



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #MKE-17-043

TITLE: Calling for Tribal Governments to be Included in the Census of Governments

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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, Indian tribal governments have a unique status in our federal system under the U.S. Constitution and numerous federal laws, treaties and federal court decisions; and

WHEREAS, tribal governments have a governmental structure, and have the power and responsibility to enact civil and criminal laws regulating the conduct and affairs of their members and reservations; tribes operate and fund courts of law, police forces, and fire departments and provide a broad range of governmental services to their citizens, including education, transportation, public utilities, health, economic assistance, and domestic and social programs; and

WHEREAS, every five years, 90,000 government entities are surveyed, right down to local sewer districts; but tribal governments have never been included in this process; and

WHEREAS, the quinquennial census of governments required by 13 U.S.C 161 applies to all "governments" and would provide beneficial data for use by tribal decision-makers, budget developers, researchers, and policy analysts if tribes were included; and

WHEREAS, the Census of Governments identifies the scope and nature of the nation's state and local government sector; provides authoritative benchmark figures of public finance and public employment; classifies local government organizations, powers, and activities; and measures federal, state, and local fiscal relationships; and

WHEREAS, the data are available by: level of government (state, local, or state and local combined), type of government (state, county, city, township, special district, school district), and, category of governmental activity; and

WHEREAS, the data comprise three main topic areas: Government Organization (lists and structure of governments); Government Employment and Payroll; Government Finance; and

WHEREAS, *Government Organization* data includes: the number of governments by type and by state, descriptions of the responsibilities and authority of local governments in each state, a list of all local governments in the United States (not tribal); *Government Employment & Payroll* includes the number of full- and part-time employees and payroll amounts for federal, state, and local levels of government; *Government Finance* includes: State government finance, State tax collections (as distinct from expenditures, debts, assets, and revenues other than taxes), Public employee-retirement systems, Public elementary-secondary education finance, State and local government finance; and

WHEREAS, when tribes attempt to plan, conduct comparative analysis, or appeal for federal resources, they do so without any of the data that other governments use; and

WHEREAS, among the hundreds of tribal governments, public revenue and expenditure varies from region to region and tribe to tribe; data to describe tribal government economic activity would assist tribal leaders and other decision-makers to better plan, develop budgets, and understand the role of the public sector in Indian Country; and

WHEREAS, tribal leaders and researchers would find the inclusion of tribal governments in data collection through the Census of Governments to be very useful.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) requests that the Census Bureau consult with tribal governments on including tribal governments in the Census of Governments in the future; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, tribal nations are government entities and should be considered for inclusion in the Census of Governments; 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 2017 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee, WI, Oct 15, 2017 - Oct 20, 2017, with a quorum present.



Jefferson Keel, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary