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DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Economic Matters Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 15, 2023

Testimony of Delegate Marlon Amprey in support of HB 446 Indigenous Peoples' Day - Rule of Interpretation and Replacement of Columbus Day

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

Christopher Columbus is often recognized as discovering America when he sailed from Spain to the Bahamas in 1492. However, Indigenous populations had been inhabiting the Americas for at least 15,000 years prior to his arrival. Columbus's "discovery" initiated an era of colonialism in which Natives endured violent pillaging, raping, displacement, and the spread of deadly disease.

Indigenous populations continue to suffer from the impact of this violent era today. For instance, Native Americans are often referred to as the "forgotten people" because they are so severely underfunded and neglected. Accordingly, they have some of the worst health outcomes in the nation; however, it is impossible to understand how extreme the disparities are between Indigenous people and the rest of the United States because of the lack of research on this population.

Every year on October 9th, Marylanders honor Christopher Columbus. Rather than glorifying this period in American history, Maryland should join the 17 states and the District of Columbia in acknowledging the harm caused by colonization and honoring the history and culture of Indigenous peoples. While we cannot change history, we can take the steps necessary to recognize this population's resilience in order to build a more equitable society.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on House Bill 446.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marlon Amprey".

Delegate Marlon Amprey
40th Legislative District of Maryland