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Testimony submitted by:

Chief Richard Velky - Schaghticoke Tribal Nation

Education Committee Public Hearing - Wednesday, March 17, 2021

In **SUPPORT** of HB 6619: AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A  
KINDERGARTEN TO EIGHT GRADE MODEL CURRICULUM

Chairman McCrory, Chairman Sanchez, and distinguished members of the Education Committee, I am here to testify in SUPPORT of House Bill 6619, An Act Concerning the Development of a Kindergarten to Eight Grade Model Curriculum.

For the transcript, my name is Richard Velky, Chief of the Schaghticoke Tribal Nation of Kent Connecticut. The Schaghticoke Tribal Nation has been recognized first by the Colony of Connecticut in 1736 and post-Revolutionary War by the State and General Assembly, continuous to this day. Our reservation was granted in 1752 but our historical ties to western Connecticut and Eastern New York reach well back into the 1600s.

First, I would like to acknowledge Senator Cathy Osten for her support and work on bringing this important issue to Connecticut's first citizen. Beginning in 2019 and in legislation introduced this session, Senate Bill 249, An Act Concerning the Inclusion of Native American Studies in Social Studies Curriculum, I understand, has been incorporated within HB 6619. Senator Osten has already testified most eloquently speaking on the importance of this legislation and, if you will, setting the record straight.

I wanted to share from my own upbringing. I, along with my six siblings, grew up in Bridgeport. My mother Catherine (Princess Matoaka) was a Schaghticoke. We would have been raised in Kent; however, the State, first through Parks and Forests Commission, Welfare commission, and Department of Environmental Protection, established regulations prohibiting Tribal Members from residing on our lands. The irony is that until 1972, Connecticut did not recognize any members of the five indigenous tribes as citizens. Technically, unless we rejected our heritage, we had no rights granted to others, in this, the Constitution State.

