

MINUTES

State-Tribal Relations



Senator Troy Heinert, Co-Chair
Representative Tamara St. John, Co-Chair

First Meeting, 2022 Interim
Wednesday, January 12, 2022

Room 413 – State Capitol
Pierre, South Dakota

The first interim meeting of the 2022 State-Tribal Relations Committee was called to order by Representative Tamara St. John at 3:00 p.m. (CST) on Wednesday, January 12, 2022, in room 413 of the State Capitol, Pierre, South Dakota.

A quorum was determined with the following members answering roll call: Representatives Steven Haugaard, Peri Pourier, Tony Randolph, and Tamara St. John (Co-Chair); and Senators Jim Bolin, Red Dawn Foster, Michael Rohl, and V.J. Smith. Representative Oren Lesmeister and Senator Troy Heinert (Co-Chair) were excused.

Staff members present included Anna Madsen, Research Analyst; and Rachael Person, Administrative Specialist.

NOTE: *For the purpose of continuity, the following minutes are not necessarily in chronological order. Also, all referenced documents distributed at the meeting are attached to the original minutes on file in the Legislative Research Council office. This meeting was webcast live. The archived webcast is available on the LRC website at sdlegislature.gov.*

Opening Remarks

Representative St. John welcomed everyone to the meeting and spoke on the importance of the State-Tribal Relations Committee.

Approval of the Agenda

Representative Haugaard moved, seconded by Senator Rohl, to approve the agenda for the meeting. The motion prevailed on a voice vote.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

Mr. Jason Ravensborg, South Dakota Attorney General, provided an update on the work his office has been doing to find missing individuals across the state of South Dakota. Mr. Ravensborg highlighted the [Missing Persons Database](#) on his website, sharing statistics, and other information, on missing individuals in the state.

Mr. Ravensborg also highlighted [HB 1199](#), which passed in the 2021 legislative session and established the Office of Liaison for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons. Mr. Ravensborg said his office carries the responsibility of staffing that position, but the office has yet to receive funds to fill the position. Mr. Ravensborg said his office has been working with the state and the tribes across the state to appropriate the funding necessary to fill the position.

State and Tribal Tourism

Ms. Dew Bad Warrior, Consultant with George Washington University and Project Manager for the South Dakota Native Tourism Alliance (SDNTA), said the SDNTA is an ad hoc network of representatives from the nine federally recognized tribes in South Dakota, and local, state, and federal partners, working together to develop Native

American tourism as a catalyst for economic growth. Ms. Bad Warrior spoke on the SDNTA's partnership with the South Dakota Department of Tourism and the work they have been doing to develop an introduction to tribal lands tour.

Mr. Callen Bloemendall, Industry Outreach & Development Representative and Cultural Heritage Tourism Manager, SD Department of Tourism, said the Department of Tourism is acting as a resource to the SDNTA. Mr. Bloemendall also commented on the tribal lands tour, the benefits and preservation of the Native culture, and the launching of the [SD Native Tourism website](#).

Representative St. John said the work that has been done by the SDNTA and their partners has been precedent setting. She drew attention to the 5-year plan and highlighted that it creates tremendous opportunities for many people across the state.

Lakota Circles of Hope

Mr. Jim Kinyon, Executive Director, Catholic Social Services, provided information on the Lakota Circles of Hope Coalition which was created to meet the needs of Native youth throughout South Dakota. Mr. Kinyon spoke on the development of the program and the curriculum, which uses Lakota values and helps both native and non-native students to gain an appreciation and understanding of culture and tradition. Mr. Kinyon said the Coalition has been implementing an elementary school program for thirteen years and added a middle school program in 2018.

Ms. Kristen Conzet, Catholic Social Services, Rapid City, said the information she presented on the Native American curriculum was entirely data driven and charted. Ms. Conzet spoke on the Lakota Circles of Hope Curriculum and said it was something that could be implemented and beneficial to all school districts in South Dakota.

Code Talker Memorial

Mr. Manaja Hill, self, Wakpala, spoke on the development of a Lakota Code Talker Memorial to be located near Capitol Lake on the State Capitol grounds in Pierre, dedicated to tribal members who served in the U.S. military. Mr. Hill said the tribes have contributed what they could to the development of the design and the sculptures that will be a part of the memorial. Mr. Hill said the memorial will help to enhance tourism to South Dakota because the code talkers are a national symbol, and that it gives better focus to Native individuals who have served the country in the military, as well as providing their children a chance to have pride and dignity in the values they grew up with.

Ms. Geri Opsal, self, Sisseton, added that the Code Talker Memorial is important for the tribes and Native children across the state because it provides education and an opportunity to highlight the important role Native Americans had in World War 2. Ms. Opsal highlighted how meaningful the history was to the families of those who served, the vitalness of keeping that history alive, and the work that has gone into the sculptures. Ms. Opsal asked the committee for support to see the Code Talker Memorial completed.

Mr. Robert Dunsmore, self, Cheyenne River, commented on the work that has been done to see this memorial become a reality, but emphasized that funding has been a problem. Mr. Dunsmore said they have received donations to complete the project, and that Senators Rounds and Thune have been a tremendous help in Washington, D.C., but more funding was needed. Mr. Dunsmore asked the committee for their help and support in seeing the project through to completion.

Senator Bolin encouraged the committee to pass a resolution urging financial support for the memorial and said it would be a great step forward.

Senator Smith also urged the committee to show support for the project and develop legislation to help in its completion.

Senator Foster moved, seconded by Senator Bolin, that the State-Tribal Relations committee support any upcoming legislation for the Code Talker Memorial. The motion prevailed on a roll call vote with 6 voting AYE and 4 EXCUSED. Voting AYE: Randolph, Bolin, Foster, Rohl, Smith, and St. John. EXCUSED: Haugaard, Lesmeister, Pourier, and Heinert.

Adjournment

Senator Rohl moved, seconded by Senator Bolin, that the State-Tribal Relation Committee be adjourned. The motion prevailed on a voice vote.

The Committee adjourned at 5:01 p.m.