

## 1 SENATE BILL NO. 388

2 INTRODUCED BY L. WHITFORD

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4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING ELOUISE COBELL DAY EACH YEAR TO HONOR  
5 HER TIRELESS EFFORTS TO HOLD THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE TO THE NATIVE AMERICANS  
6 WHOSE LAND WAS HELD IN TRUST AND TO LIFT HER PEOPLE OUT OF POVERTY."

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8 WHEREAS, Elouise Pepion Cobell was a Blackfeet elder and activist, treasurer of the Blackfeet Nation,  
9 founder of the Blackfeet National Bank, rancher, wife, and mother; and

10 WHEREAS, as treasurer of the Blackfeet Tribe for over a decade, she discovered the accounting of the  
11 management of individual lands held in trust by the United States to be in chaos and filed the largest class-action  
12 suit against the federal government in United States history to recover royalties that had never been paid; and

13 WHEREAS, Cobell was the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit filed in 1996, known as Cobell v. Salazar, which after  
14 14 years of litigation resulted in a 2009 settlement approved by Congress and the President in 2010 to provide  
15 payment to those whose property had been held in trust; and

16 WHEREAS, Elouise Cobell sought to right a wrong for her people to inspire a new generation of Native  
17 Americans to fight for the rights of others and lift her community out of poverty.

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19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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21 NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Elouise Cobell day.** November 5 of each year is established as Elouise  
22 Cobell day. The governor shall encourage the observance of this day and, by proclamation, honor her legacy  
23 of inspiring a new generation of Native Americans to fight for the rights of others and to lift their communities out  
24 of poverty.

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26 NEW SECTION. **Section 2. Notification to tribal governments.** The secretary of state shall send a  
27 copy of [this act] to each tribal government located on the seven Montana reservations and to the Little Shell  
28 Chippewa tribe.

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30 NEW SECTION. **Section 3. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an

1 integral part of Title 1, chapter 1, part 5, and the provisions of Title 1, chapter 1, part 5, apply to [section 1].

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