



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

RESOLUTION #PHX-03-034

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**Title: Support for the 2005 Reauthorization of the Violence
Against
Women Act Including Enhancements for American Indian
and
Alaska Native Women**

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 and their way of life, 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, all Indigenous Native cultures have a belief that respects and honors Native women as cultural bearers, life-givers and care-givers of nations; and

WHEREAS, the interaction between immigrants and Indigenous cultures has caused a significant breakdown of this value of respect and honoring American Indian and Alaska Native women, resulting in a high rate of domestic violence and sexual assault directed toward American Indian and Alaska Native women; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the NCAI as the leadership of tribal governments to be proactive in the defense of American Indian and Alaska Native women to curtail and prevent violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native women are battered, raped and stalked at far greater rates than any other group of women in the United States and these disproportional statistics have attracted little comment or concern from federal institutions with specific responsibilities in responding to these heinous crimes; and

WHEREAS, 1 of 3 American Indian and Alaskan Native women are raped in their lifetime, and American Indian and Alaska Native women experience 7 sexual assaults per 1000 compared to 4 per 1000 among Black Americans, 3 per 1000 among Caucasians, 2 per 1000 among Hispanic women and 1 per 1000 among Asian Americans, according to the November 2000 National Institute of Justice report; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native women experience the violent crime of battering at a rate of 23.2 per 1000 compared to 8 per 1000 among Caucasian women; and

WHEREAS, about 8 in 10 American Indian and Alaska Native victims of rape or sexual assault were estimated to have assailants who were White or Black, according to the U.S. Department of Justice – American Indians and Crime Report from 1999; and

WHEREAS, Indian Tribes require additional resources to respond to violence assaults against American Indian and Alaska Native women and it is evident that there is an inadequate federal response to these serious crimes against American Indian and Alaska Native women; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Justice has jurisdiction over felony crimes by or against Indians, including homicide, rape and aggravated assault; however, perpetrators of such violent crimes against American Indian and Alaska Native women are rarely, if at all, prosecuted; and

WHEREAS, the unique legal relationship between the U.S. and Indian Tribes creates a federal trust responsibility to safeguard the lives of American Indian and Alaska Native women; and

WHEREAS, the future of Indigenous nations rests in the capacity of Native Nations to preserve the safety, integrity, and well-being of its members, especially the sacred status of American Indian and Alaska Native women to live in an environment free of violence and sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, the current federal legislation does not adequately address the safety needs of American Indian and Alaska Native women.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act of 2005; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby resolve to support amendments to the Violence Against Women Act to increase the Federal response to violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women such as:

1. Increasing the sentencing authority of Indian tribes in cases of domestic violence and sexual assault cases beyond one year and \$5,000;
2. Increasing criminal authority to Indian tribes to prosecute non-Indian rapists and batterers;
3. Increasing Federal support to Indian tribes to enhance their response to violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support amendments to the Violence Against Women Act to enhance the ability of non-profit, non-governmental American Indian and Alaska Native women's organizations providing services to survivors of domestic and sexual violence such as:

1. Creation of a grant program to provide Federal support to non-profit, non-governmental American Indian and Alaska Native women's organizations to provide services to survivors of domestic and sexual violence; and
2. Creation of a grant program to provide Federal support to non-profit, non-governmental Native women's organization providing services to survivors of domestic and sexual violence to build shelters and transitional housing for American Indian and Alaska Native women; and
3. Creation of a grant program to provide Federal support for the development and maintenance of Sexual Assault Forensic Exam and Sexual Response Team units to provide services to American Indian Tribes and Alaska Native villages; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby resolve to support amendments to the Violence Against Women Act to increase the Federal response to violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of the NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2003 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Gila River Indian Community, in Phoenix, Arizona on June 18, 2003 with a quorum present.



Tex Hall, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel, Recording Secretary

Adopted by the General Assembly during the 2003 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Gila River Indian Community, in Phoenix, Arizona on June 18, 2003.