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# South Dakota Legislature



## Senate Commemoration 817

Introduced by: **Senators** Foster, Nesiba, and V. J. Smith and **Representative** Perry

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

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

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

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

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

