

State of South Dakota

NINETY-FOURTH SESSION
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 2019

648B0856

HOUSE COMMEMORATION NO. 1017

Introduced by: Representatives Bordeaux, Barthel, Cwach, Duba, Finck, Healy, McCleerey, Otten (Herman), Perry, Pourier, Ring, Rounds, Smith (Jamie), Steele, Sullivan, and Zikmund and Senators Heinert, Foster, Kennedy, Nesiba, Wismer, and Youngberg

A LEGISLATIVE COMMEMORATION, Recognizing the individuals and organizations participating in memorial rides and runs this winter to honor and pay tribute to those brave relatives who lost their lives during the tumultuous times in the 1860s through the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890.

WHEREAS, the Dakota 38 execution was the largest mass execution in United States history and took place on December 26, 1862, and two more Dakota People were hanged at a later date, giving the name "38+2". At the same time, a massive wagon train headed out with approximately 3,000 Dakota tribal members and prisoners who were held captive and then forced to march west out of Fort Snelling Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, Dakota tribal members organize a ride in remembrance that travels 330 miles by horseback from Crow Creek, South Dakota, to Mankato, Minnesota, in the cold and harsh December weather. Dakota tribal members share sacred sage smoke, prayers, and dances, finishing the Dakota Wokiksuye Memorial Ride on December 26; and

WHEREAS, on December 26 each year, Lakotas and their relatives ride on horseback from Bullhead, South Dakota, on the Standing Rock Reservation to Cherry Creek, South Dakota, on the Cheyenne River Reservation, where Chief Big Foot-Spotted Elk led his band to the Pine Ridge Reservation town of Wounded Knee, calling it the Chief Big Foot Memorial Ride; and

WHEREAS, every year more than 500 riders and peace walkers with the Chief Big Foot Band Memorial Ride remember those lost in the Wounded Knee massacre. The riders set out from 150 miles north, near Bridger, South Dakota, and cover an average of about 20 miles a day before arriving at Wounded Knee; and

WHEREAS, afterward, groups of runners make the trip back on foot to Cherry Creek to finalize the commemoration with a journey of many hours running or riding through the harsh and cold conditions. Prayers and ceremonial blessings mark the presence of Unci Maka, Grand Mother Earth; and

WHEREAS, Montana relatives of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe also join in remembering and commemorating these historical events that deeply affected indigenous people by

completing a 400 mile memorial run across the parts of South Dakota where their people were forced to escape on foot from Fort Robinson in Nebraska back to their homelands in Montana through parts of South Dakota. The Fort Robinson Memorial Outbreak Spiritual Run commemorates the anniversary of the slaughter of Chief Dull Knife's followers in Nebraska in 1879. Indigenous people from Montana share history with the indigenous people of South Dakota and many are intermarried with Lakota people, sharing the same culture and traditions; and

WHEREAS, in 1879, 300 Cheyenne tribal members fled Fort Reno, Oklahoma, in a race toward Montana's Tongue River country with the U.S. calvary in hot pursuit. In Nebraska, Cheyenne leaders split the exodus in two. Little Wolf pressed northward with most of the Cheyenne warriors. Dull Knife led 150 people, mostly women and children, to Fort Robinson, Nebraska. Soldiers disarmed Dull Knife's followers, confining them to an unheated army barracks. They would be deprived of heat, water, and food until they agreed to return to Fort Reno; and

WHEREAS, after five days, the prisoners resolved to resist. Dull Knife agreed to lead a desperate escape attempt. At 10:00 a.m. on January 9, the captives spilled from the wooden barracks into the subzero cold and a hail of bullets. Within minutes, rifle slugs cut down all but a handful of Dull Knife's people who slipped through the deadly fire to hide in the hills. Mounted Soldiers overtook the refugees at dawn, slaying all 26 remaining captives at point blank range:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT COMMEMORATED, by the Ninety-Fourth Legislature of the State of South Dakota, that the Legislature recognizes that these memorial rides and runs and the efforts to remember the hardships faced by the native people in our history, and the great significance of the Wokiksuye Rides to memorializing and honoring our forefathers for their struggles, determination, and sacrifices.