



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #MKE-17-003

TITLE: To Support the Examination of Charter Schools in Indian Country

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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, tribal governments have a solemn responsibility for the welfare of their citizens, which includes their children and students; and

WHEREAS, tribes, Native communities, and parents have the inherent right to determine an educational system that will best meet the needs of their children; and

WHEREAS, providing a cultural based, high-quality education is the most critical investment tribal nations can make for our future; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has a trust responsibility for the education of Native students that comes from the Constitution, treaties and the inherent sovereignty of Native nations; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People states in Article 14 that indigenous people have the right to control their own education, and to be free of discrimination, and that national governments have an obligation to provide for the education of indigenous people; and

WHEREAS, despite barriers, tribal governments and Native communities are innovating through tribally controlled charter schools to create Native education programs that fulfill the unique needs of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students; and

WHEREAS, tribal nations, states, and localities have implemented policies that recognize and continue to strengthen tribal sovereignty and self-determination over their education, such as the 2015 Oklahoma Charter Schools Act, which expanded the definition of charter school authorizers to allow tribes to open and manage their own unique schools through the charter school system; and

WHEREAS, tribal nations and Native communities in states such as Florida, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Michigan, and Hawaii have been innovative in creating exceptional schools integrating Native languages, culture, and history into the classroom.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) shall advocate for and support tribal self-determination and initiatives to improve outcomes for Native students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI shall convene with tribal leaders, other stakeholders, and partners, a working group to examine challenges and opportunities in tribal charter schools and compact schools to develop information and recommendations that tribes can utilize in reaching decisions about charter schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI shall not support the use of funds for charter schools if such funds are taken from existing programs for Native education; 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 2017 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee, WI, Oct 15, 2017 - Oct 20, 2017, with a quorum present.



Jefferson Keel, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary