



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #RAP-10-053

TITLE: U.S. Department of Interior and Education Needs to Address Governance and Management of Haskell Indian Nations University and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute

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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, among those institutions now operated by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), within the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI), are Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU), established in 1884, located in Lawrence, Kansas, and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institution (SIPI), established in 1971, located in Albuquerque, New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, both of these institutions have developed good reputations for quality education; and

WHEREAS, tribal control of higher education institutions that primarily serve American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians has long been shown to be an effective mechanism for governance of these institutions, including the 35 Tribal colleges, and most recently, the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) located in Santa Fe, New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, HINU has suffered, both in reputation and enrollment, from recent turmoil at the University, and by the failure of the BIE to provide the leadership needed to ensure quality education and stable governance at HINU in recent years; and

WHEREAS, SIPI has had series of leaders over the past 10 years and it, too, has suffered because of lack of leadership at the BIE caused by political turnover in top positions within the DOI; and

WHEREAS, both HINU and SIPI serve American Indians and Alaska Natives from many federally recognized tribal Nations throughout the United States, and have advisory boards with little power or influence in the management of these institutions; and

WHEREAS, the IAIA, another institution operated primarily with funds from the DOI, was granted the ability to govern itself by the United States Congress in 1992, and is governed by a diverse Board of Trustees with a majority of the Trustees being American Indians from Federally recognized Indian tribes; and

WHEREAS, given existing problems at both HINU and SIPI, a similar governing structure to IAIA should be developed for HINU and SIPI, and appropriate Congressional legislation enacted, so that governance of these institutions is controlled by American Indians and Alaska Natives with a vested interest in good management of these institutions, in a manner similar to how contracts are performed under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (P.L. 93-638, as amended).

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby respectfully request that the United States, through the DOI and the Department of Education, fulfill its trust responsibility by supporting legislation or administrative action that will enable both HINU and SIPI to be tribally controlled postsecondary education institutions, with a governance structure similar to that of IAIA, with a board capable of administering Federal funds for the operation of the institutions in a manner similar to how funds are administered under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975; and

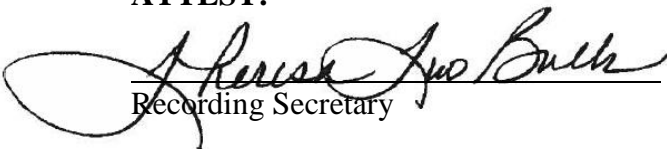
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NCAI respectfully requests that the United States, through the DOI and the Department of Education, fulfill its trust responsibility by developing an action plan that addresses the aforementioned concerns that will be presented to NCAI at the 67th Annual Convention, November 14-19, 2010, in Albuquerque, NM; and

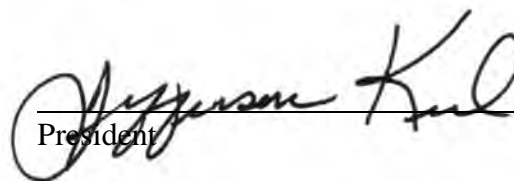
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of the NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2010 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City, South Dakota on June 20-23, 2010, with a quorum present.

ATTEST:


Recording Secretary


President