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THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

RESOLUTION #SD-02-057

Title: Reiterating Support for Federal Native American Language Education Funding and Policy

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 and their way of life, 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 historical policy of the United States was to eliminate the use and development of indigenous (Native American) languages as the language of the schools serving Native America; and

WHEREAS, the policy of prohibiting the use of Native American languages as the language of the school has resulted in reducing over 300 original Native American languages spoken at initial European contact to 175 languages used by Native peoples in the United States at the end of the twentieth century, with only 20 still spoken by children; and

WHEREAS, many of the Native American languages are predicted to become extinct in the 21st century unless current trends are reversed; and

WHEREAS, in 1990 through the Native American Languages Act, the federal government reversed its policy of eliminating Native American languages, and established policy in support of education that reverses the loss of Native American languages; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, the National Indian Education Association passed NIEA Resolution #99-04, calling for federal support for Native American language education funding and policy; and

WHEREAS, grassroots awareness of the need to address Native American languages in education has grown in American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities; and

WHEREAS, educational research has further strengthened the positive role of Native American languages in educational achievement and the special academic, linguistic, cultural, and social strengths of schools that make the most use of Native American languages.

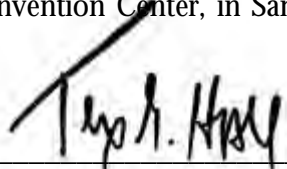
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby call upon the United States Congress to establish, as priority areas, specific funding and policy support for Native American language development with a special focus on those programs that make the most use of Native American languages within the context of exercising the rights expressed in the Native American Language Act; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI will send copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, and members of the United States Congress; 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 at the 2002 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Town and Country Convention Center, in San Diego, California on November 10-15, 2002 with a quorum present.



Tex Hall, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel, Recording Secretary

Adopted by the General Assembly during the 2002 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Town and Country Convention Center, in San Diego, California on November 10-15, 2002.

