



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #MKE-11-027

TITLE: Support for Full Funding for Indian Programs in Legislation Reducing the National Debt and Raising the Debt Ceiling in 2011 and Beyond

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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, under the United States Constitution, the United States government has a Nation-to-Nation relationship, as set forth in the Commerce clause contained in Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, which states that the United States Congress has the power to *“regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes”* (emphasis supplied), and under the Treaty clause, Article 6, Clause 2, which makes treaties the Supreme Law of the land; and

WHEREAS, arising out of this Nation-to-Nation relationship, along with the taking of Indian lands from Tribes over the past 300 years; the many Treaties that the United States has with Indian Tribes; numerous Federal statutes; and many decisions of the United States Supreme Court, the U.S. has a unique and fundamental trust responsibility towards American Indians, Alaska Natives and the Indian Tribes that remain and that are federally recognized within the boundaries of the United States, and for whom reservations were established or lands were set aside subject to use by the various Indian tribes, on which more than one million Tribal citizens reside; and

WHEREAS, under the various Treaties entered into by the U.S. with Indian Tribes, and pursuant to statute and Supreme Court decision, the U.S. has a trust responsibility to provide health care to the various Tribal nations and to American Indian and Alaska Native citizens generally; and

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), part of the Department of Interior, is the government agency charged with carrying out the long-standing trust responsibility of the U.S. towards those peoples and Tribal Nations that first occupied the lands that became the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Indian Health Service (IHS), part of the Department of Health and Human Services, is the agency responsible for providing health care to the citizens of Tribal Nations and American Indians and Alaska Natives not residing on the reservations; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress is again debating increasing the debt ceiling, a periodic process necessary to ensure that the United States can continue to meet all of its long-term monetary obligations; and

WHEREAS, in this year, 2011, there have been serious proposals that would require, as a condition for approval of a debt ceiling increase, significant long term and short term expenditure reductions by the United States; and

WHEREAS, any cuts to programs benefitting American Indians and Alaska Natives, regardless of which U.S. agency or department provides such programs, that results from short and long-term reductions in expenditures made as a result of legislation increasing the debt ceiling of the United States, would seriously erode the trust responsibility the U.S. has to American Indians, Alaska Natives and Indian Tribes.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support full funding for all U.S. programs in existence at present that provide a benefit to American Indians, Alaska Natives and federally recognized Indian Tribes, regardless of the Department within the Executive Branch that carries out the particular trust responsibility; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NCAI hereby urges that in any discussion of short and long term reductions in expenditures that are part of legislation that needs to be enacted to raise the debt ceiling of the U.S., the trust responsibility and duty of the U.S. to its citizens who are American Indians and Alaska Natives and to the federally recognized Indian tribes within the United States should not be reduced in any manner; and

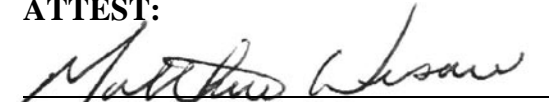
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI hereby urges Congress to make plain that reductions in expenditures of the U.S. that may become part of legislation that raises the debt ceiling for the United States will not include reductions for programs that benefit American Indians and Alaska Natives and will not impair the financial obligations to American Indians and Alaska Natives; 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 2011 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Frontier Airlines Center in Milwaukee, WI on June 13-16, 2011, with a quorum present.



President**ATTEST:**

Recording Secretary