



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SPO-16-043

TITLE: **Opposing the Use of a Question on Tribal Enrollment in the 2020 Census or in the American Community Survey**

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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, the US Census Bureau has decided to test a question on tribal enrollment for possible use in the 2020 Census; and

WHEREAS, the responses to such a question would be based solely on self-identification with no proof of tribal enrollment required; and

WHEREAS, the determination of who is an enrolled tribal member, a tribal citizen of that tribe, is an attribute of the sovereignty possessed solely by that tribal nation and is not a matter of self-identification; and

WHEREAS, there has not been a comprehensive federal effort to improve the capacity of tribes to use existing data or collect tribal demographic data; and

WHEREAS, the Census Bureau's issuance of counts of tribal enrollment based on self-identification are certain to differ from the official counts found only on tribal rolls; and

WHEREAS, the Census Bureau has provided no information to tribes on how such Census Bureau counts of enrolled tribal members will be used by the various federal agencies, such as possible use in the federal funding formulas for the Indian Housing Block Grant program, the Tribal Transportation Programs, and the special Native American programs authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, among others; and

WHEREAS, the considerable variations in enrollment policies from tribe-to-tribe will inhibit the ability of non-tribal governments, organizations and the general public to accurately interpret any data on tribal enrollment issued by the Census Bureau; and

WHEREAS, the inclusion of any question on tribal enrollment poses serious and complex issues when applied to the identification of Alaska Natives; and

WHEREAS, the Census Bureau's National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic and Other Populations opposed the testing of a tribal enrollment question by resolution at its spring 2016 meeting and approved a range of recommendations specific to how the tribal enrollment testing should proceed in relation to adding reservation sites, tribal consultations, and an Alaska Native strategy, among others.

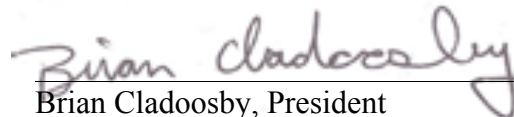
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians opposes the inclusion of a question on tribal enrollment in the 2020 Census and the inclusion of such a question in the American Community Survey (ACS); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Census Bureau inform all tribal governments, the National Congress of American Indians, and other intertribal organizations as to its decision or intention to include the topic of tribal enrollment in the 2020 Census prior to its submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Congress of any list of topics planned for such census; 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 2016 Midyear Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Spokane Convention Center, June 27 to June 30, 2016, with a quorum present.


Brian Cladoosby, President

ATTEST:


Aaron Payment, Recording Secretary