

**From:** Beverly Little Thunder <blittlethunder@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 26, 2019 12:56 PM  
**Subject:** Re: H.119 in House General

My name is Beverly Little Thunder. I have lived in Vermont for 15 years and am a land owner in Huntington, Vt. I am also an enrolled member of a federally recognized tribe of Standing Rock Lakota people from North Dakota. I thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today as you consider moving the issue of Indigenous Peoples day ahead.

This country has not been honest in its teaching of true US history. The celebration of a man, Columbus, who murdered, enslaved, destroyed a culture, and never set foot on this continent has always been a slap in my face. Vermont has been complacent in this teaching of false history for many years. Generations of our children across the country still believe that this person discovered millions of Indigenous people on this continent. This teaching in our schools renders Indigenous people invisible or relegated to a distant past.

We here in Vermont know that the Abenaki community is alive and well. Our state has done the right thing to acknowledge their presence here before European arrival. There are also members of other tribes like myself who now live here and raise their families here. While it is commendable that for the past few years there has been a recognition of Indigenous Peoples Day, it is time to make this permanent so that history can be corrected. It benefits your children and grandchildren. It creates a renewed sense of pride and belonging to all Indigenous People who live here. It also speaks to the country at large showing that Vermont is truly committed to honoring its rich history and teaching with honesty and openness the real story of how this country started.

I implore you to consider how important this is to my children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Make this a holiday that celebrates those who lived here long before the arrival of others. Let Vermont join those who recognize the harm caused by celebrating a man who by his Own writing did not even recognize the people he encountered on the islands as human. A man who told his fellow countrymen that girls as young as 10 years old could be had for the taking.

Support the permanent recognition of Indigenous People instead of giving recognition to a false hero.

Thank you,  
Beverly Littlethunder