.

[Talking Points Supporting HB 1535]

1. Timely Alerts Can Save Lives: The proposed Feather Alert system will use existing emergency alert channels to broadcast information about missing Indigenous individuals quickly. Prompt activation can significantly increase the chances of recovery and reunification.

2. Community Involvement: This bill underscores the importance of community engagement and support. The requirement for local, tribal, and state resources to work together creates a united front in search efforts, bolstering trust between law enforcement and Indigenous communities.

3. Culturally Relevant Responses: The bill ensures that alerts can be issued in Indigenous languages when necessary, which is crucial for effective communication within our communities. It respects our cultural heritage and acknowledges our unique needs.

4. Data-Driven Monitoring: The establishment of an annual reporting system will enable us to track the effectiveness of the Feather Alert system. This data will be invaluable in refining our response strategies and ensuring that no family experiences the agony of a delayed alert.

5. Advocacy and Education: The Indian affairs commission's role as a liaison will foster better communication between tribal and state agencies. It will also provide ongoing public education about the Feather Alert system, ensuring that communities are well-informed and prepared.

****[Call to Action]****

To the members of this committee, we ask you to support HB 1535—not just for Renzo, but for all the families who are waiting for news of their loved ones. Let us work together to create a safer North Dakota for everyone, especially for our Indigenous communities who are disproportionately affected by violence and abduction.

We have seen an incredible outpouring of support from volunteers and community members who have come together to search for Renzo. This spirit of unity is what we need to channel into legislative action.

[Conclusion]

In closing, I want to express my sincerest gratitude for your time and attention today. HB 1535 represents more than just a legislative act; it embodies our hope for a system that honors our loved ones, provides timely assistance, and brings families back together.

May we find strength in collaboration and compassion in our efforts. Thank you.

ALERT: MISSING RELATIVE



NAME: RENZO BULLHEAD
AGE: 20
HEIGHT: 5'11"
WEIGHT: 180
HAIR/EYES: BLACK/BROWN
LAST SEEN: By the railroad bridge on the Bismarck side, along the Missouri River
WEARING: Black and grey plaid pajama pants, black hoodie, and black puffer jacket



IF YOU HAVE SEEN RENZO OR HAVE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT HIS WHEREABOUTS, PLEASE CONTACT:

Diedra Leaf
605-581-8424

Delane Blue Thunder
605-314-6425

Mandan Police Department
701-667-3250 (Case #25000954)

Please also contact Diedra or Delane if you would like to be of any assistance in an on-the-ground search.

