



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

April 17, 2003

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
P.O. Box 371
Milwaukee, WI 53201-0371

Dear Editor:

On behalf of the 250 member tribes of the National Congress of American Indians, I write to convey our disappointment over the Wisconsin Republican Party's racist and defamatory portrayal of Wisconsin tribes in an editorial cartoon about Governor Jim Doyle that recently appeared on a Wisconsin GOP sponsored website.

We understand that the ongoing gaming compact negotiations between tribes and the state of Wisconsin have been a source of tension for many in both state and tribal governments. Humor is a reasonable way to approach the frustrations of political conflict—racist stereotyping and exploitation of cross-cultural tensions are not.

Tribal gaming has provided one of the most promising forms of economic development for *all* of Wisconsin. Indian gaming has created 30,000 jobs in Wisconsin. Tribes have numerous service agreements with state and local governments to share revenues, contribute emergency service equipment, build roads and other basic infrastructure, and provide an array of government services to non-Indian community members. To imply that tribes are threatening the well-being of Wisconsin's citizens runs entirely contrary to the facts.

NCAI is committed to building strong relationships between state and tribal governments, regardless of political ideology. We are deeply troubled that the state of Wisconsin's Republican Party has resorted to the use of racist imagery in the face of substantive disagreements at play within the state. On behalf of tribes throughout the nation, I urge the Wisconsin Republican Party to apologize for the cartoon and for its decision to make race an issue in this sensitive debate.

Sincerely,

Tex Hall
President, National Congress of American Indians

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