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My name is Prairie Rose Seminole. I grew up in North Dakota and I am also a citizen of the Three Affiliated Tribes of ND on the Fort Berthold reservation. I am a descendent of the Sahnish/Arikara, Northern Cheyenne and Lakota Nations. I've served in appointed public office on the Fargo Human Relations Commission in Fargo from 2001 to 2010, serving as Chairperson from 2007 -2010. I've held faculty appointments with the Tri-College NEW Leadership Institute since 2005 to 2014 and am a trainer with Wellstone Action and VoteRunLead, national organizations that train candidates, campaign workers and activists. I have been lead on campaigns to elect candidates and organized and trained on issues from health care, gender justice, marriage equality, voting and voting rights.

I have been involved with ND state politics since 2006, leading the ND Native Vote since 2012. I recently concluded a three-year term on the Midwest advisory council to the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and was the former cultural advisor to Sanford Health One Care initiative. Awards and recognition include being named the White Shield ND, Arikara Woman of the Year in 2013, a ND Center for Technology and Business Leading Lady in 2015, Bush Foundation Native Nation Rebuilder in 2015, and a Salzburg Global Fellow in 2016 and 2017.

Currently, since 2016, I serve as the American Indian Alaska Native Program Director for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Serving American Indian, Alaska Native communities around the United States as an educator, and advocate, deconstructing colonial systems of oppression.

I'm an educator and organizer. Community organizing is in my DNA. I grew up in a multicultural home with parents who lived out their faith in action through democratic participation and encouraging others to be engaged starting conversations at kitchen tables and church basements. Albeit different models of organizing, my parents' role modeled efforts that are values based and personal. I at home with non-partisan politics, understanding the issues we face as a community are personal. American Indian visibility, our quality of education, affordable health care, how the police were trained to work in communities of color, and our access to vote were just a few of the examples I grew up with. My mother is a devout Lutheran with a social justice lens, guided by the love of her children. My father was a community educator, active in the American Indian movement, not to use violence, but to stand up and speak up when necessary. They raised me in a household where community organizing happened, relationship building with leaders and folding in like-minded citizens who were committed to seeing sustainable change that mattered be a reality. My mom voted and worked every election I can remember. I started organizing in middle school, bringing education around American Indian identity and narrative into our schools. I realized by having a conversation with teachers and principals, people who make the decisions about my well-being, can make a difference about the visibility of American Indian people. School assemblies, classroom conversations, that got me started into the world of organizing.

As a young adult, I started organizing around issues such as health care, marriage equality, economic equity and others. Voting and civic engagement have been a revolving door of efforts

for nearly twenty of my years, constantly needing to fight for a right given to all citizens. American Indian people were given citizenship and the right to vote in 1924 whether we wanted to or not. Unfortunately, states had authority to implement voting barriers that prevented our American Indian population from voting. In ND we had to give up our tribal identity to vote, essentially a strategy of erasure of the Indigenous people from this area. Considering American Indian Veterans have served in every branch of the U.S. Military for well over the past 200 years, It goes without saying that their efforts and histories of distinguished services should be recognized. The fact that American Indians serve at a high rate and have a higher concentration of female service member than any other ethnic demographic in the United States, we still have to fight for our right to vote. The Voting Rights act of 1965 created a false ending of the state by state efforts of tribal nations fighting the issue in courts for the right to vote. States however, still found ways to create arbitrary barriers to voting.

ND in 2010, during the fight for affordable health care and workers rights, as organizers with democratic leadership, including Senator Byron Dorgan were fighting to create more polling locations for tribal voters in Benson County, on the Spirit Lake reservation. At the time, there was only one polling location that wasn't accessible to all voters in the district. The decision was made to make an additional polling site, only to have that site made inaccessible by floodwaters washing the roads out. Consistently, even in the 2018, the previous county auditors of Sioux County for the Standing Rock reservation inefficiently equipped the polling sites with ballots. Many times, running out and denying people the opportunity to vote because there were no more ballots. The Fort Berthold reservation is divided by six voting districts that are set up to confuse and creating barriers because of the distance voters have to travel to cast an in-person ballot. People who drove an hour to vote, only to be told they are at the wrong polling location. A trend conversation is to make some or all of the precincts on the Fort Berthold reservation mail in only also creates a barrier as postal stations are closing in the rural communities of North Dakota. As an organizer, organized people to write letters to editors to create visibility on the issue as well as people who testified at state legislature hearings on the need for more polling locations. Legislators often referred to the county auditors' authority of establishing polling locations and how many ballots to have on hand. In 2009-2010, we were basically told that it wasn't a big enough issue for state legislators to waste time on the issue of American Indian voters having barriers in place in one of the most voting friendly states in the country.

In 2012, we started to see polling locations deny people their right to vote for not having proper identification. Voters could still vote by having an affidavit filled out on their behalf. In the next years, the state legislature voted to end the affidavit system and started to require voting ID's to have a physical address. This action created a disparity for American Indian Voters, rural North Dakotans and College students. The reservation system in ND was not mapped out like urban districts are. Physical addresses varied between the tribal system, the 911 administrative system and other mapping systems in the state. Having one authority to address the American Indian population has yet to be efficiently implemented. In the 2014, 2016 and 2018 we started to see more American Indian voters denied their right to vote because of the denial of common forms of identification such as tribal ID's and student ID's. Elders were turned away because they didn't have ID cards and they no longer had the affidavit process, legitimizing their right to vote.

In 2014 and 2016 as an election observer, I witnessed few people being turned away from New Town ND polling locations because of not having proper ID's. I sat a small polling location. Several voters were turned away because they were at the wrong polling location, they would not be voting, again a confusing dynamic of having a reservation split by 6 districts.

2018, I partnered with tribal colleges and funders to educate American Indian voters of their power of voting. Especially in response to the Supreme Court upholding the ND law. In essence establishing a crisis across tribes in ND to equip voters with acceptable forms of identification. The state of ND did not put forward any efforts to fund the mandated requirement. Tribal members, citizens of ND implemented incredible efforts to build the voter turnout accomplished in the 2018 elections. With less than a month to scale local efforts to reach the potential tens of thousands of Native voters in ND who needed new ID's to vote. Election day 2018 I was present in New Town, ND where students were denied their right to vote and the administration of the tribal college, Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College printed residency papers for these students who were later allowed to vote because the leadership of the tribal college stepped up.

I learned in 2008 working with national organizations pushing the Native Vote, that as American Indian voters, we do not show up to vote unless we are engaged. We as a voting block have been left out of this civic process for so long that some have grown apathetic, yet we are the most legislated demographic in the entire country. We have to vote, we have power when we vote. So, in 2018, we emphasized that it is recent history that we've been allowed to vote and mobilized efforts around the values of education, health care, infrastructure, and sovereignty- that are at risk when we don't vote. Efforts raised money for tribes to become equipped with technology that met the need to make the ID's needed for tribal members, citizens of North Dakota. I partnered with national media and our in state tribal colleges to ensure our efforts were non-partisan, and spoke to the personal nature of American Indian voters, our quality of life is a decision of people at the tables of government, and the right we have as voters.

There continues to be barriers, interpersonal and systemic at our polling locations in our tribal communities and for our Native voters across the state. The result of the high voter turnout of Native voters in ND has always been the result of significant on the ground organizing efforts and education happening in tribal communities by volunteers and paid staff from partisan and non-partisan organizations, committing to building consistently engaged, informed voting communities.

I continue to do this work so that there are no more barriers in place for our American Indian voters and advance our inherent rights of citizenship.