



2022 South Dakota Legislature

Senate Commemoration 817

Introduced by: **Senator Foster**

1 **A LEGISLATIVE COMMEMORATION, Commending the Social Distance Powwow for**
2 **promoting traditional songs, dance, and a sense of community in the virtual**
3 **world amidst a global pandemic.**

4 WHEREAS, the Social Distance Powwow is a movement created during the COVID-19
5 pandemic by co-founders Dan Simonds, a Pequot tribal member from Connecticut; Stephanie
6 Hebert, a Mi'kmaq tribal member from Texas; and Whitney Renountre, a Crow Creek Sioux
7 tribal member from South Dakota. During the pandemic when many powwows and cultural
8 gatherings were cancelled, the Social Distance Powwow created a virtual space for people to
9 gather in a safe way, becoming popular with Native and non-Native people alike; and

10 WHEREAS, the mission of the Social Distance Powwow is to foster a space for community
11 and cultural preservation and to retain cultural knowledge through indigenous songs, dance,
12 and arts. Powwow celebrations hold immense value as a place where people build inter-
13 generational and inter-tribal friendships, which help to establish a supportive community
14 across Native America; and

15 WHEREAS, the creation of the Social Distance Powwow group has provided an outlet for
16 individuals to share their songs, dances, and stories in a period of time when face-to-face
17 meetings are inaccessible. This platform also allows individuals who may be unable to travel
18 or previously attend a powwow the ability to participate. The success of this movement is
19 clear as the Social Distance Powwow Facebook group has garnered over 290,000 members;

20 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT COMMEMORATED, by the Ninety-Seventh Legislature of the
21 State of South Dakota, that the Social Distance Powwow group be commended for its
22 innovative thinking and promotion of cultural values during a global pandemic.