

To the Committee:

I'm writing today in support of SB 911, the Commission for Original Peoples from South America, Central America and Mexico bill.

As a numunuu, Comanche, from the Peneteka and Kwahadi bands, I understand the need for opportunities to express core identity amid broader umbrellas like "Indigenous" and "Native American." It is for this reason I am glad to see advocacy for the diverse Indigenous peoples from the southern half of what has been called, variously, "Turtle Island," "Indian Country," and, in Comanche, Sokobi, "the place/our place."

It's undeniable that the flattening of Indigenous identity within mixed/mestizo communities often completely erases tribal affiliations, so Ixil refugees are just called "Central American refugees," and even more heinously, creates situations in which identities are so sapped of meaning that racist assumptions about the ethnicity and homeland of Indigenous people (i.e., assuming certain CSAM Indigenous people are all Mexican within a local diaspora).

I appreciate the work that the sponsors have done on this and look forward to the results of long-needed cultural and individual respect.

Signed,
tuibitsi / AJ Earl
aj@ajearl.com