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House State and Local Government Finance and Policy Committee

Dear Chair Klevorn and Members,

HF3431, in part, adds language to Statute 307.08 addressing human remains. I oppose this language as it limits State offices that must retain authority to choose the most qualified professionals until investigation confirms identity and initiates federal involvement.

HF3431 amends 2023 legislation to statute 307.08 by adding language (introduction HF3431 Section 4. MN Statutes Supplement, section 307.08, subdivision 3a):

If probable American Indian cemeteries are to be disturbed or probable American Indian remains analyzed, the Indian Affairs Council must approve the professional archaeologist, qualified anthropologist, or other appropriate expert.

Requiring approval from the MN Indian Affairs Council removes State employee judgement and best practices. The State would also be without remedy for licensed professionals who are banned for scientific discoveries or reports that do not coincide with Indigenous claims.

The proposed language does not define “probable” and creates controversy.

This amendment removes State protection and control to investigate discoveries of mass violence victim graves; victims of Euro-American and biracial (European and Indigenous) descent who were killed between 1862 and 1865 in several counties: Blue Earth, Brown, Clay, Cottonwood, Douglas, Grant, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac Qui Parle, McLeod, Meeker, Murray, Nicollet, Ottertail, Pope, Redwood, Renville, Stearns, Swift, Watonwan, Wilkin, Wright, Yellow Medicine.

No Minnesota law protects non-Indigenous mass violence victim remains. An estimated 400 individuals are still unaccounted for as a result of the 1862 Massacre and War. Their remains have not been discovered.

Thank you,

Stephanie Chappell