



Governor Kathy Hochul
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12214

Dear Governor Hochul,

March 24, 2023

We are the Committee on Native American Ministries of the Upper New York Conference of the United Methodist church. We represent a group of Native and non-Native people working to build relationship between the UMC and the Indigenous Peoples of the Upper New York geographic area. We have three Native American Churches on Native territories within our Upper New York Conference area: Four Corners UMC on the Cattaraugus Territory; Onondaga Nation UMC on the Onondaga Nation; Hogansburg UMC on the Mohawk Nation.

We are writing to you regarding your veto of The Unmarked Burial Site Protection Act on December 30, 2022. This bill had been approved unanimously. We understand that you vetoed this because you felt it was not fair to individuals who purchased property with the intent of building on it. How would you feel if that individual discovered an unmarked grave while excavating and it belonged to your ancestor? Most people would want the opportunity to recover the body and give it a proper burial. We are asking for the same opportunity.

We understand that this bill is once again making its way through the NYS Congress. It was reintroduced on January 5, 2023. As of March 13th, it was on its' third reading. We urge you to sign this bill when it gets to you again, as we are certain it will. If you do not sign it, or opt to veto it again, we urge both the NYS Assembly and NYS Senate to override your veto and make protecting all unmarked burial sites a law.

New York State is one of only four states that does not have a law protecting unmarked burial sites. The others are New Jersey, Wyoming, and Ohio. New York State should not be the last without one. Please sign Senate bill S630 when it reaches your desk.

Sincerely,

The Committee on Native American Ministries
Upper New York Conference
United Methodist Church

Bethany Printup-Davis, Tuscarora
Sue Crawson-Brizzolara, Dine, Peenpac
Dr Thom White Wolf Fassett, Seneca
Debbie Jacobs, Onondaga
Rosalie Schotanus, Onondaga

Marilyn Anderson, Seneca
Sharon Schmit, Mohawk
Kae Wilbert, Cherokee
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