

REPRESENTATIVE ANNESSA HARTMAN (SHE/HER)
HOUSE DISTRICT 40



OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Pham,

Thank you for taking some time to hear HB 3529. As some of you know, I belong to the Haudenosaunee people, more commonly known as the Six Nations of Iroquois. My people's ancestral homelands are present-day New York, the Finger Lakes area. When you grow up in a culture you just assume that everyone knows what you know. I was surprised that many did not know what Residential Schools were, that we each have different cultural practices, or what treaties or ceded land are. So, I quickly realized how little exposure or understanding folks have of Tribal governments, sovereignty, or cultural norms.

Since my people are not from these lands, it is my responsibility to spend time learning about the rich culture and history of the original stewards of the Pacific Northwest, and I am still learning every day. I also learned that the State of Oregon has taken strides to create strong government-to-government relationships with Tribal Nations, but we still have a long way to go.

Throughout my short time here, I cannot even count the number of times my office has forwarded policy to LCIS to alert them or simply ask if there were any legal impacts to Tribes. I will be the first to admit I am not an expert on Tribal Treaty Law and will never claim to be.

When I have asked for some quick oversight, it led to formal Tribal consultation with one of the Tribes where they would have otherwise been left out. Most of the time, though, they were not complicated fixes but small wording changes that ensure Tribes are properly recognized and meaningfully included.

When asking for advice, I do need to be clear that it was never to be in place of formal consultation, nor is the advice ever given that is to speak on behalf of the Tribes because that's a no-no.

But the fact that I have to keep doing this—there have already been at least three bills where this has happened and then led to formal consultation—made it clear that we have, not a problem, but an opportunity to improve. So, my dream is that everyone in this building, while crafting policy, will automatically think to themselves, "How might this impact Tribal Governments?" Ultimately, at the very least, Tribes should be brought into the conversation at the very beginning.

Consultation isn't something that should happen because someone remembers to ask at the last minute. It should be a core part of how we make policy in this state.

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That is why I believe HB 3529 is a necessary and small step forward to continuing to build a strong understanding of Tribal Sovereignty.

It would require all legislators and legislative staff to go through training on Tribal sovereignty, consultation protocols, and how to engage respectfully with Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes. It would be similar to the Rule 27 training we all take on workplace conduct and would evolve with the times, including incorporating feedback from the Tribes and the recommendations from Rep. Sanchez's Consultation Task Force, once their work is done, so we're continuously improving how we engage with Tribes.

At the end of the day, this is about evolving. It's about making sure that when we pass laws in Oregon, we're not making things harder for Tribal governments, ignoring treaty rights, or leaving Tribes out of the conversation entirely. This training is just one step toward fixing a long-standing issue, and it's the least we can do to ensure we're honoring our government-to-government relationships the way we should be: with respect and meaningful understanding.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Annessa Hartman".

Representative Annessa Hartman
House District 40 – Gladstone, Oregon City, North Clackamas County