



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

**The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #REN-19-037**

**TITLE: Promoting Healthy Pregnancies and Families through the Advancing
FASD Research, Prevention and Services Act**

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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, children are the future of our tribal nations and the continuation of our cultures, and in utero, they must have good nutrition and be free from prenatal exposure to alcohol, drugs, and other substances known to harm fetal neuro-development; and

WHEREAS, NCAI Resolution #ABQ-10-101 recognized that alcohol, as a teratogen, can permanently harm the developing brain and other organs of the growing baby, that prenatal alcohol exposure can result in Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) – an umbrella term used to describe the range of cognitive and behavioral impairments, including physical, mental, behavioral and learning disabilities with possible life-long implications, and that the cost to tribal communities over the lifetime of one individual with FASD can range from \$850,000 to \$4 million, depending on the severity of the disability; and

WHEREAS, FASD is 100 percent preventable, and is the leading known preventable cause of birth defects and neuro-developmental and intellectual disabilities in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the most recent and wide-ranging active case ascertainment cross-sectional study of over 13,000 first-grade students in four regions of the U.S. found FASD prevalence rates of 1 in 20 children (1 in 10 in some areas), and rates as high as 1 in 5 among children and adolescents in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems – rates that far exceed the prevalence of autism (1 in 59) and cerebral palsy (1 in 323), according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and

WHEREAS, based on CDC data, as many as 430,000 newborns annually in the United States are alcohol-exposed, with 125,000 of these births exposed to high-risk binge drinking (defined as consumption of four or more drinks an average of 4.5 times in the past 30 days); and

WHEREAS, prenatal alcohol exposure does not always result in below average IQ or visible birth defects, making the disability of FASD difficult to identify or diagnose such that affected children often receive improper treatment or none at all, or are denied support services; and

WHEREAS, early recognition and identification of FASD and appropriate treatment and services can improve outcomes and reduce secondary disabilities, such as mental health disorders, disrupted school experiences, trouble with the law, detention or incarceration, inappropriate sexual behavior, alcohol and substance use disorders, dependent living, and problems in later life; and

WHEREAS, FASD is as significant a public health crisis as the opioid epidemic that Congress must address immediately by enacting legislation with new, robust strategies to expand screening, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment to reverse the upward trends in FASD prevalence; and

WHEREAS, the Advancing FASD Research, Prevention and Services Act will improve the federal response to FASD by:

- (a) supporting a national strategic action plan to reduce FASD prevalence, reduce its impact, and improve the quality of life for those with FASD;
 - (b) increasing resources for FASD prevention, screening and identification, and FASD-informed services by federal, state, local, tribal and private stakeholders;
 - (c) increasing recognition of FASD and improving diagnostic capacity by establishing a consensus on FASD diagnostic conditions, universal clinical practice guidelines and required training, and use of allied health professionals in the diagnosis, evaluation and treatment of FASD; and
 - (d) integrating the federal response to the opioid crises by including prenatal alcohol screening of children born with neonatal abstinence syndrome or who may have been prenatally exposed to alcohol.
- (e)

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) supports the prompt introduction, consideration, and enactment of the Advancing FASD Research, Prevention and Services Act or similar legislation intended to update and fortify federal programs that support research, screening, diagnosis, and provision of treatment and other services for children and other individuals with FASD, as well as prevention and education efforts through state, local, and tribal programs that promote the health and welfare of tribal and other communities in the United States; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

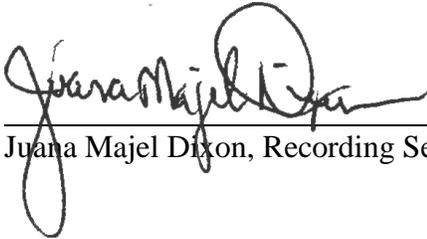
CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2019 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Nugget Casino Resort, June 24-27, 2019, with a quorum present.



Jefferson Keel, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary