



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #LNK-12-027

TITLE: In Support of the Native American Program in the Workforce Investment Act of 1998

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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, the United States Department of Labor is designated as the Authority on oversight, guidance, and allocation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998; and

WHEREAS, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor appropriates WIA funding specifically for Native American Programs, under Section 166, which serves approximately 32,000 unemployed, under-employed, and under-skilled American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians through a network of 178 grantees; and

WHEREAS, the Native American Program increases employment, education, retention and earnings of participants, and increases occupational skill attainment by participants, and as a result, improves the quality of the workforce, reduces welfare dependency, and enhances the productivity and competitiveness of Native Americans throughout Indian Country; and

WHEREAS, the Native American Program provides essential opportunities for developing the necessary skills for job entry, re-entry, advancement, and security for reservations that lack the infrastructure and urban environment to attract workforce development; and

WHEREAS, elimination of the Native American Program or reallocation of program funding through the state would be a direct attack on tribal sovereignty because the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor currently distributes and allocates funding directly to section 166 grantee tribal programs residing on and off reservations to administer their own workforce development programs; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of additional unidentified Performance Accountability Measures and reductions of total appropriations for the Native American Program would create significant administrative and financial burdens on tribes, especially when 25% of American Indians and Alaska Natives live at or below the poverty line and 22% of them are unemployed.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NCAI declares its opposition to any version of the WIA Reauthorization that would propose to do any of the following: 1) Eliminate the Native American Program; 2) Delegate additional authority and appropriations to states; 3) Establish additional Performance Accountability Measures; or 4) Reduce total appropriations in comparison to current levels; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI hereby respectfully requests that the President of the United States of America and United States Congress oppose any WIA Reauthorization that would threaten the Native American Program in such a manner as described above; 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 2012 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at The Cornhusker Hotel from June 17-20, 2012 in Lincoln, Nebraska, with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary