



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

**The National Congress of American Indians  
Resolution #ABQ-19-009**

**TITLE: Calling on Congress to Introduce and Support Reparation Legislation  
that Addresses the Historic and Ongoing Mistreatment of American  
Indians and Alaska Natives**

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**NCAI HEADQUARTERS**

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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 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**, reparations, or the concept of governmental compensation for past wrongs, has been a recent policy topic in the mainstream media and politics, including the 2020 presidential elections; and

**WHEREAS**, the vast majority of the national reparations conversation so far has not addressed the United States' litany of wrongs and human rights violations undertaken against American Indian and Alaska Native people, ignoring the forced removal, land theft, and genocide that the United States is founded on; and

**WHEREAS**, the atrocities the United States has carried out against American Indians and Alaska Natives can be directly traced to the European "Doctrine of Discovery" and its religious, cultural, and racially based ideas of the superiority of Europeans over indigenous people; and

**WHEREAS**, the Doctrine of Discovery was embraced by the United States Supreme Court in *Johnson v. M'Intosh*, a case that continues to serve as the foundation of modern federal Indian law and policy, where the Court referred to Indians as "heathens" in justifying the United States' attempt to divest Tribes of Indian land, resources and governmental rights; and

**WHEREAS**, since *M'Intosh*, all three branches of the United States government have continued to apply this imperialist doctrine to justify the decisions and policies that have sought to assimilate, dispossess, and eliminate every aspect of American Indian and Alaska Native life, culture and sovereignty; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States' policies and actions have profoundly handicapped American Indian and Alaska Native sovereignty and self-determination, and continue to present barriers to the creation of tribal economic success and American Indian and Alaska Native peoples access to jobs, housing, education, and health care; and

**WHEREAS**, while various efforts have been made to settle American Indian and Alaska Native claims for the United States' historical wrongdoings, those efforts have been woefully inadequate due to procedural hurdles and the inadequate representation and remedies that do not account for tribal treaty rights or tribes standing as sovereign governments; and

**WHEREAS**, for these reasons, in order to meaningfully address the long legacy of legal and moral harms inflicted on American Indians and Alaska Natives, the United States must study and enact a policy of reparations; and


**WHEREAS**, any reparations policy should be developed with and informed by American Indians and Alaska Natives who continue to suffer from the inter-generational historical trauma inflicted by the United States and should not be limited to monetary compensation.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) hereby calls on members of the United States Congress to develop, introduce, and support legislation that seeks to address the policies, decisions, and institutions of the United States which have caused and continue to cause historical trauma and harm to American Indians and Alaska Natives through enactment of reparations legislation; and

**BE IT FURTHER 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 2019 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Albuquerque Convention Center, October 20-25, 2019, with a quorum present.

  
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Fawn Sharp, President

**ATTEST:**

  
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Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary