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JOINT COMMITTEE ON STATE-TRIBAL  
RELATIONS

LESLIE G. OSTERMAN  
97TH DISTRICT

February 1, 2018

**To: Representative John Barker, Chairman  
Representative Ron Highland, Vice Chair  
Representative Louis Ruiz, Ranking Minority Member  
and members of the House Federal & State Affairs Committee**

I am here today to testify on **HB 2498**. This bill would allow Native Americans to wear their regalia or objects of cultural significance at a public event.

One of the examples of where they do not allow it is at high school graduations. One of the traditions of the Native American culture is to give the individual an eagle feather. This is given by an elder of the tribe, their grandparents or parents. These are very sacred to the Native Americans and they want to show people how they were honored by their family or elders.

Our culture is very proud. We are trying to teach our children what the various ceremonies mean or stand for. I believe that we have for so long a period suppressed the Native Americans from practicing their culture. There was a time when we were not allowed to dance (Pow Wow), speak our native language, or tell the children the stories that the elders have told for years.

This is one way that we can show people our culture and what things mean to all of us Native Americans. The children are proud of these feathers or regalia. The regalia is made by parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. Each part has a special meaning and they are proud of these items. The regalia also tells a story, such as a hunting trip or a battle. The colors usually represent what tribe you are from.

I ask the committee to pass this bill out.

Please show these children that you care about their culture and support them.

Thank you for hearing this bill and my testimony.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leslie Osterman', written over a horizontal line.

Rep. Leslie Osterman, Chairman  
Veterans & Military Committee