

Rep. Madison: Joins annual Capitol celebration of Indigenous Peoples of Wisconsin

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2026 State of the Tribes creates clear mandate to fix past harms while building a just future

MADISON, Wis. – Today, Wisconsin celebrated its 22nd consecutive State of the Tribes, featuring an address from Chairwoman Nicole Boyd from the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. The State of the Tribes is an opportunity to strengthen relationships between state government and the sovereign indigenous people of Wisconsin – but also an important opportunity for decision makers to hear directly from tribal leaders about the unique, ongoing challenges facing Native people in Wisconsin.

Rep. Madison (D-10) released the following statement:

“Chairwoman Boyd’s powerful remarks today underscore state legislators’ historic, continuing responsibility to work hand in hand with Wisconsin’s Native people. We must address the unique challenges that persist in Native communities due to a legacy of colonization now culminating in an openly fascist federal government. But this is an active history – we all have lessons to learn from Wisconsin’s First Peoples, as the original water protectors and stewards of our lands. They will help us emerge from this authoritarian crisis, but only if we listen and act accordingly.

I believe we can address the harms of the past while charting a just path forward. New fossil fuel pipelines and gas plants are simply incompatible with respecting and protecting nature – those problems will be exacerbated, maybe beyond repair, without effective regulation of large data centers. Wisconsin’s boarding schools

purposefully destroyed indigenous culture, creating our clear obligation to invest in sovereign tribal education, to provide fully funded healthy school meals to students, all while protecting the legacy of Wisconsin's indigenous languages.

We must also honestly confront the interrelated problems of mental wellness, violence prevention and the continuing crisis of murdered and missing Black and indigenous women in Wisconsin. This crisis is exacerbated by underinvestment in multiple communities – as Black, brown and indigenous communities continue to face tragedy and violence, the need to invest in the Office of Violence Prevention is critical.

As we approach the end of the session, I'm proud that our work is closely aligned with the values shared by Chairwoman Boyd today. We are working to confront climate change and pollution by protecting the Rights of Nature and enacting a Green Amendment for the people of Wisconsin. We can legalize cannabis in Wisconsin, acknowledging the critical role it's played for centuries as a resource to the indigenous peoples of the Americas. I feel newly energized and hopeful we're headed in the right direction, together.