

REN-19-026: Support of Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act
Sponsor: Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians

Summary:

- The Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-394, H.R. 4766) expired in FY 2012 and must be reauthorized and fully funded as an investment in Native American culture and language preservation.
- Resolution REN-19-026 supports the reauthorization of the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act.

Issue:

The Esther Martinez Native American Language Act authorizes Native language programs by providing funding to tribal nations and tribal organizations for preserving and increasing fluency through language immersion schools and language restoration programs. In 2012, P.L. 109-394 expired, however, programming has continued with yearly appropriation legislation.

Native American language immersion programs have been shown to promote higher academic success for students who participate in these programs compared to their Native peers who do not participate in these programs. Esther Martinez Grants train 170-280 Native language teachers each year, and biennial evaluations by the Department of Health and Human Services show that grantees increase the abilities of more than 4,000 youth and adults to speak a Native language on a yearly basis.

Legislation has been introduced in both the House and Senate in the 116th Congress to reauthorize and fund the Esther Martinez Native American Language program (S. 256 & H.R. 912). In June 2019, S. 256 passed the Senate without amendment by voice vote. H.R. 912 is currently waiting to be considered in the House Committee on Education and Labor.

Action:

Resolution REN-19-026 urges Congress to reauthorize and fund the Esther Martinez Native American Language Preservation Act.

For additional information, please contact Jacob Schellinger at jschellinger@ncai.org or Nicholas Courtney at ncourtney@ncai.org.

Resolution Action Plan: REN-19-026

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Action Plan:

- 30 Days:
 - Staff will review pertinent legislation related to resolution subject area.
 - Contact resolution sponsor to coordinate requested assistance.
 - Assess opportunities for cross-coordination with other tribal nations, organizations, and representatives.
 - Letter to House leadership in support of the Esther Martinez Preservation Act.
- 60 Days:
 - Schedule Hill visits to follow-up on support letter.
 - Prepare activities update for NCAI Annual Convention and the Native American Languages Task Force.
- 90 Days:
 - Continue Hill visits and track discussions, hearings, and Hill activity pertaining to Esther Martinez Preservation Act reauthorization.
- 120 Days:
 - Continue Hill visits and track discussions, hearings, and Hill activity pertaining to Esther Martinez Preservation Act reauthorization.