



2021 South Dakota Legislature

House Commemoration 8009

Introduced by: **Representative Pourier**

1 **A LEGISLATIVE COMMEMORATION, To recognize and celebrate the life of Thomas**
 2 **Richard Poor Bear.**

3 WHEREAS, on December 17, 2020, the Oglala Sioux Tribe reflected on the passing of
 4 Thomas Richard Poor Bear, who journeyed on to the realm of the spirits of his relatives and
 5 ancestors who had gone on before him; and

6 WHEREAS, Thomas Poor Bear was born on December 11, 1956, in Chicago, Illinois. He
 7 was a member of a highly respected family from Eagle Nest District. His brother and older
 8 sister were two influential figures in the Native American community. His mother, Mabel Red
 9 Shirt, and his father, Enos Poor Bear, lived and worked through the government's Relocation
 10 Program. He attended Oglala Community School until his junior year, at which time he joined
 11 the ranks of the American Indian Movement; and

12 WHEREAS, Thomas Poor Bear was active in the efforts of the American Indian Movement
 13 by fighting against injustices across Turtle Island. He later established Camp Justice to
 14 continue the campaign for many causes he was involved in, including the Unsolved Murders
 15 of all Native Americans; and

16 WHEREAS, after Thomas returned to his home in Wanblee, in the Eagle Nest District, he
 17 was encouraged by many elders to represent Eagle Nest on the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council,
 18 thus beginning his involvement in the political arena. He would go on to serve two terms as
 19 an Eagle Nest Representative before moving north of Wounded Knee. Thomas then ran for
 20 Vice Chairman and served for three-and-one-half terms. He more recently was appointed to
 21 serve as Acting Chairman of the Oglala Sioux Tribe; and

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT COMMEMORATED, by the Ninety-Sixth Legislature of the State
 23 of South Dakota, that the Legislature honors and commends Thomas Richard Poor Bear on
 24 his accomplishments and contributions to the state of South Dakota.