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State of Minnesota  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-FIFTH  
SESSION

HOUSE FILE No. 779

February 8, 2007

Authored by Bly, Mariani, Greiling, Clark, Rukavina and others  
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Finance

March 1, 2007

Committee Recommendation and Adoption of Report:  
Amended and re-referred to the Committee on E-12 Education without further recommendation

March 13, 2007

Committee Recommendation and Adoption of Report:  
To Pass as Amended and re-referred to the Committee on Finance  
By motion, recalled and re-referred to the Committee on Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology and Elections

1.1 A bill for an act  
1.2 relating to American Indian languages; establishing the Council on Indigenous  
1.3 Language; appropriating money; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota  
1.4 Statutes, chapter 3.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. **LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.**

1.7 The status of the cultures and languages of American Indians is unique and part of  
1.8 the rich heritage of the state. The state shall collaborate with American Indians to ensure  
1.9 the survival of these unique cultures and languages. The legislature further recognizes  
1.10 American Indian culture and language as a vital state treasure and resource. In order to  
1.11 maximize the potential of American Indian language resources, the legislature recognizes  
1.12 the need to encourage indigenous language development and continuation, especially  
1.13 among children.

1.14 The legislature recognizes that one-third of indigenous tongues have disappeared  
1.15 since the coming of Columbus. Of those that survive, nine out of ten are no longer spoken  
1.16 by children. If this erosion continues, virtually all American Indian languages could be  
1.17 extinct within two or three generations. Along with this erosion goes part of the history of  
1.18 our state. There are many benefits to preserving indigenous languages. These include:  
1.19 cognitive and academic growth among students; help with identity conflicts; preservation  
1.20 of family values; increased cultural vitality; preserving unique traditional tribal ecological  
1.21 knowledge; preserving Minnesota's indigenous native history; and increased student  
1.22 self-esteem and self-sufficiency. These benefits reflect in greater community involvement  
1.23 in tribal communities and for the state. Children who are schooled in their native language

2.1 will demonstrate greater creativity and participation in the community and the state as  
2.2 a whole.

2.3 **Sec. 2. [3.9228] COUNCIL ON INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE.**

2.4 Subdivision 1. **Creation; membership; executive director.** (a) The Council on  
2.5 Indigenous Language is created and membership shall consist of a member appointed  
2.6 by each of the 11 tribes in Minnesota and ten members from the Indian communities  
2.7 in this state, including members with expertise in languages indigenous to this state.  
2.8 The ten Indian community members shall be selected by the Dakota/Ojibwe Language  
2.9 Revitalization Alliance. The tribal appointments to the council are not subject to the open  
2.10 appointments process under section 15.0597.

2.11 (b) The council shall annually elect a chair and executive secretary and other officers  
2.12 it deems necessary. The chair may appoint subcommittees necessary to fulfill the duties  
2.13 of the council. Because the council performs functions that are not purely advisory, the  
2.14 council is not subject to the expiration date in section 15.059.

2.15 (c) The council shall select an executive director to manage the operations of  
2.16 the council. The executive director of the Council on Indigenous Language may hire  
2.17 staff necessary to carry out the functions of the council. The executive director must be  
2.18 experienced in administrative activities and familiar with language revitalization. The  
2.19 executive director and office staff shall serve in the unclassified service of the state.

2.20 (d) Members of the council may receive per diem and expense payments as provided  
2.21 in section 15.059.

2.22 Subd. 2. **Duties.** (a) The council shall develop specific guidelines for funding  
2.23 community and educational programs that provide language revitalization to meet the  
2.24 needs of the community. In order to develop these guidelines, the council shall collaborate  
2.25 with American Indian community groups to develop the resources needed to provide  
2.26 native language classes.

2.27 (b) The council shall promote activities and programs that are specific to promoting  
2.28 revitalization of indigenous language for American Indian children and adults. Since  
2.29 language revitalization is critical for the youngest of American Indian children, the  
2.30 council shall focus on developing programs that meet the language needs of children in  
2.31 prekindergarten through grade 12. In addition, the Council on Indigenous Language shall  
2.32 work with community groups, educational groups and institutions, and tribes to identify  
2.33 programs that will promote the preservation and revitalization of indigenous language in  
2.34 order for children to learn the speaking, reading, and writing of native language.

3.1 (c) The council shall administer grants to organizations, programs, and schools  
3.2 that meet the guidelines developed by the council for programs that provide language  
3.3 revitalization to children and adults.

3.4 (d) The council shall establish grant criteria and funding priorities to fulfill its  
3.5 purpose.

3.6 (e) The council shall consult with tribal governments to maximize the effectiveness  
3.7 and coordination of policies and programs that support language and culture and  
3.8 collaborate with tribal governments to develop an integrated language strategy.

3.9 (f) The council shall explore funding opportunities with the United States  
3.10 Department of Education and other federal agencies to meet the special needs of students  
3.11 for native language learning.

3.12 (g) The council shall work with existing government and tribal agencies to integrate  
3.13 funding and remove barriers to enable statewide language revitalization efforts to be  
3.14 successful.

3.15 (h) The council shall work collaboratively to enable native speakers to teach in all  
3.16 language revitalization programs and schools and to develop standards on curriculum,  
3.17 critical pedagogy, and scope and sequence as it pertains to indigenous language learning,  
3.18 consistent with world language standards under section 120B.022.

3.19 (i) The council may contract in its own name including contracting for office space  
3.20 and equipment. Contracts, including grant contracts, must be approved and executed by  
3.21 the executive director of the council. The council may apply for, receive, and expend in its  
3.22 own name grants and gifts of money consistent with the duties specified in this section.  
3.23 Grants and gifts of money received are appropriated to the council for its purpose.

3.24 Subd. 3. **Report required.** The council shall report to the legislature by January 15  
3.25 of each year regarding the use of indigenous languages within the state and the status of  
3.26 programs and efforts to preserve and promote them.

3.27 Subd. 4. **Meetings.** Meetings may be called by the chair or at the written request of  
3.28 five members of the council. A majority of the voting members of the council is a quorum.

3.29 Subd. 5. **State agency assistance.** Upon request, other state agencies shall supply  
3.30 the council with advisory staff services on matters relating to the jurisdiction of the  
3.31 council. The council shall have the right to call upon various state departments for  
3.32 technical advice and services as needed to fulfill its purpose.

3.33 Subd. 6. **Appropriations and money received for the Council on Indigenous**  
3.34 **Language.** All money and appropriations received for the Council on Indigenous  
3.35 Language must be used to further the purpose of language revitalization. Money and

4.1 appropriations received for language revitalization shall not be transferred or reallocated  
4.2 for any other purpose.

4.3 Sec. 3. **INITIAL MEETING.**

4.4 The initial meeting of the Council on Indigenous Language shall be convened by a  
4.5 facilitator designated by the Minnesota Dakota/Ojibwe Language Revitalization Alliance.  
4.6 The facilitator shall chair the first meeting and subsequent meetings until the council  
4.7 elects a chair.

4.8 Sec. 4. **APPROPRIATIONS; COUNCIL ON INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE.**

4.9 (a) \$..... in fiscal year 2008 and \$..... in fiscal year 2009 are appropriated from  
4.10 the general fund to the Council on Indigenous Language.

4.11 (b) \$..... in fiscal year 2008 and \$..... in fiscal year 2009 are appropriated from  
4.12 the general fund to the director of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education for grants to  
4.13 the Council on Indigenous Language for training teachers of indigenous American Indian  
4.14 language. This appropriation must be included in the base budget for the office.

4.15 (c) \$..... in fiscal year 2008 and \$..... in fiscal year 2009 are appropriated from  
4.16 the general fund to the commissioner of human services for grants to the Council on  
4.17 Indigenous Language for the purpose of language revitalization. This appropriation must  
4.18 be included in the agency's base budget.

4.19 (d) \$..... in fiscal year 2008 and \$..... in fiscal year 2009 are appropriated from the  
4.20 general fund to the commissioner of education for grants to the Council on Indigenous  
4.21 Language for the purpose of language revitalization. This appropriation must be included  
4.22 in the agency's base budget.