

scientists might quantify and study through microscopes and biological analysis and chemical breakdown. So if we were looking at these bones only as material substance, they, in fact, would have no more significance than the remains of carcasses that we find at the slaughterhouse, but we know that from the time that human beings walked upright, they considered themselves distinct from the animal kingdom, and everything that pertained to human beings was placed on a higher level. So when people died, it was felt that they went from this world to another world, or took a different form and came back to this world. But in any case, death, physical death was not the total end of that person and his or her existence. So for those who believe in an after-life, not just the Native Americans, but there are cultures throughout the world and in this country who believe that there are certain items that should be buried along with the dead. Those who feel that the dead actually travel to another world bury these items so that the person will have the use of them in that other world. In some instances, animals were killed at the time the owner was buried so that the person would have the use of that animal in another life. Even for Christians, the idea of animals in the afterworld is not unheard of because if you've read Revelations, you will find animals existing in the place called Heaven. I don't know where they come from, I am just stating the fact that is laid out. What we are talking about with this bill is nothing less than human dignity, and what we are asking for is common decency. The same concern accorded to those that we identify as Native Americans accorded routinely to every other group on this planet and certainly in this country. It should not be necessary for a group who were wronged in the first instance to be required to bring out their religion and have it pass muster before those who may have wronged them in the first instance. They should not be required to prove every tenet of their creed, or their doctrine, or their dogma as no other member of any religion is required to do before he or she is allowed to say that I reverence and respect my dead and I want the same respect from you. We must be able to conceive of the idea that to Native American people there can be as much concern on their part for their ancestors who are departed as we have for ours. We must be able to concede that to the same way that a blessed rosary has a special significance when buried with a departed Catholic that the burial goods placed with our Native American brothers and sisters would have the same consecrated significance for them. We are not talking, or we shouldn't be, about trinkets, bits of bones, stones, leather, metal, cloth, fabric, that have