



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians  
Resolution #ABQ-19-018

**TITLE: In Support of State Laws and Tribal Compacts that Allow Native Students to Wear Items of Cultural Significance**

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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**, despite steps forward in recent years, many schools continue to bar Native students from wearing items of cultural significance, resulting in damage to sacred items and trauma for graduating students; and

**WHEREAS**, some states, such as Montana and North Dakota, have taken steps to address these ongoing concerns by passing laws that allow Native students to wear tribal regalia and items of cultural significance at graduations; and

**WHEREAS**, some schools and tribal nations have developed innovative compacts for tribal nations to approve requests to wear regalia and cultural items at graduation as part of a larger partnership to improve Native representation and education services in public schools.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) will work with the National Indian Education Association (NIEA), the Tribal Education Departments National Assembly (TEDNA), and other partners to support the development of state laws and codes that allow Native students to wear regalia and items of cultural significance at celebrations and school events, including graduation; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, NCAI, in partnership with NIEA and TEDNA, will work with tribal nations and schools across the country as they ask their state legislatures to pass applicable laws and codes, as well as develop innovative partnerships and compacts to support items of cultural significance at graduation; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCAI, in partnership with NIEA and TEDNA, encourages national, state, and regional Native organizations to pass similar resolutions in support of our Native American students; 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 2019 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Albuquerque Convention Center, October 20-25, 2019, with a quorum present.



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Fawn Sharp, President

**ATTEST:**



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Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary