

Written Testimony for Maryland Indigenous Peoples Day Bill, House Bill 895

March 12, 2020

Indigenous Peoples Day is more than a day on the calendar. It is an opportunity to educate others about people with deep and complex cultures and traditions. Indigenous Peoples Day is about how we create positive change, while contextualizing and correcting the fallacies of history most adults received in school systems across the United States.

Indigenous Peoples Day does not aim to take away from Italian communities. Instead, it offers a space of community and healing. This very space welcomes all, unlike the heroic and imperialistic rhetoric often used to characterize Christopher Columbus.

Indigenous Peoples Day shows support for vulnerable populations, including Indigenous children. Indigenous children are sacred and need support in order to grow and thrive. Indigenous Peoples Day creates a space of healing for the month of October, which is very much needed as painful holidays like Thanksgiving approach.

Maryland citizens, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, benefit from Indigenous Peoples Day in the same ways that all people benefit from learning about diverse life experiences and understanding how to interact in these spaces.

Please do the right thing and vote for this bill.

Sarah Stern, Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma

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