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CHRISTINA HASWOOD, MPH
10TH DISTRICT

January 26, 2021

House Federal and State Affairs Committee
Representative John Barker, Chairman

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 2006, changing Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day. I understand if this bill is a bit uncomfortable as I too recall on my Elementary school days in Lawrence, KS, that we were taught to celebrate this day. Though, why should we make a holiday out of someone who initially did not land in North America? For the past several years, we have known this history to be false and harmful to Indigenous youth who are taught in schools to celebrate that day but taught in our cultural history, the genocide, disease, slavery, and assimilation.

My community, the City of Lawrence, first made this change, to Indigenous Peoples day, in 2015 after the advocacy of Haskell Indian Nations University students. They said this day should be made in celebration of Indigenous resiliency, survival, acknowledgement and healing. Schools in my district, such as Billy Mills Middle School, continue to make efforts to celebrate its history with Indigenous peoples and its Indigenous students. You can see the effort as they changed their previous name to Mr. Mills' name to celebrate his accomplishments. Indigenous students at Lawrence High School have been fierce advocates to their peers and they go out into the community to share their culture and history.

I am a proud alumnus of all the schools mentioned above. I mentioned academic entities from my District because I want to highlight my personal experience and show to the committee the future of Kansas is already leading the way. We must meet them there. I invite the committee to take this step towards healing and truth. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify. I stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Christina Haswood', written over a faint blue line.

Representative Christina Haswood, District 10