

March 12, 2020

To the Members of Health and Government Operations:

Testimony in full support of Indigenous Peoples' Day - Rule of Interpretation and Replacement of Columbus Day – House Bill 895

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to address this important issue. And a special thanks to the Delegates for having the forethought to make this change. It is not always easy to take on racial issues especially with so many people in our society having been brainwashed through teachings in schools, etc., to say or to believe that Christopher Columbus discovered America. There is no difference between this issue and the people believing that the name of the Washington, DC football team is ok...it is not ok. The term sensitivity is always being used by other demographics who are not affected by this issue.

It is imperative that this body recognize and correct the racism of my People especially here in the State of Maryland.

In Maryland we are known as “People who live where waters blend below the rapids”, or the Piscataway-Conoy Chiefdom.

A few other states have already done this – two in particular, the great states of California and South Dakota – celebrate this day as a non-working holiday. We, Native Americans, still persist. And for Maryland to acknowledge their first citizens will go a long way in correcting the many wrongs brought upon Indigenous People who have lost much are worthy of acknowledgement by proclaiming “Maryland Indigenous Peoples' Day”.

Our People thank you,

Barry Wilson  
Speaker, Choptico Band