



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #REN-19-033

**TITLE: Supporting the Department of Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory
Committee Act**

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COMMUNITY*

NCAI HEADQUARTERS
1516 P Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005
202.466.7767
202.466.7797 fax
www.ncai.org

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, Per capita, American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) serve in the Armed Forces at a higher rate than any other group of Americans, and AI/ANs have served in all of the nation's wars since the Revolutionary War, and many have paid the ultimate sacrifice for their service; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) should be able to provide medical attention and other services AI/AN veterans need, yet too often AI/AN veterans report difficulty accessing the benefits they have earned through their military service; and

WHEREAS, increased engagement with AI/AN veterans, tribal leaders, and tribal organizations, including AI/AN women veterans, AI/AN disabled veterans, and Tribal Veterans Representatives/Tribal Veterans Service Officers (TVRs/TVSOs), would help improve access to VA medical and other services for all AI/AN veterans; and

WHEREAS, a Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory Committee (VATAC) would provide vital opportunities for collaboration, communication, and coordination between the VA and tribal nations; and

WHEREAS, the majority of VATAC membership should be comprised of AI/AN veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VATAC would advise the Secretary on how to improve programs and services for AI/AN veterans, identify timely issues related to VA programs, propose solutions to identified issues, provide a forum for discussion, and help facilitate getting useful feedback from across Indian Country.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) calls upon Congress to pass the Department of Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory Committee Act of 2019 or similar legislation to ensure officials at the VA understand and work to address the unique issues affecting American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) veterans in tribal communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that AI/AN women veterans, AI/AN disabled veterans, and Tribal Veterans Representatives/Tribal Veterans Service Officers be included in the membership of said Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory Committee; and

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

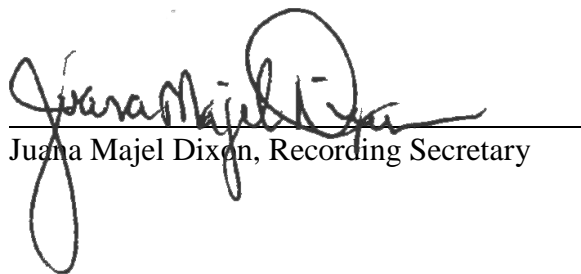
CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2019 Mid-Year Conference 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