The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #DEN-07-102c

TITLE: To Create an NCAI Wounded Warrior Family Support American Indian and Alaska Native Task Force

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, NCAI recognizes and honors the unique sacrifice and service of American Indian and Alaska Natives in the Armed Forces and their families, as well as all men and women who serve in Iraq and Afghanistan and all other military service on behalf of our country; and

WHEREAS, the wounded warriors of Iraq and Afghanistan have unique recovery issues as a result of surviving Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), vision loss, Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD), amputations, “Iraq infections,” subsequent bone growths, other injuries and complications; many of the Very Seriously Injured (VSI) surviving injuries unseen in past wars and conflicts; and

WHEREAS, the extent of harm combined with deployment extensions and redeployments may cause marital and family stress, divorce and separation and are also contributing factors to the likelihood of Post Traumatic Stress Disorders; including secondary PTSD symptoms among family members; and

WHEREAS, the President’s Commission on Care for America’s Returning Wounded Warriors of July 2007 suggests methods for Congress, the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Veterans Administration to extend support to families for the first six months of the wounded warriors care, it does not address the long-term issues of on-going family support of the wounded as well as family care after discharge and approaches for reintegration; and
WHEREAS, families are left to care for or adapt to life with seriously injured or traumatically affected warriors or many others who may suffer from PTSD and undiagnosed brain injury. Families and their wounded suffer without the benefit of a targeted PTSD and TBI VA Medical Center or assistance from a PTSD Indian Health Service program (IHS); and

WHEREAS, the effects of stress on families can be acute further complicated by lack of information on symptoms of PTSD and how to manage life, lack of counseling, and other support for the family members, particularly mothers and fathers of the wounded with few places for non-military members or rural/reservation family members and extended family members to turn for support or information; and

WHEREAS, the rates of suicide among Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans is known to be high and expected to rise and support of families may help lessen the suicide rate.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI coordinate with a work group within the Veterans Committee allowing the committee to report during each NCAI convention regarding the needs and solutions to assist American Indian and Alaska Native families caring for wounded warriors; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI request all tribes to identify wounded warrior care and family support issues. That may include culturally sensitive notification, the establishment of long-term family counseling, family education regarding PTSD and wounded warrior care; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI notify the Advisory Committee of Minority Veterans, United States Department of Veteran Affairs to address and resolve the issues of this resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI encourage recognition of our wounded warriors and their families.

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 2007 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Hyatt Regency Denver at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver, Colorado on November 11-16, 2007, with a quorum present.

[Signature]
President

ATTEST:

[Signature]
Recording Secretary