



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SAC-06-005

TITLE: Support for Reducing and Responding to Incidents of Child Abuse in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities

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WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, all Native cultures have a belief system that respects and honors Native children; and

WHEREAS, as the future protectors of tribal customs, beliefs and traditions; and

WHEREAS, the interaction between immigrants and Native cultures has caused a significant breakdown of this value and respect and honoring American Indian and Alaska Native children, resulting in a high rate of child physical and sexual abuse directed toward Native children; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary for NCAI to unite the voices and leadership of tribal governments to be pro-active in the defense of American Indian and Alaska Native children to intervene and prevent violence against American Indian and Alaska Native children; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native children are physically and sexually abused at far greater rates than other groups of children in the United States and these disproportional statistics have attracted little comment or concern from federal institutions with specific responsibilities in responding to these heinous crimes; and

WHEREAS, Indian children have the second highest rate of victimization - 21.3 per 1,000 children - among racial and ethnic groups in the United States. The only group with a higher rate of victimization was Pacific Islander children at a slightly higher rate of 21.4 per 1,000 children - nearly double that of Caucasian children, according to the 2006 National Offenders and Crime Report; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native children represent approximately one percent of the total U.S. population yet are overrepresented in substantiated cases of child abuse. According to the 1997 BIA statistics, 9,040 incidents of child abuse; and, 4,567 incidents of child sexual abuse were reported. Up to 40% of child abuse cases involving American Indian/Alaska Native children go unreported, according to a 2001 study by the National Indian Child Welfare Association and Casey Family Programs; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that one in every four girls and one in every seven boys will be sexual abused in Indian Country and that over 65% of child abusers will be known to the child; and

WHEREAS, Indian tribes require additional resources to respond to physical and sexual abuse committed against American Indian and Alaska Native children and it is evident there is an inadequate federal response to these serious crimes against American Indian and Alaska Native children; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Justice has exclusive jurisdiction over felony crimes by or against Indians, including homicide, rape and aggravated assault; however, perpetrators of such violence crimes against American Indian and Alaska Native children are rarely prosecuted; and

WHEREAS, the future of Indigenous nations rests in the ability of Native nations to preserve the health, safety, physical and spiritual well-being of its members, especially its children who are entitled to live in an environment free of physical and sexual abuse; and

WHEREAS, the current federal legislation does not adequately address the health, safety, legal and physical well being of American Indian and Alaska Native children.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support the creation of a grant program to provide Federal support to non-profit, non-governmental American Indian and Alaska Native organizations to provide services to American Indian and Alaska Native communities to establish holistic and culturally responsive prevention and intervention services to child abuse victims; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support Indian child advocacy models as an effective strategy to reduce incidents/trauma of child physical and sexual abuse committed against American Indian and Alaska Native children; and creation of a grant program to provide Federal support for the development and maintenance of sexual assault services and sexual assault team units to provide services to American Indian Tribes and Alaska Native villages; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2006 63rd Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Sacramento Convention Center in Sacramento, California on October 1-6, 2006, with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary