



## 2026 South Dakota Legislature

# Senate Commemoration 831

Introduced by: **Senators** Foster and Perry and **Representative** Muckey

1 **A LEGISLATIVE COMMEMORATION recognizing the historical significance of the**  
2 **buffalo and celebrating their return to tribal lands in this state.**

3 WHEREAS, the buffalo, tatanka, has long been a symbol of strength, resilience, and unity  
4 for the Oceti Sakowin and other tribal nations of the Great Plains, providing food, shelter, and  
5 spiritual connection to the land for millennia; and

6 WHEREAS, the near extinction of the buffalo in the nineteenth century was a tragedy that  
7 disrupted the way of life of Native communities; and

8 WHEREAS, the approaching two hundred fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United  
9 States offers a time to reflect on the nation's shared history and to focus on healing and  
10 renewal; and

11 WHEREAS, the return of the buffalo to tribal lands in this state and across the Great Plains  
12 is led by tribal nations, conservation organizations, and community partners working to  
13 restore this iconic species to its rightful place on the land; and

14 WHEREAS, the return of the buffalo to tribal lands also revitalizes cultural and spiritual  
15 traditions, strengthens food sovereignty, and empowers Native communities in ways that  
16 honor ancestral knowledge and build a sustainable future for all; and

17 WHEREAS, the return of the buffalo to the plains is an important part of restoring and  
18 protecting the natural world for future generations, while also fostering a greater  
19 understanding of the diverse histories that define our collective journey;

20 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT COMMEMORATED, by the One Hundred First Legislature of the  
21 State of South Dakota, that the return of the buffalo to the Oceti Sakowin and other tribal  
22 nations of this region is critically important for cultural renewal, ecological restoration, and  
23 providing hope for future generations.