

National Congress of American Indians **2015 Election Procedures**

To: Membership of the National Congress of American Indians
Fr: Juanita Ahtone, Elections Committee Chair
Re: Elections for National Congress of American Indians
NCAI 72nd Annual Convention – October 18-23, 2015, San Diego, CA
Dt: September 22, 2015

This is an election year for the National Congress of American Indians, and I would like to encourage all tribal leaders and members of NCAI to participate in the elections at the Annual Session in San Diego. NCAI is a great organization with a very important mission: to work in unity with tribes for the protection of tribal sovereignty and treaty rights and to promote the welfare of Native people. It is up to all of us to elect the members of the Executive Committee who will take on the responsibility to provide the leadership and ensure that this mission is accomplished. The following is some information about the procedures for the election:

Registration and Membership – In order to vote in the election, both tribal delegates and individual members must be members in good standing and registered at the conference. Membership dues and registration fees for the Annual Convention are the major source of NCAI's annual budget so it goes to a good cause. I would like to encourage everyone to register early for the Annual Convention and if you are going to be casting the votes for your tribe, please have your resolution from your tribal council in place. In order to cast the tribal votes, you must have a current resolution from your tribal council stating that you are the delegate or alternate delegate for the tribe. You can register online [here](#) and a model resolution at http://www.ncai.org/membership/2015-2016_Tribal_Membership_Forms.pdf.

Time Frames for Registration, Rules and Credentials and Voting – The deadline for registration is Wednesday, October 21, 2015 at 5:00 pm pacific standard time. This deadline will be printed in the agenda so all are on notice.

Revisions to the Election Schedule and Balloting Process

The NCAI General Assembly adopted revisions to NCAI election procedure at its 2014 Annual Convention in an effort to streamline and clarify the process. All voting will be held in a room separate from the General Assembly, with the location to be announced once the schedule has been finalized. Potential candidates should note the following revisions to the election schedule:

- 1) Nominations will take place Wednesday, October 21 at 10:30 am, with candidate speeches following directly afterwards;
- 2) Candidate speeches immediately follow the cutoff of nominations on Wednesday, October 21. Candidate speeches are limited to five minutes;
- 3) Voting will take place between 8:00 am and 10:00 am on Thursday, October 22 in the California Room;
- 4) In the event of a runoff between candidates, voting will take place between 11:00 am and 12:00 pm on Thursday, October 22 in the California Room.

Administrative Board Elections – NCAI elects its President, First Vice-President, Treasurer and Recording Secretary with voting by the entire membership by electronic ballot. Nominations for these offices will be received in the General Assembly on Wednesday, October 21, 2015. The election will be held between 8:00 am and 10:00 am on Thursday, October 22, 2015, and we expect to start promptly. In the event of tie, a runoff election will take place between 11:00 am and 12:00 pm the same day. All tribal delegates must be properly credentialed in order to cast the votes of their tribe. I would encourage each of you to be credentialed well before that time and remember the deadline is Wednesday, October 21 at 5:00pm.

Voting in the Regional Caucuses – During previous elections, we have encountered some confusion about voting procedures for the Regional Caucuses for the Regional Vice Presidents. Many of the regions have a history of handling these elections somewhat informally: sometimes through consensus; sometimes through “one tribe, one vote”; or sometimes with a “one person, one vote.” It is up to the caucus to decide how to run its own elections and we do not intend to interfere. However, we have received some requests for clearer rules on voting in the regional caucuses.

First, all candidates must be (1) an NCAI tribal delegates or alternate, and (2) a tribal official who is currently elected or appointed to represent his or her own tribal government. If there are any questions about eligibility please see me and we will discuss with the Parliamentarian.

Second, the NCAI Constitution provides the process by which Regional Vice Presidents are elected. Individual Indian members in good standing are eligible to participate in the regional caucus elections. The Constitution also indicates that all elections should be conducted according to the weighted voting system where each Indian individual member is entitled to one vote and each member tribe is entitled to 100 to 180 votes, depending upon the enrollment of the Tribe. In the past, it has not generally been the practice that the regional caucuses would use this weighted voting system, but it should be utilized if the caucus is unable to agree on how to run its election. The current Regional Vice Presidents should clarify the procedures before the election. Please contact me if you would like assistance in facilitating the regional election. The time and exact location of such caucuses to elect the Regional Vice Presidents shall be announced in General Assembly at least four hours prior to caucus.

Volunteers Needed – The elections committee will need two volunteers from each of the Regional Caucuses to assist us in administering the election. Having volunteers from each Region ensures that the elections are administered fairly and that we have enough assistance to complete the work efficiently. The volunteers should meet at 12:00 noon on Tuesday, October 20 in the Pacific Salon Three Meeting Room. We have contracted with an election services company that will handle the printing of ballots and electronic ballot counting under the direction of the Elections Committee.

Unregistered Members – The NCAI Constitution is clear that registration at the conference is required in order to vote. So even if a person or tribe is a member of NCAI (they have paid their membership dues) they must also register for the conference in order to vote.

Vendors – Registering for the conference is not the same as participating in the trade show as a vendor. The NCAI Constitution and the vendor contracts are clear that separate registration is required for the conference if you wish to vote in elections.

Conference Volunteers - If a volunteer would like to vote they will be required to pay the conference registration and their individual membership dues in order to vote.

Speakers – Invited speakers are not required to pay registration fees for the day they are speaking. Their name badges have a ribbon that says “speaker” but they do not get a “registrant” ribbon unless they register for the conference and pay the fee. I would clarify for speakers that they must register separately if they wish to vote.

Hotel and Meeting Space - Campaign material can be distributed by hand but not within fifty (50) feet of the doors to the General Assembly hall, the Rules and Credentials table, or the Registration area.

No banners, hand held signs, or distribution of campaign materials will be allowed in the general assembly hall. NCAI will allow campaign information to be left on the chairs in the general assembly room; however, these materials must be placed before the meeting is called to order or during breaks.

The property has a strict policy of not allowing items to be taped or tacked up on the walls. The property also does not allow any materials to be put on doors and walls. The center may rent easels directly to a candidate who makes prior arrangements with the property (limited quantity). Please do not affix campaign materials to NCAI signs.

NCAI will provide a candidate information table where candidates can leave their campaign material (this will be separate from the NCAI information table). These tables are not to be staffed but an area to leave materials.

Candidates can rent tables directly from the center for their campaigns based on availability.

Banners must be hung by the center. The center will directly charge the candidate \$25 for this service.

It is the responsibility of each campaign to make arrangements for removing and cleaning up post-election. Any expenses NCAI incurs from the center for a candidates material will be invoiced by NCAI to the candidate.

In previous elections, some candidates used other methods to advertise through the hotel (e.g. advertisement run on the hotel channel, hotel distribution of materials to each sleeping room, etc...). It will be the responsibility of a candidate to contact the host hotels for cost estimates or availability of such services.

Contact Niki Gagliano, Convention Services Manager, ahead of time to make arrangements for

anything needed from the hotel and to make payment arrangements directly with Town & Country Resort.

Contact: Alexandra Nath, Senior Catering Sale Manager

Phone: (619) 502-7068

Email: anath@destinationhotels.com

Credential Membership List - On Wednesday, October 21, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. the list of the member tribes, who have completed the credential process, will be posted near the Rules and Credentials area. NCAI membership records are proprietary information and will only be posted at Rules and Credentials area. This allows everyone to have access to the list at the same time.

If you have further questions contact the Elections Committee Chair, Juanita Ahtone at 405.933.1095.

Thank you on behalf of the Elections Committee.

National Congress of American Indians
ELECTION PROCEDURES
(Excerpts from Constitution and By-Laws)

Election of Officers

Only tribal government officials or delegates in good membership standing shall qualify for nomination, election or office for the Administrative Board Officers or Area Vice-President. Any registered member in good standing is eligible to nominate others and participate in the election process. The President (or session Chair) shall turn the Chair over to the Election Committee Chairman. No member of the Election Committee shall be a candidate for any office.

Constitution – Art. II.Sec.F.1(c)., Standing Rules – Sec.5.

Duties of NCAI Officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer

PRESIDENT: The President shall preside at all conventions of the organization and meetings of the Executive Council and shall exercise other duties delegated to him by the Executive Council. By-laws – Art. IV.Sec.B.

VICE PRESIDENT: The First Vice President shall assume the responsibilities of the President in the absence or incapacity of the President, and shall carry on such other duties as are assigned by the Executive Council. By-laws – Art. IV.Sec.C.

RECORDING SECRETARY: The Recording Secretary shall perform the duties set forth in the Constitution usually performed by a secretary, and such additional duties as shall be prescribed by the Executive Council. He/She shall provide copies of the minutes of all actions by the Annual Convention, Executive Council, Executive Committee, and Administrative Board to the Executive Committee by postmark or electronic delivery within (30) days of the action. By-laws – Art. IV.Sec.E.

TREASURER: The Treasurer is responsible for all funds of the organization. He/She shall provide monthly financial reports to the Executive Committee and provide for an annual audit by a Certified Public Accountant and submit a report to the Executive Committee within (15) days of receipt of the report designated by electronic delivery. By-laws – Art. IV.Sec.F.

AREA VICE-PRESIDENTS: Alaska Area, Eastern Oklahoma Area, Great Plains Area, Midwest Area, Northeast Area, Northwest Area, Pacific Area, Rocky Mountain Area, Southeast Area, Southern Plains Area, Southwest Area, Western Area. These (12) Area Vice-Presidents shall be responsible for coordination of National Congress of American Indians activities in their regions. He/She should serve in a leadership role in fundraising and membership activities in their regions and act as a liaison between the tribal and individual members in their area and the officers and other members of the Executive council. This person shall also carry out the duties by the Executive Council and/or Executive Committee. By-laws – Art. IV.Sec.D.

- A. Nominations: Nominations of officers shall begin no later than 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 21, 2015. Standing Rules – Sec.V.A.

1. Nominations of officers shall be in the following order:
 - i. President
 - ii. First Vice-President
 - iii. Recording Secretary
 - iv. Treasurer
2. The Election Committee Chairperson shall declare nominations open for the office of President
3. Nomination speeches shall be no longer than two (2) minutes. Individual making nominations must state their name, the Tribe they represent, and indicate that they are a member in good standing of NCAI. Nominations do not have to be seconded, and no seconding speeches shall be allowed.
4. After calling for nominations three (3) consecutive times, the Chairman may declare nominations closed without a motion. Motions to close nominations in order to block a nomination are not allowed.
5. Campaign speeches will take place immediately after the nominations. Campaign speeches shall be no longer than five (5) minutes.

B. Balloting by Tribal Delegates

The voting process shall take place from 8:00 am to 10:00 am on Thursday of an election year. If needed, balloting for a runoff will be held from 11:00 am to Noon. The balloting will take place in a separate room while the General Assembly continues.

The balloting for all officers shall be by consolidated secret ballot. Each Tribal delegate shall be entitled to 100 to 180 votes in accordance with the table in Article III, Section B.1.d of the NCAI By-Laws.

C. Balloting by Indian Individual Members shall be entitled to cast one vote.

D. The NCAI Bylaws require the winning candidate to win by a majority or 50%,

E. If a runoff is required, another balloting will take place. Only the two (2) highest vote-getters for an office will be on the second ballot. Once a candidate gets a majority of the delegate votes, the Chair will request a motion to adopt the Election Committee report.

F. Regional Vice-Presidents are elected in the Regional Caucuses at a time specifically set aside for this purpose. Each caucus chair reports the results of caucus elections and makes a motion to ratify their elections at the conclusion of the report: Standing Rules – Sec.V.F.

“Mr. /Madam Chair the _____ Area has elected Mr. /Ms. _____ as our Area Vice-President and Mr. /Ms. _____ as the Alternate. I move and ask unanimous consent for the Convention to ratify our election.”

SECTION E - No Proxy Voting

At any meeting, a voting member may vote only in person and not by proxy.