

no more value than what they would have based on their intrinsic nature. We are talking about things that have taken on an almost mystical significance for the Native Americans as the ceremonies and the ceremonial items have taken on for white people of a different type of religion. I would hope that you could try when you consider this bill and the burial goods to equate it with the way you feel about those things that are important and precious to you. We would not want to have a type of ethnocentric arrogance that would put us in a position of saying that unless I think that your religion is a religion worthy of my consideration, I will not respect it. They should not have to be required to prove the validity of their customs to our satisfaction because that, in itself, is humiliating, demeaning, degrading, and contrary to what America is supposed to be about. We should keep in mind, too, what I mentioned earlier that most of these remains and burial goods were the direct result of deliberate plundering and robbing of graves. Anybody who has been to law school, or even has walked past a law school, knows that a thief never obtains good title. When a thief is caught with the goods, the thief must give them back, and we are talking about people, who under standards established today and before today about how archeologists operated, violated every ethical tenet and in some cases the existing law of this state when they plundered these graves and took these burial goods. We're not talking about a great amount of anything in terms of dollars or whatever. But if these burial goods could be valued in terms of billions of dollars, that is not even the issue. A Catholic's rosary does not have value based on whether they are made of jewels or diamonds or whatever physical substance or the dollar value. If we're looking in terms of dollars, we can forget not only about this but all of the laws that make it a crime to desecrate cemeteries today. Everybody on this floor understands very well what it is I am talking about and were it not for a group that has traditionally been despised, abused, spat upon, who are few in numbers, impoverished, ignorant, wracked by disease and alcoholism, has a friend in very few places, if any place, if we were not talking about such a group as that, this bill would not even be necessary. We didn't need a bill like this to protect the ancestors of white people or any other group, and I think the very fact that we have to do it in this fashion is a shame upon all of us, but we can rectify a long-existing wrong as much as lies within our power. This bill has been deluded and watered down to a point that I, personally, would not accept were I pushing this issue...