



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## **Resolutions Committee Recommendation**

Resolution # REN-19-033

Title: Support for the Department of Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory Committee Act

### Comments:

This resolution supports passage of legislation that would create a Tribal Advisory Committee within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. A Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory Committee (VATAC) would ensure officials at the VA understand and work to address the unique issues affecting Native veterans in tribal communities. Earlier this year the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress introduced the Department of Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory Committee Act of 2019, therefore it is emergency in nature that NCAI may advocate on this important legislation. Establishing a VATAC is national in scope and calls for Representatives from each of the 12 Indian Health Services of the Indian Health Service nominated by tribal nations or tribal organizations.

### Recommendations:

Due to the comments mentioned above it is recommended by the Resolutions Committee that this resolution be considered by the Veterans Committee. The NCAI Resolutions Committee recommends passage of this resolution.

Sponsor a member in good standing (yes/no)?: \_\_\_\_\_



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The National Congress of American Indians  
Resolution #REN-19-033

**TITLE: Support for the Department of Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory  
Committee Act**

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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 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 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**, Per capita, American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) serve in the armed forces at a higher rate than any other group of Americans, and AI/ANs have served in all of the Nation's wars since the Revolutionary War, and many have paid the ultimate sacrifice for their effort; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) should be able to provide medical attention and other services AI/AN veterans need. However, too often Native veterans report difficulty accessing the benefits they earned through their military service; and

**WHEREAS**, increased engagement with AI/AN veterans, tribal leaders, and tribal organizations would help improve access to VA medical and other services for AI/AN veterans; and

**WHEREAS**, a Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory Committee (VATAC) would provide vital opportunities for collaboration, communication, and coordination between the VA and tribal nations; and

**WHEREAS**, the VATAC would advise the Secretary on how to improve programs and services for AI/AN veterans, identify timely issues related to VA programs, propose solutions to identified issues, provide a forum for discussion, and help facilitate getting useful feedback from across Indian Country.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) calls upon Congress to pass the Department of Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory Committee Act of 2019, or similar legislation to ensure officials at the VA understand and work to address the unique issues affecting Native veterans in tribal communities; 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 2019 Mid-Year Conference of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Nugget Casino Resort, June 24-27, 2019, with a quorum present.

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Jefferson Keel, President

**ATTEST:**

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Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary