



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #REN-13-004

TITLE: Engaging the NCAI Budget Taskforce to Protect Tribal Programs from Impacts of Sequestration through Legislation

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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, in recent years, the Congress of the United States has attempted to seek solutions to balance the budget of the United States, and in beginning the process of cutting the budget, passed legislation in 2011 that made automatic cuts to the budget across the board beginning in FY 2013 for a ten year period, the entire process being known as “sequestration”; and

WHEREAS, the sequestration cuts placed in the Budget Control Act in 2011 went into effect on March 1, 2013 because the Congress failed to act to prevent them from going into effect, and these cuts, which have been approximately 5 percent or greater, have begun to have immediate and devastating impacts throughout Indian country; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has a unique political relationship with tribal nations as domestic dependent nations, a relationship recognized in the U.S. Constitution and secured through numerous federal laws; and

WHEREAS, because of their status as domestic dependent nations the federal government has a fiduciary trust obligation to tribal nations and this obligation is not discretionary; and

WHEREAS, tribes across the United States have effectively used federal funding received through Department of Interior, especially the Bureau of Indian Affairs, among other Departments and Agencies to improve the economic, social and education circumstances for Native American and Alaska Native people through all formula and competitive grants; and

WHEREAS, Congress has reversed the impact of a few areas of the budget cut by the sequester, but has not acted to avoid the disastrous and devastating cuts to funding for the trust responsibility to Indian Country; including health care, education, law enforcement, resource protection and land consolidation, among many other things; and

WHEREAS, the abrupt and arbitrary nature of the across-the-board cuts from sequestration is having damaging effects on the progress made in addressing the serious problems facing Indian Country; and

WHEREAS, it is flawed public policy to drastically reduce funding for tribal programs that have a track record of effectively addressing the acute, high-priority needs of extremely vulnerable populations; and

WHEREAS, further cuts planned for FY 2014 will add misery to the lives of hundreds of thousands of tribal citizens throughout Indian Country, people who are among the most vulnerable citizens within the United States and who are among the poorest, including single parents, and will not substantially reduce the deficit.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI budget taskforce work with United States Congress and the Administration to pass legislation to immediately exempt all tribal programs, and federal employees that serve Indian country, from the current sequestration and any future sequestration of appropriations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI invites all tribes, tribal issue organizations, and regional and intertribal organizations to join in this effort to reverse the effects of sequestration on tribal programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI budget taskforce will continue to develop and implement strategies to ensure trust and treaty obligations are protected in the federal budget and appropriations process and work to address sequestration’s impacts in Indian Country.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2013 Midyear Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Atlantis Casino from June 24 - 27, 2013 in Reno, Nevada with a quorum present.



 President

ATTEST:



 Recording Secretary