



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

June 24, 2019

Honorable Tribal Leadership and NCAI Members—

Earlier this year, the National Congress of American Indians announced its search for its first-ever Chief Executive Officer (CEO). NCAI has historically had an Executive Director to manage the day to day affairs of the organization. However, in reviewing NCAI's internal operations over the last year, it became apparent how much NCAI has grown as an organization.

Right now, NCAI policy staff oversee a number of issue areas, including tax and economic development; lands and natural resources; health, education, and workforce development; justice and law enforcement; and many others. In turn, the administrative, outreach, and finance staff at NCAI has grown to keep pace. Further, the recent acquisition of Indian Country Today, LLC has solidified that NCAI is in a new era.

This realization spurred the decision to transition from an Executive Director to a CEO to lead the organization. However, NCAI's Constitution, By-Laws, and Standing Rules of Order need technical amendments to support this transition. Right now, the title "Executive Director" is mentioned 9 times in those documents. Each of these sections will need to be amended at the upcoming Annual Convention and Marketplace in Albuquerque, NM, October 20–25, 2019. In addition, NCAI's General Counsel reviewed the current version of the Constitution, By-Laws and Standing Rules of Order and identified several other technical amendments that are suggested as well.

The following is a comprehensive summary of the proposed amendments. All proposed amendments need approval by NCAI's voting membership.

I. Proposed Changes from "Executive Director" to "Chief Executive Officer"

Each reference to "Executive Director" would need to be changed to "Chief Executive Officer" in the following areas:

- NCAI's Constitution
 - Article II, Section D (page 3)
 - Article III, Section D (page 7)
 - Article IV, Section B(1) (page 9)
- NCAI's By-Laws
 - Article III, Section B(1)(e) (page 13)
 - Article IV, Section G (page 17)
 - Article VIII (page 23)
 - Article IX (page 23)
- NCAI's Standing Rules of Order
 - Section I (page 24)
 - Section X (page 29)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Chickasaw Nation

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*Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa
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Pauma Band Mission Indians

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*Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of
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Leonard Forsman
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PACIFIC
Brian Poncho
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Nancy Carnley
Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indians

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Zach Pahmahmie
Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation

SOUTHWEST
Joe Garcia
Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo

WESTERN
Quintin C. Lopez
Tohono O'odham Nation

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II. Proposed Technical Amendments

The following are proposed technical amendments to NCAI’s Constitution and By-Laws.

i. Proposed Technical Amendments to NCAI’s Constitution

a. Article II, Section B (2) (page 2):

Indian Individual Membership

Any person of Indian and/or Alaska Native ancestry in the United States ~~or a native of Alaska, who is eligible for individual membership. For the purpose~~ recognized as a member by an Indian tribe, or combination of tribes and bands, recognized by **either** the U.S. Department of the Interior, the Indian Claims Commission, Court of Claims, or a State, **is eligible for Indian individual membership.**

Reason:

This section is currently unclear because some words are unintentionally omitted. In looking at a similar provision of the By-Laws, at Article III, Section B (2) (page 13), it seems the intent of this provision was to make membership in an Indian tribe, or a combination of tribes and bands, which are recognized by either the Department of the Interior, the Indian Claims Commission, the Court of Claims, or a State, a minimum requirement for Indian individual membership. The proposed amendments clarify that intent. These edits make this section of the Constitution consistent with a similar membership provision in the By-Laws.

b. Article II, Section F (1)(b) (page 4):

Regional Vice-Presidents:

Elections of Regional Vice Presidents to represent the National Congress of American Indians in the separate **NCAI** regions ~~of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Northeast regions~~ shall be conducted during the second half of the Annual Convention.

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Reason:

NCAI regions do not correspond directly with all BIA regions, although there is significant overlap. This amendment clarifies that NCAI uses its own regions and refers to those regions as NCAI regions.

ii. Proposed Technical Amendments to NCAI's By-Laws

a. Article III, Section B (2) (page 13):

Indian Individual Membership

Any person of Indian and/or Alaska Native ancestry in the United States ~~is eligible for individual membership. For the purpose of this section, an Indian is a person,~~ who is recognized as a member by an Indian tribe, or combination of tribes and bands, recognized by **either** the U.S. Department of the Interior, the Indian Claims Commission, Court of Claims, or a State, **is eligible for Indian individual membership.**

Reason:

These amendments are proposed to ensure this definition is consistent with the proposed amendments to a similar definition in the Constitution, at Article II, Section B (2), as discussed above.

III. Conclusion

In conclusion, NCAI thanks you for your continued support and involvement. This year's Annual Convention and Marketplace will be an exciting time. Not only will it be an election year, but these proposed changes to NCAI's organizational documents mark a significant step forward in a new era in our mission. We look forward to working with each of you in the coming years as we work collectively to advance the sovereignty of all tribal nations.

Sincerely,



Jefferson Keel
NCAI President