



Teresa Alonso Leon
State Representative

May 4, 2021

Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Girod, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Teresa Alonso Leon, and I am the Representative for House District 22 in Congressional District 5 which incorporates Woodburn through the north part of Salem. I am proud to write to you today as the first Mexican indigenous Legislator in the history of our state, I am a member of the Purepecha community from the state of Michoacan Mexico and a proud Co-Chief Sponsor of House Bill 2526, a bill that give us an opportunity to rethink how we celebrate our state and national history and to formally observe Indigenous People's Day.

For the Native people of this country, Columbus Day has long been hurtful. It negatively impacts and hurts those who are Indigenous. It glorifies the violent history of 500 plus years of colonial oppression at the hands of European explorers and those who settled in the United States and across the Americas — A history which still has ramifications and continues to sustain wounds that run deep for many indigenous communities today.

Indigenous Peoples Day recognizes and honors the beautiful cultures, traditions and lives of Indigenous People around the world. Prior to the arrival of numerous European explorers, including Columbus, Indigenous people were self-sufficient, thriving and successful communities that sustained and created life for thousands of years. Let's remember and celebrate all that indigenous people have done and continue to do.

It's important to note that not only does the state of Oregon collaborate with and officially recognize the state's 9 confederated tribes, it also has the honor of being called home to many other indigenous tribes from across the country who have chosen to live here.

Based on University of Oregon research, there are an estimated 137,076 Oregonians who identify as Indigenous people from Mexico and Central America. The full list of Indigenous languages spoken by Indigenous immigrants in Oregon from Mexico and Guatemala includes: Achi, Akateko, Amuzgo, Chuj, Ixil, Huichol, Jakalteko, Kaqchikel, Mam, Maya Yucatan,

Mixteco, Mixteco Alto, Mixteco Bajo, Náhuatl, Purépecha, Q'anjob'al, Q'eqchi', Quiche (K'iche'), Tlapaneco, Tojolobal, Trique (Itunyoso and Copala), Tzeltal, Tzotzil, and Zapoteco.

Join me in celebrating indigenous people and their cultures, rich heritages, languages, and contributions to our world! Vote yes on HB 2526. Thank you for reading my testimony. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions about this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Alonso', written on a light-colored rectangular background.

Teresa Alonso Leon
State Representative, HD 22
Chair, House Education Committee