



**Testimony for the House  
Health and Government Operations Committee**

**March 12, 2020**

**HB 895 Indigenous Peoples' Day - Rule of Interpretation and  
Replacement of Columbus Day**

TONI HOLNESS  
PUBLIC POLICY DIRECTOR

**FAVORABLE**

AMERICAN CIVIL  
LIBERTIES UNION  
FOUNDATION OF  
MARYLAND

MAIN OFFICE  
& MAILING ADDRESS  
3600 CLIPPER MILL ROAD  
SUITE 350  
BALTIMORE, MD 21211  
T/410-889-8555  
or 240-274-5295  
F/410-366-7838

FIELD OFFICE  
6930 CARROLL AVENUE  
SUITE 610  
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912  
T/240-274-5295

[WWW.ACLU-MD.ORG](http://WWW.ACLU-MD.ORG)

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS  
JOHN HENDERSON  
PRESIDENT

The ACLU of Maryland urges a favorable report on HB 895, which would replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Every year, across the country and here in Maryland, Christopher Columbus is celebrated for having “discovered” America, which he believed to be India. He gave the people he found here the name “Indians” and thus began a long, painful history of violence, exploitation, and oppression of Indigenous people. The ramifications of this violence continue to be felt by Indigenous communities across the country today.

To continue recognizing and celebrating Christopher Columbus is to continue honoring a legacy of violence and oppression—a history that we should learn from, not laud. More importantly, we send a message of revisionist history to our children and future generations that Columbus did discover this land, which he did not. Worse, this has a diminishing effect on the culture, suffering, and lived experiences of Native American people who were here long before Columbus's accidental arrival.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 895, which we hope will usher in a celebration of the beauty, strength, culture, and resilience of Indigenous peoples.