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THE MONTANA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



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**MONTANA TRIBAL LANGUAGES BILL
REMARKS**

Rep Shannon Augare

Mr. Chairman, for the record my name is Representative Shannon Augare of HD16. I am a proud member of the Blackfeet Nation and very pleased to offer my support to this bill.

I thank Rep. Wilmer for her leadership on this effort on behalf of the many constituents I represent. The movement to preserve and renew indigenous languages through a community-education process serves several important purposes. It defines and strengthens the identity of sovereign nations. It builds the confidence of our Indian youth and their families; and it represents increased

cognitive flexibility and literacy skills. Research reveals that bilingual children clearly have a better understanding of reading and higher levels of achievement in English (Kathleen Marcos, 1998).

A growing number of Native communities have expressed their beliefs that we must not lose our languages. Through solid commitment and the process of networking, using technology, sharing teaching ideas, and building a foundation for a sustainable teaching force, American Indians hope to see future generations of young Indian people who are fluent and creative in using the ancestral languages and possess the vocabulary of their nations' worldviews.

Mr. Chairman, members of this committee, on behalf of those who I serve, please pass this important legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.