

Chairman Barker and esteemed members of the committee,

Chokma! Saholchifoat Representative Stephanie Byers. Chickashsha Saya

Hello! I am Representative Stephanie Byers, and I am a member of the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma

I come here today to testify in favor of House Bill 2462.

The importance of the joint committee on State and Tribal Affairs must always be held in high regard. Our First American Nations, while citizens of the United States are also Sovereign nations and should be treated properly as such. The Kansas Legislature is fortunate to have three legislators, who serve not only the people of Kansas but also are members of their respective Tribal Nations. It is also fortunate that one of the three of us also serves on this esteemed Committee and would therefore be eligible to be a part of the joint committee on State and Tribal Affairs. This good fortune may not always be possible, however. Members of First American Nations, Indigenous Americans have as many vast interests, skills and talents, as there are tribal nations and may be best suited to serve in committees other than Fed and State. The fact that I, as a former Public School Educator, serve on both the House Education AND K-12 Budget Committees is proof of that. To insure that there be tribal representation from the legislature on the State and Tribal Affairs joint committee, it is necessary that the rules for committee membership be expanded to include others who serve in the House of Representatives. I understand that there may not always be legislators who are also Native Americans, but if there are, it is important that they be given consideration in the formation of the State and Tribal Affairs Committee, no matter which committees they may serve on.

Chockma 'shki

Thank You,

Representative Stephanie Byers

She/Her

Kansas House of Representatives, 86th District

Chickashsha Saya!