



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SAC-12-068

TITLE: Support for the Protection of the Indian Child Welfare Act

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 Indian Child Welfare Act was passed in 1978 in response to the large number of American Indian and Alaska Native children who were being removed from their homes and communities and placed in foster care and adoptive homes which were primarily non-Indian; and

WHEREAS, large numbers of American Indian and Alaska Native children are still being removed from their homes and communities today, and in many states the foster care and adoption placement rate of American Indian and Alaska Native children is much higher than their numbers in the general population; and

WHEREAS, an Indian Child Welfare Act case (“the Baby Veronica Case”) in South Carolina involving a Cherokee Nation father and his daughter has been the subject of national media attention, much of it very negative toward the father, his tribe, and the Indian Child Welfare Act; and

WHEREAS, the daughter is currently with her father; however, the non-Indian pre-adoptive couple have now petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to review the decision of the South Carolina Supreme Court which upheld the father’s custody, ICWA, and its application in to this case; and

WHEREAS, the non-Indian pre-adoptive couple from South Carolina are working with an anti-ICWA coalition (“The Coalition for the Protection of Indian Children and Families”) seeking to repeal portions or all of the Indian Child Welfare Act; and

WHEREAS, these legal and legislative threats to the Indian Child Welfare Act have the potential to impact tribal sovereignty and American Indian and Alaska Native families nationwide.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT
Jefferson Keel
Chickasaw Nation

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT
Juana Majel Dixon
Pauma Band of Mission Indians

RECORDING SECRETARY
Edward Thomas
*Central Council of Tlingit & Haida
Indian Tribes of Alaska*

TREASURER
W. Ron Allen
Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe

REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

ALASKA
Bill Martin
*Central Council of Tlingit & Haida
Indian Tribes of Alaska*

EASTERN OKLAHOMA
S. Joe Crittenden
Cherokee Nation

GREAT PLAINS
Robert Shepherd
Sisseton Wahpeton

MIDWEST
Matthew Wesaw
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi

NORTHEAST
Lance Gumbs
Shinnecock Indian Nation

NORTHWEST
Fawn Sharp
Quinault Indian Nation

PACIFIC
Don Arnold
Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians

ROCKY MOUNTAIN
Scott Russell
Crow Tribe

SOUTHEAST
Larry Townsend
Lumbee Tribe

SOUTHERN PLAINS
George Thurman
Sac and Fox Nation

SOUTHWEST
Joe Garcia
Ohkay Owingeh

WESTERN
Ned Norris, Jr
Tohono O’odham Nation

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Jacqueline Johnson Pata
Tlingit

NCAI HEADQUARTERS

1516 P Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005
202.466.7767
202.466.7797 fax
www.ncai.org

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NCAI, in conjunction with the National Indian Child Welfare Association, will continue to provide leadership and assist tribes as they address these threats to their sovereignty and well-being of their children and families; 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 2012 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Sacramento Convention Center from October 21-26, 2012 in Sacramento, California, with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary