



**PISCATAWAY  
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**Written testimony of Chief Jesse James Swann Jr., HB0179: Indigenous Peoples' Day - Rule of Interpretation and Replacement of Columbus Day.**

Position: Favorable Support.

Name:

Chief Jesse James Swann Jr, Beaver Clan of the Piscataway Conoy, Direct Descendant of Wannas.

March 12, 2024.

As Chief of the Piscataway Conoy Tribe and direct descendant of Wannas, the Piscataway Chief who first encountered European settlers, I am in full support of HB0179: Indigenous Peoples' Day - Rule of Interpretation and Replacement of Columbus Day.

Many do not grasp the importance of changing Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day, but as the Piscataway Conoy Chief and a Tribal Citizen, it's ending a yearly reminder that bears no true relation to the past and ongoing history of Indigenous peoples, except for a lack of choice.

Columbus mistakenly sailed around the ocean blue in 1492, fueled with greed that led to him to exploit, kidnap, torture, rape, and murder our Indigenous brothers and sisters to the south, with that later news spreading solely of where Europe can continue competing against each other; yet here we are now, half a millennia later, considering which context or narrative is of greater importance to be told. The principle of celebrating this one man's temporary reign of terror is completely illogical, and in no way shape or form, something to be revered - not to mention,



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Columbus barely came close to setting foot through the mainland United States, nor met tribal nations anywhere close to where Maryland came to be.

I look at this bill as an opportunity to help spread a better understanding of Indigenous People within the State of Maryland and across Turtle Island, to help us reclaim part of our identities, and to help accurately celebrate our presence in the context of being Indigenous Peoples with lineages dating long before Christopher Columbus' misadventure and the subsequent hardships that each tribal nation has had to endure.

For me, this reinterpretation bears an ancestral, historical, and contemporary value to our tribal community; I believe the rich history, culture, and contributions to our ancestral lands that are now respectively part of Maryland, should be fully acknowledged and can be partially done so through the observance of Indigenous Peoples Day.

On behalf of the Piscataway Conoy Tribal Community, we will look forward to Maryland becoming more of a place to celebrate culture, inclusivity, and ongoing stories of success, that is reflective of everyone, with the continued hope for the Maryland Governing Body, its elected officials, and all constituents, to properly recognize the rights of tribal sovereignty, treaties, leadership, knowledge, history traditions, culture, and our existence.