



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

July 23, 2019

The Honorable Bobby Scott  
Chairman  
Committee on Education and the Workforce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2176 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Virginia Foxx  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Education and the Workforce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2176 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

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RE: Supporting the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Programs Reauthorization Act

Dear Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Foxx:

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) is the oldest and largest national organization composed of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal nations and their citizens. We write to express our support for the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Programs Reauthorization Act, introduced in the Senate as S. 256 and in the House as H.R. 912. This legislation will enable schools, tribal language departments, and other Native American language organizations to preserve and revitalize Native languages. Preserving Native languages will build stronger communities by sustaining and rejuvenating tribal cultures and traditions rooted in those languages. Additionally, it will facilitate better educational outcomes in tribal communities because Native language immersion programs have proven effective in promoting academic success among American Indian and Alaska Native students.

Indian Country has long supported the reauthorization of the Esther Martinez program. Tribal nations were encouraged that this legislation passed the Senate last Congress and hope that it will be enacted this Congress. We appreciate Representative Lujan and Senator Udall for introducing companion versions of the legislation this year. We are hopeful that we will see this legislation enacted this session, as S. 256 passed the Senate on June 28 and is ready for consideration in the House.

To emphasize the need for Congress to enact this vital legislation quickly, NCAI's membership passed [Resolution #REN-19-026](#) supporting reauthorization of the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Programs Preservation Act. Accordingly, we strongly support the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Programs Reauthorization Act and urge this Committee to include this legislation on the agenda of the Committee's next legislative hearing. We look forward to working with you and the Committee on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Kevin Allis  
Executive Director  
National Congress of American Indians