



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor



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DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

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**Colt Gill**

Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction

## MOVING EQUITY FORWARD

**HB 2052: Tribal Regalia & Objects of Cultural Significance**  
**House Education Committee**  
**February 2, 2021**

Chair Alonso Leon, Vice Chairs Neron and Weber, and members of the committee, I am Ramona Halcomb, Indian Education Specialist with the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). I am providing testimony in support of House Bill 2052.

Historically, American Indian/Alaska Native Education is a rocky path. Many factors contribute to the Academic Achievement Gap that exists between American Indian/Alaska Native learners and their peers. This legislation is intended to reduce the lower graduation rate of American Indian students in Oregon. It will reduce disparities by instilling pride and dignity in the recognition of academic achievement, leadership, and tribal sovereignty.

This proposal recognizes the unique cultural, language, and rich heritage of American Indian and Alaska Native students. This also affirms Native American self-determination, self-governance and decision making on issues that affect their own people. Each year, American Indian/Alaska Native graduates across the state receive eagle feathers to be worn at graduation

to signify the academic achievement and leadership and to honor the graduate, the graduate's family, community, and tribal nation.

The giving of and wearing eagle feathers honor the spiritual and cultural expression of American Indian beliefs. Each year there may be a school district that prevents American Indian students from wearing clothing and items of cultural significance during graduation ceremonies. This is an infringement upon the students' rights to wear clothing or items of spiritual or cultural significance, especially eagle feathers, at graduation. Being barred from wearing regalia is unfair, as items such as an eagle feather are a recognition of honor for significant contribution to the community and is also a sign of significant academic success.

I ask for your support of HB 2052.

Thank you,

Ramona Halcomb