

I am an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and a Jefferson County School District 509J School Board Director. The school district is comprised of 34% Native American student population. I am writing in support of this bill that will allow our students to freely express their values in a safe manner. The Native students should not have to continue to justify the reasons for wearing culturally significant items to important events such as high school graduation. In order to continue to support Native students the school districts must recognize the importance of these items to their culture, identity and family. It is also important to note that although Oregon has nine tribes there are many other tribes that reside here. My point is that traditional norms may look different across the 574 federally recognized tribes that may possibly reside in Oregon.

Every year this issue is brought up and it is an equity issue that must be resolved. The Native students that the school districts serve should be allowed to wear culturally significant items at school events. Thank you.