



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #DEN-18-027

**TITLE: Urging the Department of the Interior to Establish a Position of Deputy Secretary for Indian Affairs and Establish a White House Council on Native Nations**

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### NCAI HEADQUARTERS

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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**, Indian nations and tribes were independent sovereign nations prior to the formation of the United States, and the source of our sovereignty is the Creator, who endowed our Native Peoples with certain inalienable rights to life, liberty and freedom to live according to our own ways of life on our homelands; and

**WHEREAS**, in the Treaty, Supremacy, Apportionment, Commerce Clauses and the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, the Constitution acknowledges Indian nations and tribes as prior sovereigns with a government to government relationship with the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States has entered into more than 375 treaties and enacted and executed hundreds of agreements, statutes, and executive orders with Indian nations and tribes to preserve our original inherent rights to self-government and to our homelands; and

**WHEREAS**, the President and the Secretary of the Interior have important Federal trust, treaty, statutory and legal responsibilities to Indian nations and tribes, including the protection of Indian lands, waters, and natural resources; and

**WHEREAS**, the Secretary of the Interior has begun to implement a plan to reorganize the Department of the Interior and the specific details of the DOI Reorganization Plan have not been provided to Indian nations and tribes as required by DOI's consultation policy, and therefore Indian nations and tribes have declined to participate in the reorganization plan; and

**WHEREAS**, Indian nations and tribes represent the Native Peoples of the United States and to provide due respect to the Native Peoples of the United States.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) calls upon the Secretary of the Interior to enhance our government to government relations with the United States by working with the President to establish the White House Council on Native Nations, co-chaired by the President and Vice President with annual meetings with Indian nations and tribes and quarterly meetings with the Vice President and Cabinet Officers; and

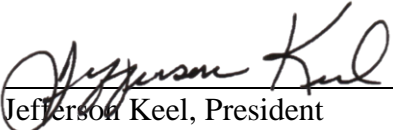
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the NCAI calls upon the Secretary of the Interior to establish the position of Deputy Secretary for Indian Affairs and to collect all of the Department's Indian offices and Bureaus under the authority of the new Deputy Secretary; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCAI calls upon the Administration, the Secretary and Congress to reaffirm national policy on Indian self-determination, treaty rights and the federal trust responsibility to core department missions; and calls upon the new Deputy Secretary position to be vested with the authority and responsibility to enforce these policies; 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 2018 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Hyatt Regency in Denver, Colorado October 21-26, 2018, with a quorum present.

  
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Jefferson Keel, President

**ATTEST:**

  
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Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary