



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #MIC-06-005

TITLE: To Support Increased Funding and Legislation for Native Language Immersion Schools and Programs

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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, in Native communities across the country, Native languages are in rapid decline and it is estimated that only twenty indigenous languages will remain viable by the year 2050; and

WHEREAS, the key to stemming the loss of Native American languages is by significantly increasing support for Native American language immersion programs and programs designed to build towards language immersion. It is well proven that language immersion programs are one of the few effective ways to create fluent speakers in Native languages; and

WHEREAS, data shows that Native students who go through an immersion program perform substantially better academically than Native students who have not gone through such a program; and

WHEREAS, enacted in 1990, the Native American Languages Act (NALA) reversed the federal government's previous policy of eliminating Native American languages and instead, established a federal policy to preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedoms of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages; and

WHEREAS, in 1992, the Congress amended NALA to create a Native American languages grant program within the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) in the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and

WHEREAS, currently, the only federal agency that provides grants for Native American language immersion programs is ANA and funding through ANA has typically been less than \$400,000.00 a year to support language immersion programs.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support new legislation and language that creates a competitive grant program within the U.S. Department of Education for Native language immersion programs and programs designed to build towards language immersion in Native communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby request an increase of \$2 million in funding to the budget of the Administration on Native Americans to be specifically used to support language immersion grants; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI will work with their Congressional delegations to support passage of a language immersion bill, the House Education and Workforce Committee and the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to hold a mark-up of the bill, and House and Senate leadership to support floor action of the bill; and

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

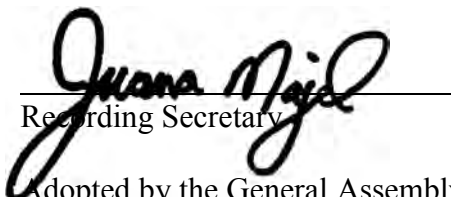
CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2006 Mid Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Kewadin Hotel and Casino in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan on June 21, 2006 with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary

Adopted by the General Assembly during the 2006 Mid Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians held from June 18-21, 2006 at the Kewadin Hotel and Casino in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.