

Boozhoo, my name is: Great-grandmother Mary Lyons
I am an enrollee of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

I support Bill _____ Indigenous People Day

It has been overdue in recognizing this day, not only for the indigenous peoples of Minnesota but for all people. Many of our young people are coming together in unity for the waters, air and other environmental issues. What is important is the history of these lands and the original peoples. By crossing these barriers and helping the non-indigenous people better understand the original people's values and traditional/cultural foundations, we would better understand Minnesota as a community.

We can no longer be a separate community looking in from the outside as Minnesota has 11 Tribal Reservations and a wealth of economical contributions through employment via our Casino and conference centers, not to mention our hotels, etc. Our population of tribal people are in the government offices as we have the first Lt. Governor and a large number of Senators and Representatives compared to other States.

By having this day of celebration, we can help educate the non-indigenous peoples about the true history of Minnesota and platform a true historical collaboration with the educational systems about who we really are. We can unite a cultural barrier that has been long overdue.

Being native here in Minnesota and an elder, we were never allowed to plain just be ourselves, we should not have to fight to be heard, yet, to this very day we still do. By declaring this day, we would be not only solving many cultural barriers but we can be building bridges for our future young people. Knowledge is not only power, it can also be a cultural divide, we want to lessen this by introducing celebrations that invite all peoples to learn the original people's history.

Our schools would benefit from this acknowledgement, the educators would be held accountable for correcting a falseness that has been going on for so long. We are not Indians, Columbus was to go to India and they got lost. When they see us, they thought they were at the destination they set out to. We are natives of this land, we have history and our truths have been hidden for much too long. There is so much to learn from us and we would like to share in our history the true history.

Please pass this Bill and witness the positive values of how all Minnesotans would benefit from our history.

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