



North Dakota Native Vote  
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Boozhoo Mr. Chairman Azure, members of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Tribal Council, Chairman Wardner and members of the State and Tribal Relations Committee, my name is Nicole Donaghy, I am an enrolled citizen of Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and a descendant of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa as well as the MHA people in Fort Berthold. I am also the Executive Director of North Dakota Native Vote. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss legislative redistricting in the homelands of the Anishinabek people.

North Dakota Native Vote is a non-profit, non-partisan grassroots organization that initially formed in response to the 2018 US Supreme Court decision to uphold the voter identification law that had the potential to disenfranchise over 5,000 Native American voters in North Dakota. Our mission is to create and affect policy to promote equitable representation for the Native people of North Dakota. We do this by fostering sustainable positive social change in our communities through community organizing, mobilization, leadership development, and policy advocacy.

According to 2010 Census information, the population of Turtle Mountain Band Reservation was approximately 8,612, the land base is six mile by twelve-mile land base and is considered one of the most densely populated Reservations, per square mile, in the United States. If the Turtle Mountain Reservation was listed as a city, it would be the 5th largest city in North Dakota.

As the state of North Dakota undertakes its redistricting process, the Legislature should take several steps.

First, the Legislature should comply with the Voting Rights Act.

This may include moving away from at-large districts for the State House of Representatives. Where there are tribal communities, there should be single member House districts to ensure tribal communities have equitable representation. Failure to draw single-member House districts dilutes the Native vote and may violate the Voting Rights Act.

Second, a "Community of Interest" standard should be utilized in redistricting, which will take into consideration groups of similar language, culture and identity, to keep them together within legislative districts.



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Turtle Mountain is its own community of interest and should remain in a single legislative district. Splitting the reservation into multiple districts would dilute the ability of tribal members to elect the representative of their choice.

Third, even though the redistricting schedule is abbreviated, it is of the utmost importance to consult with the tribal governments as well as their citizens to take the tribal perspective into account in the redistricting process. In as many ways as possible. Many other states have already begun holding redistricting hearings to get feedback directly from citizens and tribes. This process is far too important to ignore the perspective of tribal communities.

While we are thankful for your attendance here today, and your commitment to improving the state's relationship with the Tribe, we also expect the same courtesy from the redistricting committee. We thank you for your consideration of these important issues. We hope that this committee will be an ally and advocate for the tribes through the redistricting process and beyond. We are happy to address any questions or discuss these issues further.

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