

**THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF  
AMERICAN INDIANS**

**RESOLUTION #SPO-01-008**

**Title: Support for NATIVE Act, S. 761**

**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**, without access to both basic and advanced telecommunications services, Indian Country cannot participate fully in the digital economy, nor can it harness the latest tools to improve the delivery of health care and education to community members; and

Falling Through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide, and 1999 Department of Commerce study, showed that, for telephone penetration, rural Native American households rank far below the national average, with a penetration rate of only 76.4 percent, compared to 94.1 percent; and

the lack of infrastructure and equipment is often the greatest obstacle to connectivity in Indian Country; and

limited access to capital often prevents tribal governments from building telecommunications systems and seriously undermines the formation of tribally-owned businesses that could provide telecommunications services; and

**WHEREAS,** 24, 2000, Senators Baucus (D-MT), Daschle (D-SD), Bingaman (D-NM), and Johnson (D-SD) introduced the Native American Telecommunications Improvement and Value Enhancement Act (NATIVE Act, S. 761), which would create a \$1 billion revolving loan fund for tribal cooperatives or tribal entities that have partnered with a telecommunications carrier to create a wireline or wireless telecommunications infrastructure; and

the NATIVE Act also would establish a grant program to provide matching grants to tribes to conduct feasibility studies for tribal telecommunications projects; and

both the revolving loan and grant program would expire when 94% of households on tribal lands have telephone service, or ten years after the date the first loan is made, whichever comes first.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,**

President to sign, the NATIVE Act in order to help provide basic telephone access to all Native American and Alaska Native households.

**CERTIFICATION**

58<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Spokane Convention Center, in Spokane, Washington on November 25-30, 2001 with a quorum present.

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Tex Hall, President

**ATTEST:**

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Colleen Cawston, Recording Secretary

Adopted by the General Assembly during the 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Spokane Convention Center, in Spokane, Washington on November 25-30, 2001.