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**HOUSE BILL 2551**

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**State of Washington**

**66th Legislature**

**2020 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Lekanoff, Ramel, Rude, Leavitt, Valdez, Davis, Doglio, Walen, Pollet, Macri, Ormsby, and Santos

Read first time 01/15/20. Referred to Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations.

1 AN ACT Relating to permitting students to wear traditional tribal  
2 regalia and objects of cultural significance at graduation ceremonies  
3 and related events; adding a new section to chapter 28A.600 RCW;  
4 adding a new section to chapter 28B.10 RCW; and creating new  
5 sections.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes that  
8 relationships between sovereign governments are strengthened when  
9 decisions of mutual interest are based in a shared respect of  
10 cultural values. The legislature recognizes also that school  
11 districts, public schools, and institutions of higher education may  
12 use dress codes and other requirements to restrict the wearing of  
13 tribal regalia and objects of cultural significance at graduation  
14 ceremonies.

15 Although the restrictions may be premised on promoting  
16 uniformity, they are not appropriate in the context of government-to-  
17 government relationships and do not recognize the distinct and unique  
18 cultural heritage of Native Americans.

19 The legislature, therefore, intends to affirm inherent rights  
20 assured through tribal sovereignty and expressly acknowledge that  
21 students in public schools and institutions of higher education may

1 wear traditional tribal regalia or objects of cultural significance  
2 at graduation ceremonies and related events.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.600  
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 (1) School districts and public schools may not prohibit students  
6 from wearing traditional tribal regalia or objects of Native American  
7 cultural significance as adornments at graduation ceremonies or  
8 related school events.

9 (2) School districts and, when necessary, public schools shall  
10 update any relevant policies or procedures in accordance with this  
11 section.

12 (3) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions  
13 apply:

14 (a) "Adornment" means an item attached to or worn with, but not  
15 replacing, the cap and gown customarily worn at graduation  
16 ceremonies; and

17 (b) "Public schools" has the same meaning as in RCW 28A.150.010.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** Section 2 of this act applies to the  
19 graduating class of 2020 and subsequent graduating classes.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10  
21 RCW to read as follows:

22 (1) Institutions of higher education may not prohibit students  
23 from wearing traditional tribal regalia or objects of Native American  
24 cultural significance as adornments at graduation ceremonies or  
25 related events.

26 (2) Institutions of higher education shall update any relevant  
27 policies or procedures in accordance with this section.

28 (3) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions  
29 apply:

30 (a) "Adornment" means an item attached to or worn with, but not  
31 replacing, the cap and gown customarily worn at graduation  
32 ceremonies; and

33 (b) "Institutions of higher education" has the same meaning as in  
34 RCW 28B.10.016.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 5.**    This act may be known and cited as the  
2    right to tribal regalia act.

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