

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 145

Rep. Witwer offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to declare October 9, 2023, as Indigenous
2 Peoples' Day in the state of Michigan.

3 Whereas, The state of Michigan understands that in order to
4 help close the equity gap, government entities should change their
5 policies and practices to better reflect and uplift the
6 experiences, culture, history, and contributions of the people they
7 serve; and

8 Whereas, The state of Michigan recognizes that Columbus Day
9 has been viewed by many as a celebration of our country's rich
10 immigrant and, in particular, Italian and Catholic heritage; and

11 Whereas, Recognizing the valuable contributions of immigrants
12 to our history is important, it should not come at the expense of
13 recognizing the experiences of the indigenous people of the

1 American continent; and

2 Whereas, Michigan honors the twelve federally recognized
3 tribes and many more tribally recognized tribes native to this land
4 and acknowledges the people, land, traditions, and customs stolen
5 by colonial systems through government practices of forced
6 separation, forced assimilation, and forced removal; and

7 Whereas, The idea of Indigenous Peoples' Day was first
8 proposed in 1977 by a delegation of Native Nations to the United
9 Nations-sponsored International Conference on Discrimination
10 Against Indigenous Populations in the Americas; and

11 Whereas, In 1990, representatives from 120 Indigenous Nations
12 at the First Continental Conference on 500 Years of Indian
13 Resistance unanimously passed a resolution to transform Columbus
14 Day into an opportunity to reveal historical truths about pre-
15 existing indigenous cultures that have survived a violent
16 colonization process and continue to exist and thrive in present
17 day America; and

18 Whereas, The United States endorsed the United Declaration on
19 the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on December 16, 2010, and Article
20 15 of that declaration states "Indigenous peoples have the right to
21 the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories,
22 and aspirations, which shall be appropriately reflected in
23 education and public information. States should take effective
24 measures, in consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous
25 peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination
26 and to promote tolerance, understanding, and good relations among
27 Indigenous peoples and all other segments of society"; and

28 Whereas, The state of Michigan recognizes the presence of the
29 three major groups in our state today, the Three Fires Confederacy,

1 the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi, collectively known as the
2 Anishinaabe who have lived upon this land since time immemorial,
3 and values the progress our society has accomplished through Native
4 American thought and culture; and

5 Whereas, The establishment of Indigenous Peoples' Day shall be
6 used to reflect upon the ongoing struggles of indigenous peoples on
7 this land and to celebrate the thriving cultures and values that
8 the Anishinaabe of the Great Lakes and other indigenous peoples
9 contribute to society; and

10 Whereas, Many of our indigenous relatives and Tribal Nations
11 in Michigan have contributed much to our state's success, history,
12 economy, politics, and cultural heritage, and there are many things
13 to be proud of as an indigenous person in Michigan; and

14 Whereas, Even the name Michigan is derived from the
15 Anishinaabemowin word michigami meaning "great lake" and there are
16 many other examples of how the Anishinaabe of the Great Lakes have
17 helped shape who we are as the state of Michigan, and

18 Whereas, The states of Alaska and Michigan, the cities of
19 Seattle, Washington, Berkeley, California, Minneapolis, Minnesota,
20 and many more cities around the country including Traverse City,
21 Ann Arbor, East Lansing, and Alpena in Michigan have voted to
22 rename Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples' Day to honor the
23 culture, heritage, and contributions of Native Americans; and

24 Whereas, On this second Monday of October, we should honor the
25 historic, cultural, and contemporary significance of indigenous
26 peoples and their ancestral lands that also became known as the
27 Americas and celebrate their contributions to communities
28 throughout Michigan, the United States, and all over the world;
29 now, therefore, be it

1 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of
2 this legislative body declare October 9, 2023, as Indigenous
3 Peoples' Day in the state of Michigan. We recognize this day in
4 lieu of Columbus Day to uplift our country's indigenous roots,
5 history, and contributions; and be it further

6 Resolved, That Indigenous Peoples' Day shall be used to
7 reflect upon the ongoing struggles of indigenous people on this
8 land and to celebrate the thriving culture and value that Odawa,
9 Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and other indigenous peoples add to communities
10 throughout Michigan and our Great Lakes region.