



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PDX-20-059

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### **TITLE: A Resolution to encourage the President-elect of the United States to appoint the first Native American as Secretary of the Interior**

**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**, NCAI seeks to ensure that the United States upholds its sacred trust responsibility to tribal nations, honors treaties, and provides a voice for American Indians and Alaska natives in the federal government; and

**WHEREAS**, Joseph R. Biden and Kamala Harris have been elected as the next President and Vice-President of the United States; and,

**WHEREAS**, the President-elect and Vice-President-elect have pledged to adopt a plan for tribal nations that will “build on the efforts of the Obama-Biden Administration, which were instrumental in rebuilding trust, good faith, and respect for the tribal-federal relationship.” In addition, the President-elect’s plan for tribal nations included a commitment to “ensure tribes have a seat at the table at the highest levels of the federal government and a voice throughout the government[;]” and

**WHEREAS**, the President-elect will work to build a Federal Government that is representative of the diversity of the United States, including in key cabinet positions to oversee federal agencies; and

**WHEREAS**, the Department of the Interior has vast responsibilities in carrying out the Federal Government’s trust obligation toward Indian tribes and Indian people, and makes decisions that directly affect the lives of millions of American Indians and Alaska Natives; and

**WHEREAS**, the Department of the Interior is also responsible for the management of millions of acres of other federal lands that are adjacent to Reservations and tribal communities or include sacred sites and treaty resources; and

**WHEREAS**, American Indians and Alaska Natives have served the United States with honor in the military, in Congress, and federal agencies for more than a century, and have made great contributions to the advancement of American democracy; and

**WHEREAS**, there has never been an American Indian or Alaska Native who has served as a cabinet secretary in the history of the United States, including the position of Secretary of the Interior; and

**WHEREAS**, there are numerous American Indians and Alaska Natives who have the qualifications, experience, and skills to serve the United States in key cabinet positions, including the Secretary of the Interior; and

**WHEREAS**, the members of NCAI understand that representation matters, and that it is important that the United States Federal Government reflect the diversity of the United States; and


**WHEREAS**, it is long past time that an American Indian or Alaska Native serve as the Secretary of the Interior.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) calls upon President-elect Joseph R. Biden and Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris to nominate the first American Indian or Alaska Native in our nation's history to serve as the Secretary of the Interior; 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 2020 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held Nov 8, 2020 - Nov 13, 2020, with a quorum present.

  
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Fawn Sharp, President

**ATTEST:**

  
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Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary