



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SD-15-073

TITLE: Supporting the Bureau of Indian Education's Reorganization and Reprogramming of Funding

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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 federal government has a responsibility to provide for the education of American Indian and Alaska Native people, as enshrined in many Treaties and as required by the trust responsibility; and

WHEREAS, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act and the Tribally Controlled Schools Act build upon the treaty and trust responsibilities of the United States to Tribes to provide for education, and recognize the right of Native people to determine the manner and goals of that education; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Interior and of Education have undertaken serious efforts to develop a plan to reform the Bureau of Indian Education school system; and

WHEREAS, the development of this plan entitled the "Blueprint for Reform" has included consultation and meetings with tribal governments, tribal schools, and other stakeholders for over two years; and

WHEREAS, Congress has held numerous hearings on the state of BIE school system calling for necessary reform; and

WHEREAS, the Blueprint intends to reform the structure of the BIE, proposes to replace Education Line Officers with Education Resource Centers and School Support Teams, and will re-align the responsibilities of the Associate Deputy Directors; and

WHEREAS, on September 15, 2015, the Department of the Interior requested authority from the Appropriations Committees to reorganize and reprogram its funds to implement the Blueprint for Reform; and

WHEREAS, on October 9, 2015, the Chairman and Ranking Members of both the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies responded to the BIE that they required more information from the agency before approving the request, providing the BIE with 19 questions that call for specific answers; and

WHEREAS, Tribes, Tribal schools, educators, school administrators, and the BIE itself agree that change at the BIE is warranted and long overdue.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) requests Congress to continue to oversee the BIE and Indian and Alaska Native education and seek transparency in the proposed reform; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI calls on the Department of the Interior to share with Congress, Tribes, and Tribal schools how the BIE reorganization effort will be carried out, consistent with existing treaties and applicable laws including the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act and the Tribally Controlled Schools Act; and

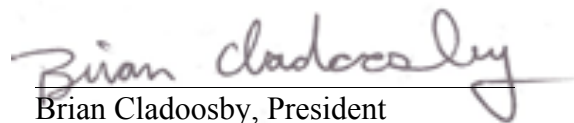
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI asks the BIE to continue to conduct informational sessions on the implementation of the BIE reorganization with Tribes and Tribal schools and to provide impact statements for Tribes that request them explaining how reform will affect their school(s), and to provide the research and data upon which the reorganization is based; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI supports the Departments of the Interior and Education in their continued efforts to reform the BIE in a manner that improves student achievement and respects tribal sovereignty; 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 2015 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Town and Country Resort, San Diego, CA, October 18-23, 2015, with a quorum present.


Brian Cladoosby, President

ATTEST:


Aaron Payment, Recording Secretary