



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6502

March 12, 2024

The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Chair
The Honorable Bonnie L. Cullison, Vice Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 179, which proposes establishing Indigenous People's Day. Our country was founded on a promise of equality and opportunity for everyone. However, despite our significant progress over the years, we have never fully lived up to that promise. This is particularly true when it comes to upholding the rights and dignity of the Indigenous people who inhabited this land long before the colonization of the Americas began.

Indigenous peoples have made significant contributions throughout history, including in public service, entrepreneurship, scholarship, the arts, and many other fields. They are an integral part of our nation, culture, and society. Indigenous peoples have served and continue to serve in the United States Armed Forces with distinction and honor at one of the highest rates of any group. They defend our security every day.

Finally, public opinion of Christopher Columbus has been steadily changing, and perhaps he should no longer be recognized as a historical figure who should be celebrated. Given his documented history of crimes, including displacement, kidnapping, and exploitation, we could better use this day to honor the strength of the Indigenous peoples who endured his abuses and celebrate their contributions to our shared history.

For this reason and many more, I sincerely hope the General Assembly will support House Bill 179 during the current legislative session. I appreciate your full and fair consideration of my support on this matter, and thank you for your service to the State of Maryland. With kindest regards, I am,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steny Hoyer".

STENY H. HOYER