



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #ECWS-14-001

TITLE: Support for Indian Veterans Housing Rental Assistance Demonstration Program in the Native American Housing and Self-Determination Act Reauthorization

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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 National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) is a coalition of tribes and tribally designated housing entities across the United States that provides training and advocacy for its members; and

WHEREAS, Tribal Nations continue to suffer from a lack of affordable and safe housing as well as adverse living conditions in existing homes in the United States (U.S.); and

WHEREAS, over the last 90 years, American Indians and Alaska Natives have volunteered to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces at a higher rate than any other ethnic group of persons in the country, and many have paid the ultimate sacrifice for their effort; and

WHEREAS, many more have returned home as military veterans to their Tribal Nations and face numerous challenges in obtaining housing opportunities; and

WHEREAS, preventing and ending homelessness among veterans by 2015 is a national priority that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and its federal partners, including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), have taken decisive action to achieve; and

WHEREAS, the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) expired in October 2013 and needs to be reauthorized; and

WHEREAS, the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program provides rental assistance for homeless Veterans by combining Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) to homeless Veterans and providing clinical services. The Department of Veterans Affairs provides these services for participating Veterans at VA medical centers (VAMCs) and community-based outreach clinics; and

WHEREAS, the HUD-VASH program currently does not include tribal lands so that rental assistance can be administered to homeless Indian Veterans residing on tribal lands.

WHEREAS, the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs included the Indian Veterans Housing Rental Assistance Demonstration Program in the reauthorization of the Native American Housing and Self-Determination Act.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI urges Congress to support the expansion of eligibility for the HUD-VASH program to be administered on tribal lands to provide housing assistance for homeless Indian Veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI urges Congress to strongly support the, Indian Veterans Housing Rental Assistance Demonstration Program, which authorizes the Secretary to implement a rental assistance and supportive housing demonstration project, in cooperation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, for the benefit of Indian veterans who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness and who are residing on or near Indian lands; 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 2014 Executive Council Winter Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Westin Washington City Center March 11 -13, 2014, in Washington, DC with a quorum present.


President

ATTEST:


Recording Secretary