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July 20, 2025

Senator Gary Peters  
Senator Elissa Slotkin

Dear Senators Slotkin and Peters:

As members of the Justice Committee and members of Westminster Presbyterian Church, we support the bill you introduced to the U.S. Senate in June of 2025 that would grant federal recognition to the Grand River Bands of the Ottawa Indians. We understand that this is a companion bill to the bipartisan legislation introduced by Representatives Scholten and James in May, 2025. This would allow tribal members to access federal resources – including tuition, health care, and housing assistance.

In an article in the Grand Rapids Press it was indicated that the legislation proposed by Hillary Scholten died without getting a hearing in the Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs in 2023. The previous chairperson of this subcommittee thought "these issues were too complex and that there was too much infighting among the tribes" to move forward. This was frustrating and a roadblock to justice because "infighting was not an issue that plagued" this legislation.

As you know, the Grand River Bands, chaired by Ron Yob, has been seeking federal recognition since 1994 but has hit several roadblocks along the way. We appreciate the work that you are both doing to move forward with this important work.

Please let us know if there are things we can do to assure these proposals don't die in committee again this year.

In Justice,

Justice Committee, Session, & Members

Westminster Presbyterian Church