

Mr. Chairman, and committee members, my name is Clarena M. Brockie and I represent HD 32, which is along the hi-line and takes in the two reservations, Fort Belknap Indian Reservation and the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation.

I am also the Dean of Students of Aaniiih Nakoda College on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation and have worked at the college for over 15 years. I am in support of SJ resolution 38.

We have always said that tribal colleges have made the biggest economic effect on the reservations than any other entity. This study will only confirm that belief.

I was Director of the Vocational Education Project under the Fort Belknap Education Department from 1978 to 1995. It was during this time the college was established. My father, Henry Brockie who was tribal chairman at the time, signed a resolution in 1982 to seek the establishment of the tribal college. Dr. Robert Swan, board members and I as the Director of Vocational Education moved forward with this plan. The funding to provide classes came from various sources including the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Project where I was the Director.

Our first program was with the College of Great Falls and then the Chief Dull Knife College carried us under their college until 1984 when the Fort Belknap College became a satellite program for Salish Kootenai College.

When we first started we were in buildings that no one wanted. I remember the pilot light kept going off in the trailer we were using for our Vo-Ag classes and we would have to send our students home. I remember our secretarial classes being in a building that again, no one wanted to be in. I was constantly complaining about cleaning up the area and not forgetting we were there. We later added the Welding Program.

Fort Belknap College received full accreditation from Northwest Commission on College and Universities, 1993, setting the path that they would be a beacon of hope for many people from these communities. Tribal Colleges have worked diligently in meeting the needs of community members and addressing the economic development needs of the area. They have an open door policy and serve students from the surrounding communities of Turner, Malta, Dodson, and Chinook. Although the funding is limited for these students, no student is turned away. This year there are 12. In addition, these students can apply for some of the same scholarships programs that Native American students apply for. They

attend the American Indian Higher Education student spring conference and can and have participated in competitions there.

Today Aaniiih Nakoda College has a beautiful campus that includes a Public Radio Station, 88.1FM and an Immersion School. They have the Environment Excellence Program, addressing the needs in the science area. The students have competed in many academic programs and have won many awards. The student clubs/organizations include Student Senate, Red Nations, Ski Club, American Indian Business Leaders, American Indian Science and Engineering Program.

Because of our success, funders have invested in tribal college. Do you know that if students start at a tribal college, they are four times more likely to finish a four year bachelors program?

Please give this bill a green light.