



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 12, 2020

Honorable Chair, Shane E. Pendergrass

Vice-Chair, Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk

Members of the Health and Government Operations

**Re:** HB895 Indigenous Peoples' Day - Rule of Interpretation and Replacement of Columbus Day

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It's an honor to be able to sponsor and introduce HB895 Indigenous Peoples' Day. This bill will abolish the observance of Columbus Day on October 12th by celebrating and commemorating the true history of Native Americans. Christopher Columbus did not discover America, as one cannot discover something that was already inhabited. He was actually our first known human trafficker as he brought Native Americans back to Spain. For decades it has been documented that Christopher Columbus was an abuser and oppressor of indigenous people. Columbus's brutality was notorious even amongst his contemporaries. Devoting a holiday to a man who caused so much intentional harm to indigenous populations doesn't reflect our values. This nation was already inhabited by Native Americans who valued and protected their family, land, and culture. Unfortunately, Indigenous children, as well as all of our children, are being raised with a false sense of history and celebrating Christopher Columbus, the person who set in motion the genocide of a people.

H895 is a step towards telling the truth of our history. The impact of Indigenous peoples' perseverance is evident throughout Maryland's history. Jurisdictions such as Baltimore City and Prince George's County have already made this change. Michigan, Wisconsin and most notably Washington D.C. have recently changed the October holiday to "Indigenous Peoples' Day". Along with Vermont, Maine, New Mexico, Alaska, South Dakota, Oregon, Hawaii, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Iowa. We must ensure Indigenous communities are respected, recognized

and honored for their contributions. Please join me in supporting our Indigenous communities by providing HB895 with a **favorable** report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wanika Fisher". The ink is dark and the signature is centered below the word "Sincerely,".

Wanika B. Fisher Esq.  
Maryland State Delegate – District 47B