

To: Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee, Senator Bud Estes, Chairman

**From: Georgia Blackwood, an enrolled member of the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas and a
Lawrence, Kansas Resident**

Date: March 2, 2018

Re: HB 2498- Native American Regalia

Good morning Chairman Estes and Members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to present written testimony in support of House Bill-2498. My name is Georgia Blackwood and I'm an eighth-grader at South Middle School in Lawrence, Kansas. I'm also an enrolled member of the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas.

When I first heard about House Bill-2498, I wondered why and how wearing an eagle feather and regalia is even an issue. I'm lucky enough that I grew up Lawrence, Kansas where we have a large Native American population. It's very common for Native Americans to "wear their best" at graduation and aunties can highlight their talents for beadwork or sewing. I look forward to graduating and wearing my eagle feather on my mortar board without worrying about someone telling me I can't participate in graduation ceremonies if I'm not dressed like everyone else.

While I plan on graduating from Lawrence High School, I wonder if my children will be allowed to wear a feather or regalia if I move away from Lawrence. I shouldn't have to worry about leaving Lawrence and wonder if the town I move to has policies against restricting Native American cultural beliefs and practices. I would hope that the State of Kansas will help protect future generations of your Native American students.

I took a field trip with my civics class to the Haskell Cultural Center and Museum and learned a lot about boarding school history and the evolution of Haskell Indian Nations University. I believe that the legislators should take a field trip there as well.

Miigwetch. Thank you for your time.

Georgia Blackwood