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August 5, 2024

The Honorable Abigail Davis Spanberger  
562 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20515-4607

Subject: Opposition to House of Representatives bill H.R. 5553

Dear Representative Spanberger:

I am writing to express the Stafford County Historical Society's concerns about your support of House of Representatives bill H.R. 5553, which seeks to extend Federal recognition to the Patawomeck Indian Tribe of Virginia, Inc.

Attached is an official copy of the Society's position on the historical status of the Patawomeck Tribe of Virginia, Inc. After a thorough review of all available scholarship, we do not find any evidence that supports the PITV's claims of tribal continuity as related to their current petition.




It is important to understand that this bill is not simply conferring an honorary designation to a group that wishes to identify as a tribe. Instead, it will confer a legal statement that the United States recognizes this group as the non-broken 358-year continuance of an indigenous tribe and grants them federal rights that they do not deserve.

Assisting the PITV to appropriate an identity that cannot be proven has negative consequences for the historic record at the county and state levels. Moreover, it severely undermines and devalues the work that has been done by all prior Indigenous groups to receive this same recognition.

Thank you for your time and serious reconsideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

**Connie Hilker**  
*President, Stafford County Historical Society*

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c.c. The Honorable Jen A. Kiggans  
The Honorable Jennifer Wexton  
The Honorable Rob Wittman  
The Honorable Morgan Griffith