



THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION

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A People of Vision

A Confederation of the Salish,
Pend d' Oreille
and Kootenai Tribes

(H) Judiciary Committee
Honorable Gerald Bennett, Chairman
Honorable Virginia Court, Vice Chair
Honorable Alan Doane, Vice Chair
64th Montana Legislature
Capital Building - Helena, MT

March 6, 2015

TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Vernon S. Finley - Chairman
Carole Lankford - Vice Chair
James V. Matt - Secretary
Len Twoteeth - Treasurer
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RE: HB 585 – Prohibit copying or duplication of cultural patrimony and sacred items

Chairman Bennett and Committee Members:

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes ("CSKT") support HB 585. This bill acknowledges the seven tribal nations within the state of Montana by honoring and providing for protections of sacred items and cultural patrimony.

HB 585 allows for an object to be protected under the law by examining the historical facts surrounding an object and obtaining evidence of ownership. The sale of sacred objects must be stopped if tribes are to maintain their cultural and historic identities. This proposed legislation mirrors the federal law in an effort to protect tribal heritage and provides a just penalty if individual attempts to duplicate, or reproduce sacred objects.

Sacred objects are priceless and essential to our cultural and historic identities. They are not meaningless baubles to be knocked off and sold for public consumption.

The CSKT support the development of legislation that allows individuals and Tribes to step forward and reclaim sacred objects that have been lost or taken.

CSKT stands in strong support of HB 585 and ask that you please help us protect our cultural heritage by voting yes. We thank the sponsor, George Kipp, for introducing and carrying such important legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Vernon S. Finley
Vernon S. Finley, Chairman
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

