

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK
GOVERNOR



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NEWS RELEASE
GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK
STATE OF MONTANA

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**Governor Bullock Encourages Montanans to Commemorate American Indian
Heritage Day**

Governor Steve Bullock is encouraging Montanans across the state to celebrate American Indian Heritage Day today, Friday, September 25, 2015.

"Indian nations and Indian people knew Montana as the 'first best place,' long before it became the 'last best place,'" said Gov. Bullock. "And on this day, across our state that is so deeply rich in American Indian history, we honor the culture, heritage, and ongoing contributions of American Indians in Montana."

American Indian Heritage Day is recognized as a day of celebration of the rich cultural heritage, history and contributions of American Indians. The 2009 Montana Legislature passed a law recognizing the last Friday of every September as American Indian Heritage Day.

Governor Bullock has been a strong advocate for preserving Native American heritage in Montana, as well as expanding educational and economic opportunities for American Indians in the state.

In 2013, Bullock signed into law a measure that would waive tuition costs for Native American students with demonstrated financial need. This change helped to open educational doors that were previously out of reach for many students because of financial hardships.

During the 2015 legislative session, Bullock demonstrated his commitment to creating jobs and improving education throughout the state of Montana, including Indian Country. The Montana Indian Language Preservation Program, signed into law by Gov. Bullock in 2013, received an additional \$1.5 million to continue the efforts of the program. He also signed the Native American Collateral Support bill which provides collateral to native-owned businesses, provided funding to assist Tribal Colleges in maintaining the capacity to provide adequate education to students, negotiated and signed the CSKT

Water Compact which honors treaty rights - while also providing surety to irrigators - and signed the HELP Act which will extend health care coverage to up to an estimated 20,000 American Indians.

Through his Main Street Montana Project, Bullock is working in conjunction with tribal governments to identify areas where they can collaborate to help grow the economies in their communities, support job creation, and increase wages.

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