



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #MSP-15-010

### **TITLE: Aligning Federal Education Policymaking to Preserve and Revitalize Native Languages**

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#### NCAI HEADQUARTERS

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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**, NCAI has deemed the cultural and spiritual well-being, via the survival of the languages of our American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian peoples, as a high priority; and

**WHEREAS**, NCAI has supported Native American language preservation and revitalization efforts, including passage of the Native American Programs Act, Native American Languages Act (NALA), the Esther Martinez Native Language Preservation Act, and the Code Talker Recognition Act; and

**WHEREAS**, NCAI maintains the belief that Indigenous languages are an irreplaceable foundation of Native religions, ceremonial practices, and cultural heritage, and has previously declared that Native languages in a state of emergency (Resolution #ABQ-10-21); and

**WHEREAS**, more than two decades after NALA's passage, federal education legislation, federal education administration rule making, federal education administration exceptions (e.g., waivers, etc.) and implementation are still not aligned with NALA to realize its promise.

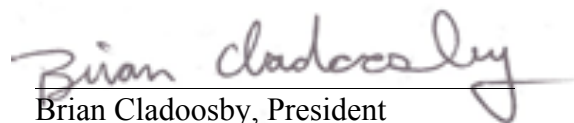
**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the NCAI does declare its support for all Native language schools and programs to implement federal education policies that include the following elements:

- Allowing exceptions for teacher certification requirements for instruction in Native languages;
- Academic content assessments allowed to be administered in the Native language, or medium of instruction, in Native language immersion schools and programs;
- Academic content, particularly that delivered in Native language immersion schools and programs, must be approached through the cultural, historical, and environmental heritage of the Native language;
- Language immersion schools or programs shall ensure that students have also developed a level of proficiency in spoken and written English to allow them to continue their academic development at an English medium institution of higher education; 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 General Assembly at the 2015 Midyear Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the St. Paul River Centre, St. Paul, MN, June 28 to July 1, 2015, with a quorum present.

  
Brian Cladoosby, President

**ATTEST:**

  
Aaron Payment, Recording Secretary