

To: House Federal and State Affairs Committee, Representative John Barker, Chairman
From: Carole Cadue-Blackwood, an enrolled member of the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas
and a Lawrence, Kansas Resident

Date: February 1, 2018

Re: HB 2498- Native American Regalia

Good morning Chairman Barker and Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to present written testimony in support of HB-2498. My name is Carole Cadue-Blackwood and I reside in Lawrence, KS. I am an enrolled member of the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas and a mother of three children who are enrolled members of the Kickapoo Tribe as well. I am a longtime resident of Lawrence, Kansas where my two youngest daughters attend Lawrence public schools.

I am here today to address the “quiet crisis” faced by our Native American students. Native Americans have the highest high school drop out rate among all ethnicities.

As parents we love and have concern for all our youth and our future. Our youth is our tomorrow. In published reports and most notably in the *Gannon v. Kansas Supreme Court* decision, students of color in our schools are at the lowest in achievement scores in all categories. The decision goes on to cite the disparity of unmet education needs in our racial groups, i.e., African American, Hispanic, and Native American students. The high school dropout rates mirror the findings of the Kansas Supreme Court decision.

In the recent *Gannon v. Kansas* decision, the Rose Standards were cited and pointed out the unconstitutional and disparate unmet education needs of students of color; African American, Hispanic, and Native American students. I specifically cite the number five (5) capacity of the Rose standards: *(v) efficient grounding in the arts to enable each student to appreciate his or her cultural and historical heritage.*

As parents we love and care for our children and strive to provide for the successful futures as any other loving and caring parent. We strive to support our children to the greatest extent of our available resources. The very act of bestowing an eagle feather or decorating a child’s mortar board is not just for decoration.

HB-2498 will allow Native American students to wear traditional regalia and objects of cultural significance. This includes feathers and beadwork at graduation ceremonies. Graduation ceremonies are a huge milestone for anyone, but more so for Native students. The very act of wearing regalia allows Native students to showcase and take pride in Native American culture and serve as role models for younger generations.

I cannot speak on behalf of all 567 federally recognized tribes. However, in my tribe, for time immemorial, eagle feathers are given in times of great honor. A graduate brings honor to his or her family, community, their tribal nation, and all Natives.

In conclusion, I thank you and my grandchildren who are not born yet thank you. We humbly ask for you to support HB-2498.

Miigwetch. Thank you.

Carole Cadue-Blackwood