

Written Testimony for Maryland Indigenous Peoples Day Bill, House Bill 895

Historical trauma is defined by indigenous scholar, Dr. Yellow-Horse Brave Heart as the accumulative emotional and psychological pain over an individual's lifespan and across generations as the result of massive group trauma.

Christopher Columbus is famous and celebrated for reportedly "discovering America". Unfortunately, most of what is celebrated about Columbus is myth rather than historical fact. Columbus did *not* discover America; it was already home to an estimated 100 million indigenous people. The indigenous people of what many of us call Turtle Island have been living here since the beginning of time. Columbus was not even the first European person to travel to present day America and also did not demonstrate that the world was round; that fact had been widely accepted in Europe for centuries.

The real Christopher Columbus is responsible for a staggering and cruel list of human rights abuses that includes slavery, raping children, murder and even feeding indigenous people to dogs. His priest traveling with him and his own diary documented many of these accounts.

The historical trauma of these events impacts generations today. Not having to celebrate this holiday anymore, but instead, acknowledging and celebrating Indigenous Peoples is one step in repairing the harm done to Indigenous and Native peoples through colonization.

It would be a wonderful thing for Maryland to make Indigenous Peoples Day a recognized holiday, with official school and government closures, so that the general public can learn about the Native peoples who are living here today, as well as learning an accurate accounting of history on Turtle Island.

Please do the right thing and vote for this bill.

Tavi Hawn

Baltimore, Maryland