



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #DEN-18-043

TITLE: Reclaiming Native Truth Phase Two: Changing the Narrative

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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, in June 2018, Echo Hawk Consulting and First Nations Development Institute completed their jointly-managed effort known as “Reclaiming Native Truth: A Project to Dispel America’s Myths and Misconceptions” (RNT), a project that sought to create a long-term, Native-led movement that will positively transform the popular image of and narrative about Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, RNT endeavors to create a long-term, Native-led movement that will positively transform the popular image of and narrative about Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, the Kellogg Foundation, tribal governments, individual donors and others invested \$3.3 million into the first phase of this research; and

WHEREAS, the research phase establishes a solid foundation of unprecedented public opinion research and data based on interviews and surveys with average Americans as well as key decisionmakers, including members of Congress, federal judges and clerks, and administration officials; and

WHEREAS, the research consolidates and expands previous research efforts in order to inform, guide, and generate strategic insights for a subsequent advocacy phase, which will include engaging national and regional partners and allies, and widely disseminating the campaign’s messaging and further supporting its activities across the United States; and

WHEREAS, among some of the RNT findings in the broader research, which is publicly available, is that most Americans surveyed significantly understate the degree of discrimination against Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, RNT's research and data show that the myths related to the abundance of tribal gaming and free government benefits to Native Americans are held and promote intense bias across diverse demographics and within institutions; and

WHEREAS, RNT research and data demonstrate that Americans hold contradictory stereotypes and many maintain conflicting narratives about Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, RNT research and data also found that people have limited personal experience with Native Americans but accept pervasive negative narratives that are erroneously set or reinforced by others, and that proximity shapes some perceptions – people who live near or work in Indian Country, especially in areas of great poverty, are likely to hold significant bias; and

WHEREAS, RNT research and data also demonstrated that Native Americans are assigned to a romanticized past, and that one of the biggest barriers identified was the invisibility and erasure of Native Americans in all aspects of U.S. society; and

WHEREAS, RNT identified promising new narrative change strategies that can support cultural shifts to advance social and policy change to support tribal sovereignty, racial equity and justice for Native Americans and tribal Nations; and

WHEREAS, RNT developed a new narrative, informed by the research, that incorporates messaging related to values, history and the visibility of Native peoples; and

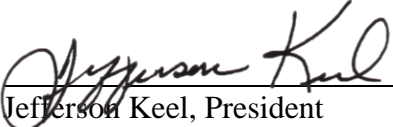
WHEREAS, the next phase of work will focus on bringing the power of many movements—of organizations, tribes, grassroots leaders, non-Native allies, foundations, and individuals—to form a broad-based national coalition of members each of whom can adopt, adapt and disseminate the new shared narrative as part of their ongoing efforts and work, while leading implementation of their own priority strategies.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) will promote and share the RNT research findings with NCAI members, policymakers, and other stakeholders; shift the narrative; remove bias and barriers; and support the next phase of work being developed that includes being a part of a national coalition of tribal nations Native organizations, youth, grassroots communities and allies to wage a national movement to achieve the collective vision for the change the RNT calls for—that Native Peoples authoring and leading a more equitable reality where we fully benefit from and contribute to both Native and American society; 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 Executive Committee at the 2018 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Hyatt Regency in Denver, Colorado October 21-26, 2018, with a quorum present.



Jefferson Keel, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary