

RESOLUTION OF THE  
NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' STANDING COMMITTEE  
25<sup>th</sup> NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL -- First Year, 2023

AN ACTION RELATING TO THE NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEE; SUPPORTING UNITED STATES SENATE BILL 2970 AND HOUSE RESOLUTION 5822, REPLACING COLUMBUS DAY WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY

WHEREAS:

- A. The Navajo Nation Council, as the governing body of the Navajo Nation, pursuant to 2 N.N.C. § 102(A), is entrusted with the responsibility to safeguard the interests, rights, and traditions of the Navajo People.
- B. The Navajo Nation Council established the Naabik'íyáti' Committee, pursuant to 2 N.N.C. §§ 700(A), 701(A)(6), and empowered the Naabik'íyáti' Committee to coordinate and facilitate communication regarding proposed county, state, and federal legislation impacting the Navajo Nation.
- C. The Navajo Nation maintains a government-to-government relationship with the United States, underscoring the sovereign rights and the autonomy of the Navajo Nation within the framework of U.S. law.
- D. Columbus Day was established in 1937, when U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed legislation declaring the second Monday in October a federal holiday. This holiday was named in honor of Christopher Columbus, a figure controversially credited with 'discovering' the Americas. This narrative overlooks the diverse and complex societies that had flourished in the Americas for thousands of years prior to Columbus' arrival.
- E. The Navajo Nation has previously honored Indigenous Peoples' Day on the second Monday of October to celebrate the resilience, cultural richness, and enduring spirit of Indigenous people, including the Navajo People. This recognition serves as a powerful counterpoint to the colonialist narrative embodied by Columbus Day.
- F. The Navajo Nation deems it necessary to oppose the observance of Columbus Day as it symbolizes the colonialism, injustices, and atrocities inflicted on Indigenous peoples. The celebration of Columbus Day erases the history of Indigenous peoples who were the original inhabitants of the Americas,

obscuring their historical and contemporary contributions to society.

- G. Indigenous communities across the Americas have weathered the storms of colonization, forced assimilation, disease, and genocide, yet have endured and continue to advocate for recognition, justice, and sovereignty. The replacement of Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day is a crucial step in acknowledging these historical realities and fostering reconciliation.
- H. The transition from Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day will instill pride among young Indigenous people about their heritage, fostering a greater sense of identity and connection to their ancestors.
- I. In 2021, President Joseph R. Biden became the first U.S. President to formally commemorate Indigenous Peoples' Day, reflecting a shift in national consciousness towards a more inclusive understanding of American history.
- J. In October of 2023, U.S. Senators Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) and Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.) and U.S. Representative Norma Torres (D-Calif.) re-introduced legislation to replace the official holiday recognized on the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples' Day through House Resolution 5822, **Exhibit A**, and Senate Resolution 2970, **Exhibit B**.
- K. On September 20, 2023, Navajo Nation President Dr. Buu Nygren formally extended support for the proposed federal legislations, recognizing that replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day would honor the tenacity and resilience of the original inhabitants, and celebrate the indigenous peoples, cultures, and languages that have played an integral role in shaping the American experience, attached as **Exhibit C**.
- L. For the reason stated above, it is in the best interest of the Navajo Nation to support the designation of Indigenous Peoples' Day as a legal public holiday, replacing Columbus Day, to honor Indigenous peoples' resilience, strength, and the significant contributions they have made to American history and society.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:**

- A. The Navajo Nation Council hereby supports House Resolution 5822 and Senate Resolution 2970, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to designate Indigenous Peoples' Day as a legal

public holiday, replacing the term "Columbus Day" with the term "Indigenous Peoples' Day," and for other purposes.

- B. The Navajo Nation Council hereby authorizes the Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council, the President of the Navajo Nation, and their designees, to advocate in favor of House Resolution 5822 and Senate Bill S. 2970 and to represent the Navajo Nation's support for this transformative and long-overdue legislation.

**CERTIFICATION**

I, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly considered by the Naabik'íyáti' Committee of the 25<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council at a duly called meeting in Window Rock, Navajo Nation (Arizona), at which a quorum was present and that the same was passed by a vote of 19 in Favor, and 00 Opposed, on this 12<sup>th</sup> day of October 2023.



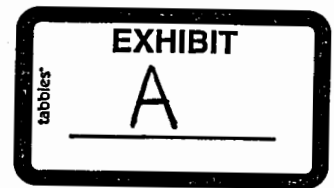
Honorable Crystalyne Curley, Chairwoman  
Naabik'íyáti' Committee

10/17/23

Date

Motion: Honorable Vince R. James  
Second: Honorable Curtis Yanito

Chairwoman Crystalyne Curley not voting



[117II5473]

.....  
(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To designate Indigenous Peoples' Day as a legal public holiday and replace the term "Columbus Day" with the term "Indigenous Peoples' Day", and for other purposes.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Mrs. TORRES of California introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**A BILL**

To designate Indigenous Peoples' Day as a legal public holiday and replace the term "Columbus Day" with the term "Indigenous Peoples' Day", and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the "Indigenous Peoples'  
5       Day Act".

1 **SEC. 2. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY AS A LEGAL PUBLIC**  
2 **HOLIDAY.**

3 Section 6103(a) of title 5, United States Code, is  
4 amended by striking the item relating to Columbus Day  
5 and inserting the following:

6 “Indigenous Peoples’ Day, the second Monday  
7 in October.”.

8 **SEC. 3. TERM “COLUMBUS DAY” REPLACED.**

9 Any reference to “Columbus Day” in any law, rule,  
10 regulation, or other official paper in effect as of the date  
11 of the enactment of this Act shall be deemed to be a ref-  
12 erence to “Indigenous Peoples’ Day”.

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To amend title 5, United States Code, to designate Indigenous Peoples' Day as a legal public holiday, to replace the term "Columbus Day" with the term "Indigenous Peoples' Day", and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

\_\_\_\_\_, (legislative day, \_\_\_\_\_), \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. HEINRICH (for himself, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. SMITH, Mr. KAINE, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. SCHLITZ, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. SANDERS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To amend title 5, United States Code, to designate Indigenous Peoples' Day as a legal public holiday, to replace the term "Columbus Day" with the term "Indigenous Peoples' Day", and for other purposes.

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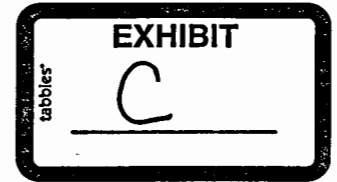


**The Navajo Nation** **DR. BUU NYGREN** *PRESIDENT*  
**Yideeskáądi Nitsáhákees** **RICHELLE MONTOYA** *VICE PRESIDENT*

Transmitted via e-mail: [sylvia.ruelay@mail.house.gov](mailto:sylvia.ruelay@mail.house.gov)

September 20, 2023

The Honorable Norma J. Torres  
United States House of Representatives  
2227 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515



**Re: Support for Legislation to Replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day**

Dear Representative Torres,

The Navajo Nation ("Nation") wishes to formally extend its support for your proposed legislation to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day. Our Nation, in solidarity with other tribal nations, has long held reservations regarding the celebration of Christopher Columbus, primarily due to the historical inaccuracies associated with his voyage and the subsequent devastation inflicted upon indigenous people and their lands. This damage, still very much present, has yet to be fully acknowledged or addressed, and continues to compound the challenges faced by tribal nations.

The notion that Columbus or his predecessors "discovered" America is a significant distortion of history. Indigenous peoples had thrived in the Western Hemisphere for thousands of years prior to Columbus' arrival. The conquest that began with Columbus led to the decimation of over 90% of the indigenous population, as well as the extinction of many rich cultures and languages. Columbus and his men directly enslaved, mutilated, and murdered thousands of the Carib and Taino people. Celebrating him as the "discoverer" of the Americas disregards the immense suffering indigenous peoples endured and the profound losses they sustained.

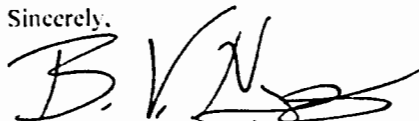
The persistence of misconceptions and discrimination against Native tribes in today's society further underscores the need for a fundamental shift in our narrative. The current portrayal distorts the reality that this land was home to a diverse array of advanced cultures and governing systems that were comparable to, if not exceeding, the European cultures of their time. Despite enduring centuries of suffering, devastation, termination eras, and relocation acts, we persist. We are still here.

In light of this, it seems only fitting that a day be federally recognized to honor the tenacity and resilience of the original inhabitants of this land. Indigenous Peoples' Day would not only serve as a day of remembrance for the indigenous peoples, cultures, and languages that have played an integral role in shaping the American experience, but also as a testament to our enduring presence and contribution to the Americas. It would be a day where we stand side by side, not only as fellow citizens, but as acknowledged contributors to the identity of this nation.

We are hopeful that Indigenous Peoples' Day will be a day for all indigenous peoples to remember their roots and contributions to America. We extend our gratitude for the opportunity to express our views on this vital legislation and look forward to engaging with your office in the future.

Should you or your staff have any inquiries, please contact Mr. Justin Ahasteen, Executive Director of the Navajo Nation Washington Office, at (202) 682-7390 or by email at [jahasteen@nnwo.org](mailto:jahasteen@nnwo.org). *Ahíhe'e'* (Thank you).

Sincerely,

  
Dr. Buu Nygren, *President*  
THE NAVAJO NATION

NAVAJO NATION

Naa'bik'iyati' Committee Regular Meeting

10/12/2023  
11:41:26 AM

Amd# to Amd#	New Business: [CONSENT AGENDA]	PASSED
MOT James, V	0226-23;0229-23;0233-23;0237-23	
SEC Yanito, C	0216-23;0220-23;0225-23;0228-23	
	0235-23;0236-23;0202-23. . . .	

Yeas : 19	Nays : 0	Excused : 3	Not Voting : 1
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Yea : 19

Arviso, S	Claw, S	Nez, R	Tolth, G
Aseret, L	Crotty, A	Notah, N	Tso, O
Begay, H	James, V	Simonson, G	Yanito, C
Begay, N	Johnson, C	Simpson, D	Yazzie, C
Charles-Newton, E	Nez, A	Slater, C	

Nay : 0

Excused : 3

Daniels, H	Parrish, S	Jesus, B
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Not Voting : 1

Damon, S

Presiding Speaker: Curley, C