

February 8, 2007

SB 390

In the Native American traditional world, we learn from the generations who came before and we live to make a good world for the generations yet to come. My grandfather's tribal allotment of land in the Mission Valley (prime ranch land) was taken through a ³forced sale² the same year our reservation was opened to homesteading.

Each day, I make a choice to devote my efforts to creating an education system where my great-grandchildren (the eldest in kindergarten next year) have the opportunity to learn about their heritage, feel a full membership in their school, and are challenged to reach the best of their abilities.

In those efforts, it has been necessary to learn a system that was foreign to my parents. I am the first person in my family to graduate from college and go on. I am grateful for the support and encouragement of our parents. I owe to my children's children a better education system.

There are not models to copy in Indian Education for All who are Montanans bear the responsibility to make this work and make it quality. From 1999's HB 528 passage to 2005's legislature the steps to implementation were hard fought, small, and there were setbacks. Without funding, it is too great a task for education entities to accomplish. The key is funding.

Please respect the hard work this legislation represents. PASS SB 390 and provide funding to the schools to continue this historic process.

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