



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PDX-20-067

### **TITLE: Expanding Federal Resources, Infrastructure, and Funding for Culturally Responsive Distance and Virtual Education Options**

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

##### PRESIDENT

**Fawn R. Sharp**  
*Quinalt Indian Nation*

##### 1ST VICE PRESIDENT

**Aaron Payment**  
*Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians*

##### RECORDING SECRETARY

**Juana Majel-Dixon**  
*Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians*

##### TREASURER

**Shannon Holsey**  
*Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians*

#### REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

##### ALASKA

**Rob Sanderson, Jr.**  
*Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska*

##### EASTERN OKLAHOMA

**Norman Hildebrand**  
*Wyandotte Nation*

##### GREAT PLAINS

**Larry Wright, Jr.**  
*Ponca Tribe of Nebraska*

##### MIDWEST

**Rebecca Crooks-Stratton**  
*Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community*

##### NORTHEAST

**Tina Abrams**  
*Seneca Nation of Indians*

##### NORTHWEST

**Leonard Forsman**  
*Suquamish Tribe*

##### PACIFIC

**Erica Rae Macias**  
*Cahuilla Band of Indians*

##### ROCKY MOUNTAIN

**Mark Pollock**  
*Blackfeet Nation*

##### SOUTHEAST

**Nancy Carnley**  
*Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe of Alabama*

##### SOUTHERN PLAINS

**Robert Tippeconnie**  
*Comanche Nation*

##### SOUTHWEST

**Vacant**

##### WESTERN

**Vacant**

##### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**Kevin Allis**  
*FOREST COUNTY POTAWATOMI COMMUNITY*

#### NCAI HEADQUARTERS

1516 P Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20005  
202.466.7767  
202.466.7797 fax  
www.ncai.org

**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**, technology and the internet have transformed the way that students learn in modern classrooms; and

**WHEREAS**, high-quality distance and virtual education options have the potential to support student growth, build culture-based academic options, connect Native language learners with fluent teachers and speakers, and expand educational and essential opportunities for new courses and subjects; and

**WHEREAS**, high-quality virtual and distance education requires culturally responsive curricula and lessons tailored to the unique cultural, traditional, historical, linguistic, and geographic needs of Native students; and

**WHEREAS**, 68 percent of those living on rural tribal lands lack access to adequate broadband for distance education in 2019 according to the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC); and

**WHEREAS**, the Department of the Interior (DOI), Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) reported that 60 percent of the 183 BIE-funded schools did not have access to adequate digital broadband access aligned with college and career readiness standards in 2016; and

**WHEREAS**, the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Native communities highlighted current gaps in the availability of culturally responsive virtual education options, infrastructure, and health related resources for Native students; and

**WHEREAS**, many schools in Native communities have been forced to create solutions that retrofit traditional curricula and lesson plans into a virtual format without proper professional development, training, fiscal resources, or tools for educators, students, and families; and

**WHEREAS**, limited existing broadband infrastructure has forced many schools to rely on the distribution of educational packets, or to rely on innovative broadband solutions, such as wifi-equipped school buses, that expand community broadband access in tribal community centers and hubs; and

**WHEREAS**, lack of access to distance and virtual education options and health related resources are becoming an increasingly powerful force in widening education gaps across for Native students and for historically marginalized students, inclusive of students in foster care, students in special education programs, and students experiencing homelessness; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) urges Congress and the Administration to take immediate action in support of full funding for culturally responsive distance education programs, broadband infrastructure including hotspots, health related resources, and professional development programs for educators teaching Native students through virtual and distance models; and

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

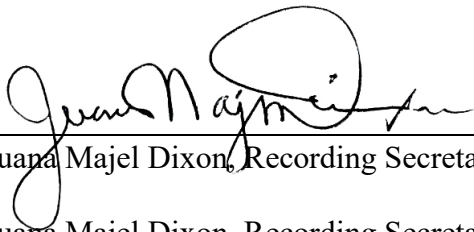
#### CERTIFICATION

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

Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary