

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

March 12, 2020

I write to you all today to express my support for the House Bill 895 in support of Indigenous People Day. Native Americans have worked tirelessly across this nation to abolish Columbus Day. There are currently 13 states/districts and over 100 cities that recognize Indigenous Peoples Day across the United States. This movement has allowed for some Natives to feel a sense of healing from hundreds of years of celebrating a man that did not discover a “new land”, but rather murdered and raped the people of this land.

Every year, we, Natives, are subject to seeing people idolize the life of someone who committed such awful acts. We see businesses running sales, for 50% off furniture for Columbus Day, but what’s truly hurtful is seeing a government that is supposed to represent you rejoice over having a day off celebrating a man that did so much harm to so many people.

Making the change to Indigenous Peoples Day, is simply the right thing to do. It allows people to not be forced to “celebrate” someone with such an evil past, as a hero. Instead people will be able take the opportunity to learn more about Native Americans, past and present, while still having the day off.

My name is Jessica Dickerson, I am an enrolled member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina and a Maryland resident. I sincerely hope that this bill is passed and continues to lead the way to changing Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day statewide.

Thank you for your time,

Jessica Dickerson