
**State Government & Tribal Relations
Committee**

HB 2551

Brief Description: Permitting students to wear traditional tribal regalia and objects of cultural significance at graduation ceremonies and related events.

Sponsors: Representatives Lekanoff, Ramel, Rude, Leavitt, Valdez, Davis, Doglio, Walen, Pollet, Macri, Ormsby and Santos.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Precludes school districts, public schools, and institutions of higher education from prohibiting students from wearing traditional tribal regalia or objects of Native American cultural significance with or attached to the cap and gown at graduation ceremonies or related school events.

Hearing Date: 2/4/20

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

The history of wearing a cap and gown at graduation is believed to date back to twelfth-century Europe. Many teachers wore clerical clothing (hoods and gowns) and students adopted the same look. Some historians think that the gowns were especially necessary to stay warm in the unheated buildings where graduations took place. This academic dress from Europe started to gain popularity in America around the time of independence. There was a decline in such dress after the Civil War, but the American Intercollegiate Commission met in 1894 at Columbia University to standardize the style and color for robes and hoods: they settled on black gowns in which the lining of the hood indicates the university and the border color indicates the academic discipline. This standardization has largely remained constant over the years, although certain details have changed.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill:

School districts, public schools, and institutions of higher education may not prohibit students from wearing traditional tribal regalia or objects of Native American cultural significance with or attached to the cap and gown at graduation ceremonies or related school events. These academic institutions must update any relevant policies or procedures accordingly.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.