



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #KAN-18-012

TITLE: Ensuring a Fair and Accurate 2020 Census Count in Native Communities

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT
Jefferson Keel
Chickasaw Nation

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT
Aaron Payment
Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Michigan

RECORDING SECRETARY
Juana Majel-Dixon
Pauma Band Mission Indians

TREASURER
W. Ron Allen
Jamestown S'Kallam Tribe

REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

ALASKA
Rob Sanderson, Jr.
Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

EASTERN OKLAHOMA
Joe Byrd
Cherokee Nation

GREAT PLAINS
Larry Wright, Jr.
Ponca Tribe of Nebraska

MIDWEST
Roger Rader
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi

NORTHEAST
Lance Gumbs
Shinnecock Indian Nation

NORTHWEST
Leonard Forsman
Suquamish Tribe

PACIFIC
Willie Carrillo
Tule River Tribe of California

ROCKY MOUNTAIN
Darrin Old Coyote
Crow Nation

SOUTHEAST
Nancy Carnley
Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indians

SOUTHERN PLAINS
Zach Pahmahmie
Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation

SOUTHWEST
Joe Garcia
Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo

WESTERN
Franklin Pablo, Sr.
Gila River Indian Community

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Jacqueline Pata
Tlingit

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, the United States Census is mandated by the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. population is enumerated every 10 years and census data are used to allocate Congressional seats, electoral votes, and is the basis for allocation of more than \$600 billion in funding allocations for federally funded programs; and

WHEREAS, federal funding for Indian schools and education programs, Native American workforce programs; Indian health programs, Indian housing programs, water and sewage projects, roads and economic development are based on data collected by the Census Bureau every ten (10) years; and

WHEREAS, in the 2010 Census, the Census Bureau estimates that American Indians and Alaska Natives living on reservations or in Native villages were undercounted by approximately 4.9 percent, more than double the undercount rate of the next closest population group; and

WHEREAS, a large proportion of American Indians/Alaska Natives in certain states live in hard-to-count (HTC) tracts; for instance, in New Mexico 78.6 percent, 68.1 percent in Arizona, 65.6 percent in Alaska, 52.4 percent in South Dakota, and 49.9 percent in Montana; and

WHEREAS, careful planning and adequate funding now and leading up to the census are essential to minimizing undercounts of the American Indian and Alaska Native population; and

WHEREAS, uncertainty about FY 2017 funding levels and lack of appropriations resulted in the Census Bureau canceling planned field tests on the Standing Rock Reservation in North and South Dakota and the Colville Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust land in Washington State, which eliminated critical testing of methods for the 2020 Census for counting people in tribal areas lacking street addresses, testing methods of making in-person counts in American Indian and Alaska Native households, and determining where and how to use oversampling to counteract the undercount facing Native people living on reservations and in Native villages; and

WHEREAS, inadequate funding has compelled the Census Bureau to announce “pauses” and modifications for key 2020 Census activities, which could greatly diminish the Bureau’s ability to take an accurate, cost-effective census and is expected to increase the disproportionate undercount of American Indian and Alaska Natives, especially those living in rural, low-income, geographically isolated, and/or linguistically isolated households; and

WHEREAS, Presidential budget proposals continue to fail to provide the necessary resources to conduct a fair and accurate 2020 census, underfund Census Bureau; and

WHEREAS, this consistent underfunding puts at risk 2020 Census preparation activities including future field tests, advertising campaigns vital to reach Native communities, delayed opening of Regional Census Centers, no testing at all to estimate the undercount estimates and accuracy of census for groups including American Indians and Alaska Natives, and a disproportionate reliance on enumeration through the internet despite the lack of sufficient broadband access on nearly 90 percent of tribal lands; and

WHEREAS, the Administration has announced that it will include a question in the 2020 census asking respondents about their citizenship status and there is a well-proven, multi-year process to suggest and test new question and the addition of new questions this far into the census process could have a significant impact on the accuracy of the enumeration and success of the census in all communities; and

WHEREAS, the addition of a citizenship question on the 2020 Census could have a similar negative impact in Indian Country, resulting from the lengthy and complicated history of discrimination against indigenous people and a strong distrust of non-tribal governments.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) does hereby support the Census Bureau and the resources it needs, including appropriations as may be needed to meet updated cost projections for the 2020 Census and other Census programs including the American Community Survey (ACS), the Current Population Survey (CPS), Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), and the Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE), which are critical to American Indians and Alaska Natives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that funding shall be allocated to increase the number of Partnership Specialists engaged in outreach to state, local, and tribal governments and community-based organizations and the Tribal Liaison Program should be adequately funded and staffed to ensure the necessary outreach and education is conducted to engage tribal communities in the census process; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby oppose the insertion of a citizenship question in the 2020 census as it could result in increased undercounts in tribal communities and NCAI calls on Congress to conduct non-partisan oversight over this issue and the potential impacts that could arise from the addition of a citizenship question; 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 2018 Midyear Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Marriott Kansas City Downtown, June 3-6, 2018, with a quorum present.



Jefferson Keel, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary