



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PDX-20-041

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TITLE: Support for Requiring Proof of Tribal Enrollment for Artists Who Claim Native American Affiliations for Grants, Exhibition, and Cultural Arts Employment

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 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 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, the American Indian and Alaska Native artists from state and federally recognized Tribal Nations within the United States provide important contributions to their respective mediums; and

WHEREAS, museums, research institutions, non-profit organizations, federal and state grant funding programs for Arts, Culture, Historic Preservation, and Humanities across the United States who collect, preserve, study, conduct academic research, exhibit American Indian art, performance (lyrical, stage, sound and movement), literature, and anthropological materials, often maintain hiring practices intended to solicit interest from enrolled members of state and federally recognized Tribal Nations; and,

WHEREAS, many individuals who claim a tribal affiliation or claim to be “Indigenous,” or to maintain “Indigenous affiliation,” are unable to provide documentation of enrolled membership in a state or federally recognized Tribal Nation; and

WHEREAS, these individuals use such self-identification to study, display, exhibit, sell cultural knowledge, art, literary work, and share admiration for the rich cultures of the United States tribes, and often misrepresent themselves for equity selection practices for grants and employment as “Indigenous Peoples” outside of the United States; and

WHEREAS, it is important to protect the interests and culture of the tribal nations, and our individual members in the artistic, historical, literary, anthropological, and employment practices within the national arts community by preventing others from appropriating our unique tribal identities; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) opposes the use of “Indigenous affiliation” or more general self-identification as “Indigenous” or the like, as commensurate with tribal enrollment in a state or federally recognized Tribal Nation for American Indian and Alaska Native arts and employment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NCAI calls on museums, research institutions, arts organizations, and employers who promote the history, art, language, and culture of the United States’ Tribal Nations to require proof of tribal enrollment in a state or federally recognized Tribal Nation from individuals who present themselves as Native professionals and artists, and as a prerequisite to eligibility for grant funding or any professional alliance as a Native professional or artist with said museums, research institutions, federal or state grant programs, and prior to any public listing as Native American (American Indian or Alaska Native) affiliation; 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 2020 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held Nov 8, 2020 - Nov 13, 2020, with a quorum present.



Fawn Sharp, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary