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March 22, 2024

TO: Senator Mark Warner
Senator Tim Kaine
Congressman Rob Wittman
Congresswoman Jen Kiggans
Congressman Bobby Scott
Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan
Congressman Bob Good
Congressman Ben Cline
Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger
Congressman Don Beyer
Congressman Morgan Griffith
Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton
Congressman Gerry Connolly

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, the state's largest faith-based advocacy network, supports efforts to designate Indigenous Peoples' Day as a legal holiday in lieu of Columbus Day. Many justice-focused organizations, like the Virginia Interfaith Center, have already changed the holiday name in their personnel policies.

Doing so is important for:

- Honoring the people who lived here long before Columbus "discovered" America.
- Providing an opportunity to educate people about the important role indigenous people have played in American history and often the brutal treatment of indigenous people by our nation.
- Encouraging the recognition of tribes and their cultures.

In the same way that MLK Day has become an important day for building relationships and reflecting on our legacy of racism, designating an Indigenous Peoples' Day creates opportunities for education and relationship building that are absent in Columbus Day, which is merely a day off work or school.

We urge you to support the U.S. House bill #5822 and the U.S. Senate bill #2970 to make this important designation change. Given Virginia's history of leading the nation, it would be great if the entire Virginia delegation could lead this important change. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kim Bobo
Executive Director

*The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy advocates economic, racial, and social justice in Virginia's policies and practices through education, prayer, and action.
VICPP is a non-partisan coalition of more than 700 faith communities working for a more just society.*