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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Anishinaabek Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party Calls for Support of HB 4853 and HB 4854

LANSING, MI December 02, 2024— The Anishinaabek Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party urges all representatives to support the passage of House Bill 4853 and House Bill 4854, crucial pieces of legislation designed to protect the rights and cultural expressions of Indigenous students in Michigan.

House Bill 4853 amends the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination against individuals in educational institutions based on their religious beliefs, race, sexual orientation, and other identities. Significantly, it ensures that Indigenous individuals are not penalized for wearing traditional regalia or for possessing traditional objects. This legislation recognizes the importance of cultural identity in educational settings and affirms the rights of Indigenous students to express their heritage freely.

Similarly, House Bill 4854 mandates that school districts and public school academies allow Indigenous students to wear traditional regalia and bring traditional objects to graduation ceremonies. This acknowledgment is vital in fostering an inclusive environment that respects and celebrates the diverse cultures within our educational institutions.

In a time when cultural representation and respect for Indigenous heritage are paramount, these bills serve as critical steps toward equity and inclusion. They not only protect the rights of Indigenous students but also enrich the educational landscape of Michigan by honoring the cultural diversity that exists within our communities.

The Anishinaabek Caucus encourages all members of the Michigan legislature to act in favor of these bills, reinforcing a commitment to justice, equality, and respect for the traditions of Indigenous peoples. The passage of HB 4853 and HB

4854 will demonstrate Michigan's dedication to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for all students.

We call on our representatives to stand with us in support of these vital pieces of legislation. Together, let us ensure that Michigan is a state where every student feels valued and respected.

END

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