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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 6, 2015

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Governor Steve Bullock Signs Tribal Language Bills Into Law

Helena, MT - Governor Steve Bullock today was joined by Sen. Jonathan Windy Boy, Rep. George Kipp and other Tribal leaders as he signed two bills into law that will preserve and promote tribal languages in Montana. HB 559, sponsored by Kipp, will extend the Montana Indian Language Preservation program, which Bullock signed into law after the 2013 legislation session. SB 272, sponsored by Windy Boy, encourages school districts in Montana to create Indian Language Immersion programs on their campuses.

"Montana is leading the nation in the promotion and preservation of tribal languages," Bullock said. "Tribal languages are more than just a collection of words and phrases tied together. They represent the culture and history of not only Native Americans in our state, but in fact they represent the culture and history of our entire state."

"Senate Bill 272 takes a bold move forward to encourage school districts to implement Language Immersion programs," said Windy Boy. "This is a unique law, because its approach is tailored to the needs of Montana."

During the 2013 legislative session, Bullock worked with Windy Boy and the American Indian legislative caucus to create the Montana Indian Language Preservation Pilot Program to support the efforts of Montana tribes to preserve Indian languages in the form of spoken, written word, or sign language and assist in the preservation and curricular goals of Montana's Indian Education for All Program. Through this program tribes have developed curricula, online tools and other resources to promote tribal languages.

"The Montana Indian Language Preservation Program has helped tribes pursue innovative approaches to ensuring these languages are passed on to future generations," Kipp said of his measure. "Today's signing will ensure that good work continues, and we are able build on the foundational efforts that are taking place across Montana."

PHOTOS: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)

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