

EXHIBIT 15DATE 2/21/07HB 750**Carol Juneau**

**From:** "Richard Littlebear" <rlbear@cdkc.edu>  
**To:** <rickjore@hotmail.com>  
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**Sent:** Tuesday, February 20, 2007 8:26 PM  
**Subject:** House Bill No. 750

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Richard E. Littlebear. I am an enrolled, full-blooded member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe of Montana. I am also the President of Chief Dull Knife College, which is located at Lame Deer, Montana. I am writing this e-mail to you to urge your approval of House Bill No. 750 which will be before you for consideration today at 3 pm. I urge that you support this Bill for all the reasons enumerated in the "whereas" paragraphs. But I go further than that. I make this plea to you because so much of the time when it comes to languages other than English, so many extraneous items are attached. Talking another language other than English, for instance, is not being unpatriotic; many of the Code Talkers spoke at least two languages. Many of the American Indians presently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are speakers of their languages and are steeped in their own tribal cultures.

The issue of language immersion focuses on issues that transcend school curricula. It goes to the very center of who we are as citizens of this great country. We would like to see Montana become an hospitable venue for our languages. This state has been revolutionary in its championing of "Indian Education For All" and for the funds that were provided to tribal colleges for writing history from the American Indian perspective. These initiatives are now being looked at as models by states that are proximal to Montana. By approving this Bill, you will be continuing initiatives that are revolutionary in education and beneficial to the American Indian language speakers, whose numbers are rapidly dwindling throughout the world.

I want to thank you for approving the funds for those non-beneficiary students attending our tribal colleges. We are grateful for your kind consideration.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email message.  
Dr. Richard E. Littlebear

2/21/2007

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Senator Juneau,

This is to express my wholehearted endorsement of HB 750, "An Act providing grants for Tribal immersion programs for the preservation and revitalization of Montana Tribal languages....."

This would be a historic and ethical move on behalf of the State of Montana. A language is the heart and soul of a people. Imagine if Montanans were not allowed to speak English and forced to learn another language? Imagine what would be lost to future generations. It's very difficult to grasp the true meaning of your history, religion, culture and traditions in a foreign language. Our language is descriptive and beautiful, much is lost in the translation.

In my opinion, public schools played a large part in the eradication of the language and has an obligation to play just an active role in reviving it.

Aside from the moral issue, there are sound educational reasons. Research shows us that children who are bilingual are higher achievers. Blackfeet children who are bilingual have a far stronger sense of who they are and better self esteem.

Montana could and should embrace and celebrate our diversity. It would enrich us all. This would be step in that direction.

Again, I urge you to support and HB 750 and make this opportunity available to public schools.

Sincerely,

Mary Johnson

Superintendent

Browning Public Schools

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