



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SAC-12-013

### TITLE: Support for Reauthorization of the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act

**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, 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**, the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-394, H.R. 4766) expires in FY 2012 and must be reauthorized and fully funded as an investment in cultural and language preservation; and

**WHEREAS**, the purpose of the Act is to preserve and increase fluency in Native American languages, as Native American languages are in rapid decline and are not spoken anywhere else in the world; and

**WHEREAS**, preserving Native languages is integral to preserving indigenous knowledge based on thousands of years of observation and application of natural laws and is essential to addressing challenges facing our country and global community today; and

**WHEREAS**, linguists estimate that, at the current rate of decline, there may be only 20 Native American languages remaining by the year 2050 and if they are not preserved, they will disappear forever; and

**WHEREAS**, the Act amends the Native American Programs Act of 1974 to allow the Administration for Native Americans, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to award grants to support and strengthen Native American language immersion programs, including language nests, language survival schools, and language restoration programs; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to creating fluency, Native language immersion programs have been shown to promote higher academic success for students who participate in Native language immersion programs compared to their Native peers who do not participate in these programs.

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**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that NCAI does hereby urge the U.S. Congress to reauthorize and fund the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act as an investment in cultural and language revitalization goals; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCAI also urges the Administration to support reauthorization of Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act; 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 2012 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Sacramento Convention Center from October 21-26, 2012 in Sacramento, California, with a quorum present.

  
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President

**ATTEST:**

  
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Recording Secretary