SURVIVAL & PERSEVERANCE
To protect, secure, promote, and improve the lives of American Indian and Alaska Native people and their nations.
Dear Tribal Leaders, NCAI Members, Native Peoples, and Friends of Indian Country,

At this time last year, I humbly accepted the call to serve my first term as President of the National Congress of American Indians. As I reflect on this year and my inaugural State of Indian Nations address, I see the revelation of many more examples of the survival and perseverance of Native people.

As a tribal leader, I witnessed and experienced the on-the-ground realities of the impacts of COVID-19 on tribal communities, and as a national leader, I observed firsthand the depth of this country’s broken promises to tribal nations and the unrelenting effort Indian Country is undertaking to hold our federal counterparts accountable.

Each day, I channel the strength of my ancestors; the power of Indian Country’s inalienable sovereignty, the perseverance and partnership of tribal leaders, Native people, and our allies; and the will of our future generations to carry me forward as I work tirelessly to protect, promote, secure, and improve the lives of American Indians and Alaska Native people every day.

This year has proven to be both a challenge and an opportunity for us to advance Indian Country’s collective quest to create futures of hope, opportunity, and cultural vibrancy for our youth and those generations yet to come.

Together we must and together we will.

Siokwil,

FAWN SHARP
NCAI, President, National Congress of American Indians
This year brought some of the most unprecedented events and developments we have encountered in our lifetimes. Despite facing monumental challenges in the forms of a global pandemic, nationwide social unrest, and mounting attacks on our tribal sovereignty, Indian Country has stood strong and risen to every occasion – just like we always have.

We began this year knowing that it would be pivotal in American Indian and Alaska Natives’ eternal effort to be visible and be heard. But we never imagined that we would be fighting to be included in a life-saving relief bill that would help save the lives of Native people. In 2020, I had the honor to be part of a group of more than 300 partners from across Indian Country, in a beautiful expression of unity, as we fought for and secured one of the most historic funding packages in history. The truth is, tribal leaders and advocates decided that Indian Country would no longer be oppressed by the policies and decisions that have kept us from achieving our fullest potential.

When I look at NCAI’s mission and history, it’s clear to me that common purpose and collective action is at the core of all of the progress we have made – and all of the challenges we have overcome. NCAI staff and I will continue to stand on the front lines with tribal nations and their citizens to ensure that we are telling Native people’s truths and pushing for policies that right the wrongs that we have faced for centuries.

In this report, you’ll see the change we’ve been able to make together. This year, we demanded a seat at the table in policymaking, deployed millions of dollars directly into tribal communities for COVID relief support and civic engagement, helped to effect historic victories in McGirt v. Oklahoma and with the Mashpee Wampanoag, and joined forces with so many others across the country to compel the Washington NFL team to change its mascot. These are only a few of the ways that NCAI and its allies have made an impact, and it is my honor to bring these stories to you.

With the help of our members, partners, and funders, we continue to advance the work our founders laid out for us, and we are forever grateful for their support and assistance. We will not stop now and we know you will stand with us.

Sincerely,

KEVIN J. ALLIS
Chief Executive Officer, National Congress of American Indians
TIMELINE OF PROGRESS

REFLECTING ON THE PAST YEAR. OCTOBER 2019 – SEPTEMBER 2020

SURVIVAL AND PERSEVERANCE

American Indian and Alaska Native people are products of our deep cultural roots and we harness the strength of our traditions and inherent power to build pathways that will help us to endure and overcome any obstacles that we may face. 2020 has been a year of many challenges but together we can and together we will continue to grow stronger as Native people so we may build foundations for the next seven generations.

OCTOBER 2019

Fawn Sharp is elected as NCAI’s 23rd President of the National Congress of American Indians

DECEMBER 2019

Esther Martinez Language Preservation Bill is passed into law

JANUARY 2020

NCAI co-hosts the second Native American Presidential Forum with Four Directions, Inc. and Nevada tribal nations in Las Vegas, Nevada

MARCH 2020

NCAI CEO Kevin Allis testifies on Capitol Hill to underscore the importance of a complete and accurate count in Indian Country in the 2020 Census

The President of the United States declares a State of Emergency and acknowledges the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

H.R. 748 CARES Act was signed into law with a historic $10 billion in tribal provisions.

continued next page
NCAI deploys tens of thousands of dollars in mini grants funding to Indian Country to help tribal nations respond to and recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

NCAI begins hosting Tribal Governments in Action series, a webinar focused on highlighting the innovative approaches tribal nations began taking to protect their citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Washington Football team officially retires its racist mascot.

The NCAI Policy Research Center hosted more than 140 researchers from across Indian Country at its first-ever virtual conference for the 15th Annual Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum.

Tribal Unity Impact Days became a two-day virtual event with hundreds of tribal leaders and administrators in attendance to discuss Indian Country’s priorities with members of Congress.
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American Indians and Alaska Natives have been disproportionately impacted by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. According to the CDC, COVID-19 cases were 3.5 times greater among AI/ANs than non-Hispanic white persons in the first six months of the pandemic, and AI/ANs have had the highest hospitalization rates compared to other racial/ethnic groups. AI/ANs have a higher risk profile for severe disease given the high rates of chronic diseases in this population that are known to increase the risk, as well as disparities in the conditions that promote the spread of COVID-19, including living conditions (multigenerational crowded homes, lack of clean water, sanitation deficiencies, and lack of access to quality healthcare). Tribal nations have also been significantly impacted by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and related shutdowns and restrictions that have been implemented to prevent the spread of the virus. At one point during the pandemic, the Navajo Nation was experiencing rates of COVID-19 disease greater than any other hot spot in the country. Recognizing the risk, NCAI quickly took action to help mitigate the spread of the disease across Indian Country, as well as advocate with Congress and the Administration for additional resources and support for our high-risk communities.

**NCAI: A LEADER IN POLICY ADVOCACY DURING THE PANDEMIC**

Beginning in March 2020, the federal government’s historic neglect of its fiduciary obligations to tribal nations and citizens was laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic, as the virus struck Indian Country hard, resulting in Native people having among the highest per capita COVID-19 infection rates in the U.S.

Early on in the wake of fast-moving policy advocacy on Capitol Hill to address the COVID-19 pandemic, NCAI took on the role of clearinghouse for COVID-19 tribal priorities and established four working groups to produce advocacy materials and organize and advance advocacy efforts. NCAI staff facilitated these working groups, whose membership exceeded over 300 individuals and included tribal leaders, partner organizations, and tribal advocates to develop and advocate for Indian Country’s top policy priorities for addressing COVID-19. This resulted in tribal nations receiving over $12 billion in direct funding to plan, prepare, and respond to the coronavirus in the CARES Act and subsequent bills. These working groups have produced more than 25 letters to Congress setting forth COVID legislative priorities and more than 30 letters addressing implementation of relief funding. These letters have been co-signed by more than 20 tribal organizations from across Indian Country. Additionally, these workings groups have also ensured Indian Country’s inclusion in pending COVID-19 relief bills that are presently under negotiation.

NCAI continues to engage with policymakers on ongoing COVID-19 legislative discussions and to date has participated in more than 10 congressional hearings directly focused on the COVID-19 pandemic and Indian Country’s particular needs.
ANALYZING THE COVID-19 DATA: POLICY RESEARCH CENTER REPORTS AND SITUATION SUMMARIES IN INDIAN COUNTRY

The NCAI Policy Research Center has tracked publicly available data on COVID-19 cases and deaths from the Indian Health Service (IHS) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) since March 2020, publishing weekly situation reports that detail trends in cases in Indian Country overall and by NCAI Region. In addition, the NCAI social audiences and Executive Board receive at least weekly summaries of the latest news updates about the COVID-19 situation in the U.S. and in Indian Country. Unfortunately, tribal nations have not had access to accurate data during the pandemic due to lack of access to state and CDC data; meanwhile, public data has underestimated the actual extent of COVID-19 infections due to underreporting and the lack of widespread availability of testing. However, NCAI’s data reports and updates have helped to ensure tribal leaders have the latest information on COVID-19 and its impacts and trends in Indian Country both nationally and regionally.

NCAI ESTABLISHES CLEARINGHOUSE FOR INDIAN COUNTRY RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

COVID-19 RESOURCE WEBSITE

NCAI determined in the first days of the pandemic that Indian Country needed access to accurate and reliable information given the amount of disinformation on social media and lack of knowledge about COVID-19 so that tribal nations could make the best decisions to protect their citizens. NCAI developed its COVID-19: Resource for Indian Country website that included trusted resources on the COVID-19 pandemic, the latest legislative and administrative updates, press releases, letters sent to the Administration and Congress, and information on funding opportunities for tribal nation COVID-19 response.
TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS IN ACTION

NCAI showcased the innovative and forward-thinking approaches that tribal governments deployed to protect their communities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. More than a dozen tribal leaders participated in sharing their stories of resilience to audiences of hundreds of tribal leaders, administrators, and the media.

NCAI-GOOGLE NATIVE SMALL BUSINESS STABILIZATION PROGRAM

Native-owned small businesses serve as the lifeblood of many tribal communities across the country, providing critical jobs and income to tribal citizens and their families while simultaneously enriching the quality of community life by providing goods and services to local residents and the public at-large.

With generous support from Google.org, NCAI launched its Native Small Business Stabilization Program, which provides to Native-owned small businesses that have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Awarded applicants can use the funds to address their most urgent needs to stabilize and strengthen their businesses, such as (but not limited to): making monthly payments on small business loans that have lapsed due to declining business revenues; keeping employees employed; paying their vendors; and/or purchasing equipment/software to transition or grow their businesses online. To date, NCAI has awarded stabilization grants to 38 Native-owned small businesses, 41 tribal nations, 13 Native non-profits, one tribal college, and nine tribal nursing care facilities that have been impacted by COVID-19. NCAI is committed to supporting Indian Country and we will continue to work to address the needs of tribal nations and communities as they work to recover from the pandemic.

BUILDING POLITICAL POWER AND UPLIFTING NATIVE VOICES THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

American Indian and Alaska Native communities thrive by learning from one another when we come together. COVID-19 has changed the way that Native people gather, communicate, and practice our ceremonies. It has even changed the way we exercise, build, and enhance our political power. From the beginning, Native people knew that 2020 would be one of the most important years of our lifetime for civic engagement. This year brought the decennial census and many anxiously anticipate the outcomes of the 2020 Election, because both will have significant bearing on federal policies and funding for tribal nations and communities over the next decade.

Despite the challenges such as the digital divide, ever-changing timelines, and considerable uncertainty, the NCAI Civic Engagement pivoted to innovative education tools and thoughtful outreach strategies, to continue engaging and uplifting tribal complete count committee and Native Vote coordinators.
**2020 State of Indian Nations**

The National Congress of American Indians’ (NCAI) 2020 Executive Council Winter Session (ECWS) kicked off on Monday, February 10, 2020 with NCAI President Fawn Sharp delivering the 18th annual State of Indian Nations (SOIN) address from the Jack Morton Auditorium at George Washington University, in Washington, D.C.

President Sharp made history when she took the stage as she became the first woman to deliver NCAI’s annual State of Indian Nations speech.

President Sharp laid out the goals of Indian Country, the opportunities for success and advancement of Native peoples, and priorities for Indian Country’s nation-to-nation relationship with the United States. Read full speech here.

“Tribal nations are not non-profit organizations – we are full-fledged, battle-tested governments guided by time-honored cultural principles, and recognized as such in the Northwest Ordinance, the U.S. Constitution, and hundreds upon hundreds of treaties and Supreme Court precedents.”

- NCAI President Fawn Sharp.

New Mexico Congresswoman Deb Haaland delivered the Congressional response for the second consecutive year, discussing the importance of passing the Violence Against Women reauthorization bill, the need for a clean Carcieri fix, and strong Indian Country participation in the 2020 Census.

“Those values instilled in us by our parents and grandparents – the values that guide our principled existence and demand that we care about our whole communities – not just ourselves; that we give our children every opportunity so that they are prepared to keep our customs and traditions and then pass them on; the values that require us to protect and defend the land that is everything, because it has sustained us for this long”

- Congresswoman Haaland.

Read the full speech here.
NCAI is honored to serve as a strong and consistent voice in Washington, D.C. for tribal nations. As the unified voice of Indian Country, NCAI fights to preserve the treaty and sovereign rights of tribal nations, advance the government-to-government relationship between tribal nations and the federal government, and remove longstanding structural impediments to tribal self-determination.

A significant portion of NCAI’s work involves educating policymakers and the general public. The U.S. education system does not adequately tell the story of the resilience and contributions of tribal nations, and thus, most Americans don’t possess an informed understanding of who tribal nations and peoples are today, or the inherent rights to self-determination and self-governance they possess. NCAI works to address this lack of understanding by teaching visiting groups at the NCAI Embassy of Tribal Nations, conducting Indian Country 101 briefings, speaking about Indian Country’s priorities at various events and conferences, and producing materials for Native and non-Native audiences.

NCAI also works extensively to advance tribal nations’ priorities with Congress and the Administration. NCAI’s advocacy work focuses on issues brought forward by NCAI members through our resolutions process. Tribal nations, as sovereign governments, strive to build strong economies and ensure the health and wellbeing of their citizens and all of those who reside in their communities. Accordingly, NCAI educates Congress on issues such as providing quality, accessible healthcare; restoring tribal homelands; trust modernization; climate change, tribal infrastructure; public safety; preserving Native languages and cultures; providing quality, culturally appropriate education; and economic development; among others. Once legislation is enacted, NCAI’s advocacy efforts turn to ensuring that laws are implemented consistent with the federal government’s treaty and trust obligations. NCAI also works with tribal nations and the Administration to ensure that tribal nations are active participants in creating and implementing federal initiatives, policies, and regulations.

Meanwhile, where tribal nations are leading with innovative and forward-looking solutions, NCAI shares those best practices with other tribal nations, Congress, and the Administration. Examples include climate change mitigation and resilience, food sovereignty, workforce development, alternative judicial practices rooted in tribal cultures, economic development, healthcare focused on prevention and traditional practices, education that reflects the priorities of tribal nations, and natural resource stewardship.

All of NCAI’s advocacy work is grounded in strengthening tribal self-governance and advancing the sovereignty of all tribal nations. Since time immemorial, tribal nations have demonstrated that they possess the values, knowledge, skills, and expertise to sustain thriving societies – a message we share every single day with Congress, the Administration, and anyone else who will listen. NCAI will continue to advocate for legislation, policies, regulations, and programs that uphold and strengthen tribal self-determination.
TRIBAL GOVERNANCE
Tribal nations are sovereign governments whose existence and authority predate the formation of the United States. Consistent with the government-to-government relationship, the United States must recognize the inherent authority of tribal nations to protect public safety and regulate all activity on tribal lands. NCAI works to advance federal policies that support and expand tribal self-determination and self-governance, as well as provide tribal nations the same direct access to federal funding and programs as states.

BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
Funding decisions made by the federal government are an expression of the United States’ policy priorities, and its commitment to honoring its obligations to American Indian and Alaska Native people. NCAI has long worked to ensure that the federal government adequately funds its sacred obligations to tribal nations by producing an Indian Country Budget Request to educate Congress and the Administration on tribal funding priorities. In addition, NCAI has continued to prioritize advance appropriations for programs administered through the Indian Health Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs to alleviate the negative impacts on tribal nations caused by impasses in the federal budget process. NCAI also continues to map out historical budget trends and address data deficiencies for the Tribal/Interior Budget Council, to ensure tribal leaders and Administration officials within the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) better understand the unmet trust and treaty obligations associated with the operation of Indian Programs at DOI.

AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION
Agriculture plays a major role in economies, workforces, and nutrition in tribal communities, and it has long been a priority for NCAI to increase tribal access to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs. NCAI’s focus continues to be on ensuring full implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill, which contained a historic number of new tribal provisions. In addition, NCAI staff continue to work supporting tribal nations and Native producers through the NCAI Tribal Food Sovereignty Advancement Initiative.

LAND, NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES, AND ENVIRONMENT
American Indians and Alaska Natives are place-based peoples with profound connections and long histories of managing their surrounding environments, traditional homelands, natural resources, and wildlife. Tribal nations’ cultures, economies, and wellbeing all depend upon natural resources, many of which are disappearing faster than they can be restored. The United States must ensure full and meaningful tribal participation when developing policies and making decisions that impact tribal lands and cultural and natural resources. There must also be strong support for tribal management of these interests through traditional and culturally appropriate means. NCAI actively seeks to advance tribal priorities involving tribal lands and natural and cultural resources by educating and holding accountable federal policy makers, advocating for key legislation, and facilitating discussions among tribal leaders. NCAI also works alongside our Climate Action Task Force to document, inform, and support the climate action efforts of tribal nations and Native organizations, and identify and advocate for policies and funding designed to empower their ability to engage in effective, sustainable climate action.
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT (VOTING RIGHTS AND CENSUS)

The Census is a critical and powerful information source that will significantly influence American policy for the coming decade. Census data plays a key role in the allocation of more than $800 billion in federal funding for programs that serve Indian Country. NCAI educates tribal nations, the federal government, and partners about the importance of an accurate count for Indian Country, as well as the importance of sufficient Census resources and tribal participation.

Native people were the last to obtain the right to vote in the U.S., and Native voters continue to face persistent barriers in exercising that right. NCAI has participated in the Native American Voting Rights Coalition since 2015 and also has the Native Vote initiative that encourages voter participation across Indian Country and protects the voting rights of Native people. In addition, NCAI has worked with members of Congress and the Administration to ensure an extended enumeration for the 2020 Census occurred and that the U.S. Census Bureau has the resources needed to ensure accurate and quality decennial census data for tribal nations.

ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Strong tribal economies are key to improving the quality of life in and around tribal communities. In order to stimulate economic growth across Indian Country, the United States must support tribal nations’ ability to use the same legal and policy authorities available to other governments, including the levy of taxes without external interference, the issuance of tax-exempt bond financing, and the regulation of all commercial activities on tribal lands.

Adequate federal funding, coupled with reduced regulatory burdens, can advance tribal nations’ efforts to access capital resources and workforce training programs. NCAI supports a comprehensive approach to increasing economic opportunities in Indian Country by advocating for resources and incentives that will grow tribal economies, facilitating discussions through task forces and work groups to identify and address economic barriers tribal nations face, and coordinating with tribal nations to expand workforce development opportunities. For example, NCAI continues to work with the 477 Tribal Workgroup to correct DOI and other federal agencies’ failure to properly implement Public Law 115-93, the Indian Employment, Training and Related Services Consolidation Act of 2017.

EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE

Access to high-quality, culturally-appropriate education is critical for American Indian and Alaska Native children to have the future they deserve. Federal policy must support productive learning environments for our students that draw on culturally relevant curricula, as well as sufficient funding and resources for quality school facilities and the recruitment and retention of excellent teachers. In addition to working with Congress and the Administration to ensure the federal government meets its obligations to provide quality education to American Indians and Alaska Natives, NCAI conducted a landscape analysis of state efforts to bring high quality educational content about Native peoples and communities into all kindergarten to 12th-grade classrooms across the United States. Positive, accurate cultural representation will improve educational outcomes for American Indian and Alaska Native students and produce a better understanding of tribal nations amongst the general public.

Finally, in the 116th Congress, NCAI, tribal nations and their representatives, and tribal organizations secured passage of critical legislation impacting Indian education, including the passage of the Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act, and the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Programs Reauthorization Act.

ELDERS

Elders are the keepers of wisdom and traditional knowledge in our communities, and play a vital role in ensuring the ongoing vitality of our cultures. They embody the collective wisdom of our ancestors. Our elders deserve our utmost respect and care. NCAI supports federal policies that promote high-quality, culturally-appropriate services that allow our elders to remain in our communities, nurture our youth, and fulfill the important task of linking our past to the future.
HOUSING

Access to affordable housing is a fundamental necessity that promotes prosperity and economic development in tribal communities. According to a 2017 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) report, approximately 68,000 new and/or replacement homes are necessary to address housing needs in Indian Country. Additionally, the growing population of American Indians and Alaska Natives means that access to affordable housing will remain an important issue for Indian Country. NCAI’s advocacy efforts for housing remain focused on reauthorizing and increasing funding for the Native American Housing and Self-Determination Act, which expired in 2013. NCAI continues to work with the National American Indian Housing Council to bring together tribal leaders and tribal housing entities to advocate for passage of critical housing legislation for Indian Country.

HEALTHCARE

The United States has treaty and trust obligations to provide quality, accessible health care to American Indian and Alaska Native people in perpetuity. Despite these obligations, American Indian and Alaska Native people have long experienced significant health disparities when compared to other Americans. NCAI works to ensure the federal government upholds its obligations to support tribal and federal program initiatives to fight critical threats to the health and wellbeing of American Indians and Alaska Natives across Indian Country. In addition to general health care issues, NCAI educates the federal government on the need to include tribal priorities in national initiatives, like efforts to address the opioid epidemic.

VETERANS

American Indians and Alaska Natives have bravely fought to protect the legacy of Native peoples through serving as members of the armed forces. They have shown exceptional valor and heroism on battlefields from the American Revolution to Iraq and Afghanistan. Despite their distinguished service, Native veterans have lower incomes, lower educational attainment, and higher unemployment than veterans of other groups. NCAI is committed to supporting the wellbeing of our Native veterans and ensuring all benefits provided to military veterans reach American Indian and Alaska Native veterans, whether they live on remote reservation lands or in major urban centers.

In October 2019, NCAI leadership participated in the first hearing in at least 30 years focused solely on the health care needs of Native veterans. In addition, NCAI leadership participated in a legislative hearing for the U.S. House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Telecommunications technology and high-speed internet access are necessities in today’s modern world; unfortunately, however, many tribal communities are disproportionately lacking broadband access. Access to high-speed broadband service supports economic development, tribal governance, healthcare, education, and public safety. NCAI’s advocacy is intended to raise awareness of the digital divide that impacts tribal communities nationally and seeks to increase access to resources and funding that will lead to deployment of telecommunications infrastructure on tribal lands while protecting tribal rights and interests on and off-reservation.

TRANSPORTATION

Well-maintained and adequately developed transportation infrastructure throughout Indian Country advances education, public safety, medical services, and commerce for tribal and surrounding communities. Without safe and well-maintained roads, bridges, ferries, trails, and air transit, tribal governments face challenges in providing essential services to their citizens that promote societal well-being and economic growth and development. NCAI is working to ensure the promises of improved road systems and road safety are included in the federal budget process. It is also working through the NCAI-Intertribal Transportation Association Transportation Task Force to ensure the next surface transportation bill includes strong provisions for Indian Country.
INTERNATIONAL ISSUES
NCAI and our member tribal nations recognize the importance of participating in international policy discussions that impact the rights of Indigenous peoples. In recent years, NCAI has prioritized negotiations at the United Nations and the Organization of American States that have been creating the structural framework for the advancement of Indigenous rights, including the negotiation and adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007 and the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (ADRIP) in 2016, as well as their subsequent implementation. In addition to this foundational work, NCAI has engaged in a number of substantive policy discussions of particular concern to Indigenous peoples, including climate change, forced migration, and the protection of Indigenous traditional knowledge and genetic resources.

JUSTICE ISSUES
The crime rate on reservations is an urgent public safety issue that is the result of decades of gross underfunding of tribal criminal justice systems, a uniquely complex jurisdictional scheme that keeps tribal governments from being able to fully police their lands, and a centuries-old failure by the federal government to fulfill its public safety obligations on tribal lands. NCAI advocates for tribal nations and tribal justice systems to have the resources and authority they need to ensure safety and justice in their communities.

CHILD WELFARE
The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which has been hailed as the “gold standard” by child welfare experts, prevents Native children from suffering the trauma of unnecessary removal from their families and tribal communities. Over the last several years, we have seen a small number of interest groups organize legal attacks to strike down or limit ICWA, the result of which would be to separate American Indian and Alaska Native children from their families and tribal nations.

In response to the constant legal attacks on ICWA, NCAI and three other Native organizations formed the Protect ICWA Campaign, a collaborative effort to inform policy, legal, and communications strategies with the mission of protecting our Native children through upholding ICWA for generations to come.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND HOMELAND SECURITY
Without the full participation of tribal nations, a national homeland security strategy is incomplete. Tribal nations bear a solemn responsibility for surveillance, law enforcement, and emergency response in protecting vast tracts of land, international borders, numerous sensitive facilities, power transmission lines, dams, oil and natural gas pipelines, highway and rail systems, sensitive military sites, and for millions of people who reside within their jurisdictions. Additionally, tribal nations must have access to consistent capacity building funding for their emergency management programs to assure that all nations can prepare for, mitigate, respond, and recover from the rising numbers of disasters. COVID-19 has showcased that few tribal nations can quickly and efficiently access disaster funding when an emergency strikes Indian Country.

NCAI continues to advocate to ensure that tribal nations have access to key resources in order to fulfill their responsibilities and save lives.
ON THE T.R.A.I.L. TO DIABETES PREVENTION

The Indian Health Service (IHS), NCAI, Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), FirstPic, Inc., and Nike, Inc. partnered to create a program aimed at reducing the onset of diabetes among Native American youth. The program – On the Together Raising Awareness for Indian Life (T.R.A.I.L.) Diabetes Prevention – features an innovative 12-chapter curriculum that provides youth with a comprehensive understanding of healthy lifestyles in order to prevent diabetes. The program is divided into themes:

- **Part 1:** About Me, My Health and Being Part of a Team
- **Part 2:** Healthy Eating
- **Part 3:** Making Smart Food Choices
- **Part 4:** My Healthy Community

Since 2003, the T.R.A.I.L program has served more than 18,000 Native youth ages 7-11 in about 90 tribal communities.

NCAI YOUTH COMMISSION

Established in 1997, the National Congress of American Indians’ Youth Commission is a body of young Native leaders who unite to serve on behalf of Indian Country. NCAI’s Youth Commission does so by providing leadership development, networking, and community service opportunities for their fellow youth constituents to positively impacting the wellbeing of tribal youth for a greater Native America. The Youth Commission also informs Indian Country’s tribal leaders, NCAI’s general membership and representatives of the youth perspective on law and policy issues. Through these efforts, NCAI’s Youth Commission has continuously made a lasting positive impact in Native communities. NCAI Youth Commission (2018-2020) leaders are:

- **Sophie Tiger,** Co-President, Comanche Nation/Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
- **Rory Wheeler,** Co-President, Seneca Nation/Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nation
- **Sydney Matheson,** Co-Vice President, Confederated Tribes of Colville
- **Dishane Everybodytalksabout,** Co-Vice President, Nisqually Indian Tribe
- **Marisela Villegas,** Secretary, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
NCAI NATIVE HEALTH GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP

The NCAI Native Graduate Health Fellowship aims to address the stark disparities in Native health by building a pipeline of Native health professionals who are prepared to lead in formulating and promoting health policies and practices that address the unique needs of American Indians and Alaska Natives. While the current challenges to Native health are great, some of the most promising developments are from tribal nations who are exercising considerable control over health care delivery and workforce development. Building the capacity of individuals and communities is critical to empowering tribal nations to assert this right to self-governance and self-determination in the public health domain. By supporting graduate students in various health-related fields, NCAI seeks to increase the number of Native health leaders and equip them with the tools necessary to achieve our vision of strong, healthy Native communities. The NCAI 2020-2021 Native Health Graduate Fellows are:

• Benjamin Yawakie, Pueblo of Zuni, University of Minnesota School of Public Health
• Julia Wilson-Peltier, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians and Oglala Sioux, North Dakota State University - American Indian Public Health
• Tara Maudrie, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health

NCAI LAW & POLICY SCHOLARS

The National Congress of American Indians values and acknowledges the value and role of American Indian and Alaska Native students as emerging contributors to the future of Indian Country. To that end, NCAI is committed to providing American Indian and Alaska Native youth opportunities to assist in their continued development as the next generation of American Indian and Alaska Native leaders and civically engaged citizens of the United States of America. The National Congress of American Indians Law & Policy Scholarship Program was specifically designed to fulfill this commitment. This program supports distinguished undergraduate, graduate school, and law school candidates in their educational endeavors that most closely align with our work and mission. NCAI is proud to welcome its inaugural class for the 2020-2021 academic year:

• Eastman Holloway, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, School of Law, Oklahoma City University
• Jessica Govindu, Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma, School of Law, University of California, Los Angeles
• Zintkala Eiring, Oglala Sioux Tribe, Master’s in Legal Studies in Environmental Law & Policy, University of Arizona
• Kim Leming, Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, Master’s in Legal Studies, University of Oklahoma
WILMA MANKILLER FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The Wilma Mankiller Fellowship Program was named in honor of the first female Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, who forged a path that simultaneously empowered and restored cultural balance to the Cherokee Nation, as well as other tribal nations. She acknowledged the struggles that Native people face and worked toward changing struggle-based narratives through grassroots community development, the expression of inherent sovereignty in practice, and the creation of many youth education initiatives.

NCAI’s Wilma Mankiller Fellowship Program gives emerging Native professionals the chance to expand their skills and workplace experience by contributing to various policy and research initiatives that advance NCAI’s mission. The Fellows serve 11-month terms of employment at NCAI gaining experience in policy development, advocacy, communications, applied research, and other programs advancing tribal sovereignty and self-governance.

In the summer of 2020, NCAI welcomed Ashley Hamilton (Ho-Chunk/Kickapoo) and Amber Holland (Lumbee). These new Fellows join the ranks of more than 80 emerging Native professionals who have been a part of the fellowship program over the past decade. Through this program, NCAI invests in the next generation of tribal leadership and it has graduated professionals from the program who have moved on to build impactful careers in service to Indian Country. During their tenure, Fellows work directly with tribal leaders, national and regional partners, educators, policymakers, and Native youth as they grow their understanding of federal Indian policy, law and tribal governance. Fellows are selected through a competitive application and interview process. NCAI is actively seeking qualified candidates for the 2021-2022 cohort and will open its fellowship application process on November 1, 2020. Applications are due by March 15, 2021 and can be accessed through NCAI’s website.
NCAI EVENTS

FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS AND FACILITATING TOUCHPOINTS

NCAI’s conferences, meetings, and events provide tribal leaders and key decision-makers with key opportunities to come together to form and advance Indian Country’s common priorities for federal laws and policies that will strengthen tribal sovereignty and self-governance. The NCAI Conferences, Events, and Sponsorship teams oversee the planning and logistics of NCAI’s convenings to create meaningful in-person experiences for tribal leaders, existing NCAI members, prospective NCAI members, allies, partner organizations, funders, and federal officials and representatives.

2019 ANNUAL CONVENTION & MARKETPLACE

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) 76th Annual Convention & Marketplace theme was “Sovereignty in Action,” with events kicking off on Sunday, October 21, 2019 in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the Albuquerque Convention Center. Thousands of tribal leaders, Native youth, federal partners, national Native organizations, and allies joined NCAI for a week full of task force, committee, sub-committee, and breakout sessions. 2019 was an election year for NCAI and at the conclusion of the convention, the NCAI Congress elected President Fawn Sharp of the Quinault Indian Nation to serve as the organization’s top leader for the next two years.

The event also included a touching memorial for longtime NCAI ally and matriarch Juanita Ahtone (Kiowa), who tirelessly served the organization for several decades in many capacities. Her memorial moved the audience to their feet in her honor.

For a full recap of the 2019 Annual Convention & Marketplace, please scan or click here.

2020 STATE OF INDIAN NATIONS

President Sharp made history when she took the stage in Washington, D.C. in the Jack Morton Auditorium at George Washington University, on Tuesday, February 11, 2020, becoming the first woman to deliver NCAI’s annual State of Indian Nations speech.

President Sharp laid out the goals of Indian Country, the opportunities for success and advancement of Native peoples, and priorities for Indian Country’s nation-to-nation relationship with the United States.

Read the full speech here.
2020 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WINTER SESSION AND NCAI LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Directly following the State of Indian Nations, the 2020 Executive Council Winter Session (ECWS) kicked off on Monday, February 10, 2020. Held at the Capital Hilton in Washington, D.C., the conference provided attendees the opportunity to hear directly from key leaders of Congress and the Administration, as well as participate in sessions tackling key issues facing tribal communities.

For a full list of speakers and highlights, scan here or visit here.

On Tuesday, February 11, 2020, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) awarded six distinguished leaders for Indian Country at NCAI’s 22nd Annual Leadership Awards Ceremony, held during ECWS. The awards are given annually to individuals or groups who serve as champions of Indian Country in their respective award categories. Every year NCAI recognizes leadership in five award categories, including: Public Sector, Native American, Government, Congressional, and Special Recognition. This year’s honorees are below:

PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP AWARD
Portugal. The Man, Grammy Award-Winning American Rock Band from Wasilla, Alaska

Known for its mega-hit song, “Feel it Still,” Portugal. The Man has shown continued support for America’s Indigenous people beginning with dedicating its Grammy win to Native youth in the villages of Shishmaref, Barrow and Bethel, Alaska and throughout its national tour by raising visibility and awareness to Native issues and Native people, including land acknowledgments and performances and speeches by local tribal artists, leaders, and activists.

NATIVE AMERICAN LEADERSHIP AWARD
Peggy Flanagan, Lieutenant Governor, State of Minnesota

Lt. Governor Flanagan is recognized for her distinguished and now historic career of service and raising awareness about tribal nations, issues, and policy priorities, and civic engagement – first as a state representative and now as the first Native woman to serve as a state’s lieutenant governor.

CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD
Representative Derek Kilmer, United States Congressman from Washington

Representative Kilmer was instrumental in pushing for the “Broken Promises” report, and has been a staunch proponent in Congress for pro-tribal sovereignty laws and policies.
GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP AWARD
Nedra Darling, United States Department of the Interior

For many years, Darling played an instrumental role in informing and guiding the federal government’s administration of its trust responsibility to tribal nations across multiple presidential administrations, and has served as mentor to many young Native professionals.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS
W. Ron Allen, Chairman, Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe

Chairman W. Ron Allen has been a leader in Indian Country for decades. His leadership covers all areas of the country from being the Chairman of Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe for over 40 years to being elected to the NCAI Board as President, First Vice President, and Treasurer (most recent) and serving on a number of other boards and leadership positions to help address a variety of issues important to Indian Country such as the budget, fisheries, and government parity.

Senator Tom Udall, United States Senator from New Mexico

Senator Udall has been a tireless advocate for Indian Country, sponsoring or co-sponsoring many key pieces of pro-tribal legislation.

15TH ANNUAL TRIBAL LEADER/SCHOLAR FORUM

The NCAI Policy Research Center held its 15th Annual Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum as a virtual event on September 1-3, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the cancellation of the NCAI Mid Year Conference. The purpose of the Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum is to provide an opportunity for researchers, practitioners, community members and others to present their findings to tribal leaders, policymakers, and tribal members. The Forum included a Data Institute, General Assemblies, Poster Sessions, and Breakout Sessions where researchers and tribal leaders discussed research and data to inform policy.

2020 TRIBAL UNITY IMPACT DAYS

On September 16-17, 2020, NCAI hosted its first virtual Tribal Unity Impact Days. The event included virtual roundtables consisting of 14 members of Congress, more than 20 tribal leaders, and more than 1,000 registrants. Congressional participants included Congressional Native Caucus Co-Chairs Congresswoman Debra Haaland and Congressman Tom Cole, Senate Committee on Indians Affairs Vice-Chairman Senator Tom Udall, Senator Elizabeth Warren, and Representatives Ruben Gallego, Raul Grijalva, and David Joyce, among others.

Main topics of discussion included:
• Public Safety and Justice
• Census and Voting
• Emergency Management
• Health and Education
• Tribal Homelands and Climate Change
• Veterans Affairs

To view the agenda and full list of Congressional participants and issue area one-pagers scan the QR Code in the sidebar or click here.
USING DATA TO INFORM DECISIONS

NCAI POLICY RESEARCH CENTER

MISSION – RESEARCH AND DATA TO INFORM POLICY

The NCAI Policy Research Center was established in 2003 and its mission is to provide tribal leaders with the best available knowledge to make strategically proactive policy decisions in a framework of Native wisdom that positively impact the future of Native peoples.

The NCAI Policy Research Center works to ensure that data and research informs policy in the following strategic areas:

RESEARCH: PROVIDE RESEARCH AND DATA ON NCAI PRIORITY ISSUES

The NCAI Policy Research Center released the report *Becoming Visible: A Landscape Analysis of State Efforts to Provide Native American Education for All*. This report reviewed current state efforts to implement high-quality educational content about Native Americans for all K-12 students, and provided recommendations for implementing Native American education policies, curricula, and professional development. This report was the first phase of a national effort to promote Native American Education for All in partnership with Wend Ventures, National Indian Education Association, National Education Association, and IllumiNative.

The NCAI Policy Research Center released the report *Review of Available Data and Literature on Services for American Indian and Alaska Native Victims of Crime* that summarized the literature and available data on services for AI/AN victims of crime to illustrate gaps in data on crimes, victimization rates, and victim services in Indian Country.
The NCAI Policy Research Center re-released the report *First Kids 1st Data Resource Book* with an updated design to better present information on research and data sources to help Native youth thrive. The report was developed as a part of the First Kids 1st initiative that aimed to promote systems of support for Native youth to thrive.

The NCAI Policy Research Center published weekly data reports that included the latest 2020 Census self-response rates for households on tribal lands during the last three months of the enumeration. These weekly reports included an overview and summary of response rates for all tribal lands and for each NCAI region. The reports provided weekly progress during the critical last months of the 2020 Census count, and were disseminated widely in Indian Country. The data on response rates also provide comparisons to the U.S. national response rate to date and the 2010 Census response rates for tribal lands. These reports were used by tribal leaders to understand where to take action to increase response rates for all tribal lands by over 30 percent in the final months of the 2020 Census enumeration.

The NCAI Policy Research Center published Native Vote data reports that showcased the close races in 2020 electoral college (Presidential), Congressional, and state legislative elections and illustrated where the AI/AN population could make a difference in specific races. The reports also highlighted Native candidates running for elected office.

The NCAI Policy Research Center published COVID-19 Situation Summary reports on at least a weekly basis during the pandemic to help tribal nations follow trends in cases and deaths in Indian Country using IHS and CDC data.

**Table 3: Arizona State Legislative Native Candidates and AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>District Race</th>
<th>AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domingo DeGrazia</td>
<td>State House District 10</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felicia French</td>
<td>State House District 6</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Ann Gonzales</td>
<td>State Senate District 3</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Jermaine</td>
<td>State House District 18</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamescita Peahalai</td>
<td>State Senate District 7</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Steele</td>
<td>State Senate District 9</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April Toole</td>
<td>State House District 7</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myron Tsosie</td>
<td>State House District 7</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Bureau, 2020 Census Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 1su204, 5 Year ACS Data, Indian Country Today, Accessed September 12, 2020.
STRAEGY – DATA IN A STRATEGIC, FORWARD FOCUSED MANNER

The NCAI Policy Research Center held the 15th Annual Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum as a virtual event on September 1-3, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the cancellation of the NCAI Mid Year Conference. The purpose of the Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum is to provide an opportunity for researchers, practitioners, community members and others to present their findings to tribal leaders, policymakers, and tribal members. The Forum included a Data Institute, General Assemblies, Poster Sessions, and Breakout Sessions where researchers and tribal leaders discussed research and data to inform policy.

SOVEREIGNTY – SOVEREIGNTY OVER DATA AND RESEARCH

The NCAI Policy Research Center continued to work to strengthen tribal-academic research partnerships through its training *Holding Space: A Guide for Partners in Tribal Research*. The team conducted a training at the University of Minnesota in March 2020 right before the COVID-19 pandemic began for an audience of academic researchers, tribal representatives, and students. It also published two peer-reviewed papers highlighting how the training’s concepts of governance, trust, and culture help strengthen partnerships between researchers and tribal nations. The training includes the Tribal Research Future Game, which is an interactive scenario-based game for participants to role play and practice real-world decision-making in tribal-academic research partnerships.

The NCAI Policy Research Center also provided technical assistance and wrote letters on several topics on data or research related issues to federal agencies or Congress, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH) tribal consultations on their draft data management and sharing policy, proposed COVID-19 research, and the All of Us Research Program. The NCAI Policy Research Center also wrote letters to the
U.S. Census Bureau to call for tribal consultation on their new data privacy methods to ensure tribal nations will have accurate 2020 Census data, and held webinars and educational sessions to help tribal leaders formulate their recommendations. These letters resulted in actions favorable to tribal nations as well as federal consultations with tribal nations on the issue.

DISSEMINATION – RESEARCH AND DATA TO TRIBAL NATIONS

The NCAI Policy Research Center utilizes its website, social media, webinars, Listserv, and exhibit to disseminate its data briefs, research policy updates, reports, trainings, and events. During the 15th Annual Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum, the NCAI Policy Research Center exhibit was highlighted as a virtual exhibit with an interactive Zoom session during breaks and a website exhibit platform where attendees could view and download recent reports and updates.

NCAI POLICY RESEARCH CENTER TEAM

(from left to right: Sierra Watt, Gwynne Evans-Lomayesva, Dr. Yvette Roubideaux)
In 2009, NCAI established the Partnership for Tribal Governance to create, coordinate, and share the knowledge, tools, and resources that tribal nations need to grow their governance systems and more fully and effectively exercise their sovereignty in critical areas.

In 2019, NCAI expanded and renamed this department “Tribal Governance and Special Projects” (TGSP) to include the Partnership for Tribal Governance and a growing number of tribal governance-supporting initiatives focused on key topics. Over the past year, TGSP has made significant strides across these initiatives, including:

**BUILDING TRIBAL ECONOMIES INITIATIVE**

For the past two years, the Partnership for Tribal Governance has been working to develop the “Building Tribal Economies” decision-framing toolkit for tribal leaders, key decision-makers, and citizens. The toolkit, set for release in December 2020, shares the main findings of NCAI’s “Building Tribal Economies” research and outreach initiative, which seeks to train the focus of tribal nations on the strategic, foundational considerations involved with building integrated, sustainable, tribal economies capable of supporting their communities and citizens today, tomorrow, and for generations to come. In a key milestone in the toolkit’s development, NCAI virtually convened two dozen Indian Country economic development experts in June and July 2020 to review and provide feedback on the draft toolkit and provide their perspectives on the central issues it explores.
TRIBAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE
Over the past two years, the Partnership for Tribal Governance has been providing technical assistance to tribal nations seeking to develop and implement strategic and comprehensive approaches to workforce development. At the core of this technical assistance effort is NCAI’s “Tribal Workforce Development” decision-framing toolkit, which it released in 2018 to guide tribal nations’ work in this area. The Partnership also has teamed up with NCAI’s Government Relations department to document emerging issues that tribal nations are experiencing with the federal government’s unlawful inter-agency MOA governing the expanded “477” workforce development law, and what fixes need to be made to the MOA to enable tribal nations to merge workforce development and related programs as they see fit.

TRIBAL FOOD SOVEREIGNTY ADVANCEMENT INITIATIVE
In fall of 2019, NCAI launched its Tribal Food Sovereignty Advancement Initiative (TFSAI), which supports the development and strengthening of tribal nations’ food sovereignty, security, and production efforts through policy advocacy and the documentation and sharing of tribal best practices. As part of its launch, TFSAI released an in-depth case study of the Yurok Tribe’s food sovereignty approach, and it will be releasing additional case studies on the Blackfeet Nation, Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, Osage Nation, and San Carlos Apache Tribe by the end of 2020. In addition, TFSAI is releasing a food sovereignty and food production resource directory for tribal nations, organizations, and individual Native food producers in November 2020; that same month, TFSAI and its partners will release a federal policy brief examining implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill’s landmark tribal provisions and presenting an initial set of policy priorities for the 2023 Farm Bill.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

TRIBAL CLIMATE ACTION INITIATIVE
NCAI launched its Climate Action Initiative in 2018 to: (1) document, inform, support, and share the climate action efforts of tribal nations and organizations; and (2) identify and advocate for policies and funding to empower their ability to engage in effective, sustainable climate action. The initiative is led by NCAI’s Climate Action Task Force (CATF), which: (1) formulates and advocates for tribal consensus-based policies at the federal, state, and international levels; (2) documents and shares tribal best practices to shorten the learning curve for tribal nations and organizations; (3) develops and maintains partnerships with research/technical assistance entities; (4) stewards a national network of tribal climate action stakeholders; and (5) serves as an information-sharing and advocacy conduit between tribal nations in domestic and international human rights forums.
CATF is supported by its Technical Committee, composed of 24 technical experts that assist with the development and review of NCAI resolutions on climate action, and synthesize and share the best available information and data about climate change impacts and tribal climate action solutions. NCAI’s Climate Action Initiative shares its work through its Climate Action Resource Center and weekly email broadcast. Over the past year, CATF and its Technical Committee have worked with NCAI’s partners to develop several climate action-focused resolutions that will be considered at NCAI’s 2020 Annual Convention.

THE SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RACIAL EQUITY MOVEMENT

NCAI, the Advancement Project National Office, Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum, Demos, Faith in Action, NAACP, National Urban League, Race Forward, and UnidosUS are a collaborative of nine leading national racial equity anchor organizations (the Anchors) supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Together, we work to promote racial equity, advance racial healing, and ensure that all children, families, and communities have opportunities to reach their full potential.

Among other collaborations, over the past year the Anchors have worked as one to: (1) advance Census 2020 “Get Out the Count” across communities of color nationally and in several key states, and (2) increase voter registration and turnout rates among people of color for the 2020 primary and general elections, and (3) formulate and advocate for a collective set of federal policy and funding priorities designed to provide immediate relief to communities of color disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and help them recover over time. In addition, the Anchors have released several joint statements on racial justice, including the murder of George Floyd and the decision not to bring charges in the death of Breonna Taylor.

ENDING “INDIAN” MASCOTS INITIATIVE – THE WASHINGTON TEAM NAME CHANGE

In July 2020, the National Football League’s franchise in Washington, D.C. announced its decision to review and ultimately retire its racial slur “R*dsk*ns” mascot, culminating a decades-long effort by NCAI, its many partners, and tribal nations and leaders from across the country about the harms such mascots cause Native people and the need to do away with them. According to NCAI President Fawn Sharp, who commemorated the moment, “Removing names and symbols that misrepresent and stereotype is an important first step to creating an environment of equality and respect for Native people. We commend the
Washington team and look forward to it taking the next essential step – adopting a new mascot that features no Native ‘themed’ imagery, references, or design elements. But Indian Country’s work is not done. We will not rest until all offensive Native ‘themed’ mascots and associated imagery and rituals are removed from the landscapes of sports and popular culture, and we call upon our partners and allies across the country to ratchet up the pressure on those who insist on mistreating Native people in this way. We are not mascots.”

**SCHOOL TRACKING DATABASE FOR EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH**

Over the past year, NCAI developed a comprehensive national tracking database of more than two dozen different Native “themed” school mascots (K-12 level), updating it daily through real-time Google alert notifications and direct, ongoing engagement with many of the schools featured in the database. The database features comprehensive information for each school, from online news stories to school mascot logos to detailed contact information for school principals, superintendents, and school board members.

The database enables NCAI staff to identify, track, engage, and educate those schools that are having active conversations about whether and how to change their mascots about: (1) the many documented harms that such mascots cause Native people, in particular Native youth; and (2) NCAI’s longstanding formal opposition (as a national governing body of tribal nations) to the continued use of these mascots. Since May 2020, NCAI has used the database to directly engage more than 150 individual schools about the harms caused by their Native “themed” mascots, leading more than 50 of them to officially retire their mascots. These include the Anderson High School “R*dsk*ns” in Ohio, the Marion High School “Indians” in Iowa, the Glastonbury High School “Tomahawks” in Connecticut, and the Taconic High School “Braves” in Massachusetts.

**ENDING INDIAN MASCOTS – INFORMATION SERVICE**

Over the past year, NCAI has grown its “Ending ‘Indian’ Mascots” email-based information service, which educates thousands of tribal advocates, media members, philanthropic and corporate leaders, and school board members and principals about the latest developments in the growing movement to end “Indian” (Native “themed”) mascots. Among other updates, it showcases and celebrates those schools, leagues, and teams that choose to stand on the right side of history by discarding the harmful mascots they have long used.
The Tribal Supreme Court Project (Project) was established in 2001 as part of the Tribal Sovereignty Protection Initiative. Since then, the makeup of the Supreme Court of the United States has changed significantly and the types of cases involving federal Indian law has continued to evolve.

Most recently, during the Court’s October 2019 term, Indian Country saw the most significant tribal treaty rights affirmation case since the Project began. In *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, the Court was asked to weigh in on whether reservation boundaries established by the treaties of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation were ever disestablished by Congress. The Court held that the Nation’s reservation boundaries remain intact. In doing so, Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote, “Today we are asked whether the land these treaties promised remains an Indian reservation for purposes of federal criminal law. Because Congress has not said otherwise, we hold the government to its word.”

On October 5, 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court began its October 2020 Term. On the opening day of the term, the Court issued an order list from its “long conference,” which was held on September 29, 2020. Among the more than 1,000 petitions for review that were denied were three Indian law matters: *Nobles v. North Carolina* (20-87) (challenging state court conclusion that defendant was not Indian for purposes of the Major Crimes Act); *In re: Scott Louis Youngbear* (20-78) (habeas corpus petition by American Indian inmate); and *Native Wholesale Supply Company v. California* (19-985) (state regulation of Indian-owned business). In addition, in a case involving an Indian’s challenge to his Oklahoma state court conviction on the grounds that the crime occurred in Indian country and was not subject to state jurisdiction, the Court granted, vacated, and remanded *Wilson v. Oklahoma* for reconsideration in light of its decision in *McGirt v. Oklahoma*. One case, *Rogers County Board of Tax Roll Corrections, et al. v. Video Gaming Technologies, Inc.* (19-1298) (state taxation of non-Indian lessor of gaming machines) was relisted for the October 9, 2020, conference.

The Supreme Court also recently suffered the loss of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a Clinton appointee who served on the Court since 1993. The Senate recently confirmed President Trump’s nominee, Justice Amy Coney Barrett, to replace the late Justice Ginsburg. The Native American Rights Fund has prepared a memorandum examining her Indian law background and experience, which is available here.
In the past year, NCAI has worked in partnership with the Native American Voting Rights Coalition (NAVRC) to address barriers facing Native voters and ensure that their right to vote is protected. On June 4, 2020, NCAI partnered with the Native American Rights Fund on the rollout of “Obstacles at Every Turn: Barriers to Political Participation Faced by Native American Voters,” a report documenting the findings from an extensive series of field hearings held by the NAVRC.

NCAI has a long history of protecting Indian voting rights. At NCAI’s first annual convention in 1944, one of the four resolutions adopted addressed the rights of Native voters. NCAI played a role in the litigation in Arizona and New Mexico in the 1940’s that first ensured Native voting rights, and we continue that work today participating in election monitoring throughout Indian country, educating Native voters about their rights, and advocating before Congress and the courts to ensure those rights are upheld.

**PREPARING FOR ELECTION 2020 – GETTING OUT THE NATIVE VOTE**

NCAI has led the Native Vote initiative and actively engaged in Indian Country voting efforts since the organization’s inception in 1944. Native Vote is a non-partisan, four-pronged initiative to mobilize Native communities to participate in civic engagement activities. The four pillars of Native Vote are:

1. **Voter Registration and Get-Out-The-Native-Vote (GOTNV)**
2. **Election Protection**
3. **Education**
4. **Data Collection**

**2020 NATIVE AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE FORUM – LAS VEGAS, NEVADA**

NCAI, Four Directions, and Nevada tribal nations hosted the second Native American Presidential Forum on January 14-15, 2020, in Las Vegas, Nevada on the campus of the University of Nevada-Las Vegas at the Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall. The 2020 Native American Presidential Candidate Forum was only the second of its kind, but the dedicated efforts of tribal nations, organizations, and citizens will ensure that it is not the last. It is up to Native peoples to stay engaged and show elected officials that Indian Country’s concerns and priorities matter. Our strength is in our voice and come Election Day, Indian Country can show the world that every Native vote counts.

Native voters got a comprehensive, firsthand account of where U.S. presidential candidates’ stand on today’s pressing issues, specifically those facing Indian Country. The presidential hopefuls themselves were able to engage with tribal leaders and other key Indian Country stakeholders, hear their concerns, and learn that Native issues are not partisan – they are America’s issues.
Concurrent with the Forum, Four Directions and its partners provided training for Native Americans living in Nevada on participation in Nevada’s presidential primary caucuses. In addition, Four Directions and its partners conducted voter registration and get-out-the-vote training for Native Americans from across the United States.

A full replay of the 2020 Native American Presidential Forum is available here.

2020 NATIVE VOTE KICK-OFF RALLY

NCAI hard-launched its Get-Out-the-Native-Vote outreach efforts with an online rally featuring NCAI President Fawn Sharp, official Native Vote ambassador. This high-energy event featured a live music set by DJ Emcee One and a line-up that included opening remarks by Congresswoman Deb Haaland, the voting landscape report by Indian Country Today editor Mark Trahant, videos from Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan and Congressman Markwayne Mullin, and special appearances by Natalie Landreth from the Native American Rights Fund, Indigenous land advocate and attorney Tara Houska, OJ Seamans, Sr. from the voting rights organization Four Directions, Inc., and several Native Vote coordinators from across Indian Country.

A full replay of the 2020 Native Vote Kick-off Rally is available here.
THE 2020 CENSUS

Beginning in 2018, NCAI and its Policy Research Center began working to ensure that we did our part to perform outreach, education, and coalition building to close the gap on the undercount for the 2020 Census. On April 1, 2019, NCAI launched the Indian Country Counts campaign complete with an online resource center, weekly trainings and seminars, in-person tabling at NCAI conferences and virtual outreach events, and began hosting a weekly series called “Taking Action in 2020.” Through the help of our generous funders such as the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation, the New Venture Fund, and the W.K. Kellogg fund, NCAI deployed millions of dollars into 28 states with hard to count populations to ensure that we could support any further outreach into American Indian and Alaska Native communities, especially those in hard-to-count areas. Here’s a look at our impact:

KEY:
- NV Only (3)
- NV and ICC 1st Round (13)
- NV and ICC 2nd Round (4)
- NV and ICC 3rd Round (1)
- ICC 1st Round Only (8)
- ICC 2nd Round Only (2)

NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED:

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<th>Native Vote (NV)</th>
<th>45 applications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian Country Counts (ICC)</td>
<td>232 applications since Fall 2019</td>
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</table>

NUMBER OF STATES SERVED WITH MINI GRANT FUNDING:

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<tr>
<th>Native Vote (NV)</th>
<th>21 states total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian Country Counts (ICC)</td>
<td>28 states total</td>
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</table>

NCAI REGIONS COVERED BY MINI GRANT FUNDING:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Native Vote (NV)</th>
<th>8 regions covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian Country Counts (ICC)</td>
<td>ALL regions covered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NCAI met the moment in 2020, raising the visibility of Indian Country’s messages and priorities in the face of a global pandemic, ensuing economic turmoil, and widespread social unrest. Through online forums, webinars, op-eds, and expanded social media activity, NCAI carried out a comprehensive and multifaceted effort to inform the public, media, and policymakers about: the disproportionate impacts of the coronavirus on tribal nations and communities; what tribal governments needed to protect their citizens from COVID-19; and what tribal governments, tribal enterprises, Native workforces, and Native-owned small businesses need to withstand and recover from the pandemic.

Meanwhile, in the wake of the murder of George Floyd, NCAI’s communications team joined forces with our civil rights partners to elevate the public’s understanding about the gravity and pervasiveness of police violence against Native people, as well as Indian Country’s priorities for criminal justice reforms. The rapidly growing racial justice movement also fueled growing attention at the national and local levels towards the harms caused by “Indian” mascots in sports and popular culture, enabling NCAI to generate a significant increase in media attention about tribal nations’ longstanding opposition to these mascots (this has directly led to more than 50 K-12 schools deciding to retire their mascots).

**PRESS AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

- 169,476 online mentions of NCAI and NCAI issue areas from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020
- 81,080 online mentions of NCAI and NCAI issue areas from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020
- 100 news sites mentioned NCAI 8,570 times in the past year
- +9% increase in NCAI Facebook Followers over the past year; 8.5 percent increase in net page likes
- 40.8 million impressions generated by NCAI tweets
- 54,737 NCAI Twitter followers as of October 1, 2020

*DID YOU KNOW? The top mentioned policy issues associated with NCAI from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020 were Washington Football Team Name Change and COVID-19 Pandemic*
NCAI is a diverse and expanding resource of information on Indian Country. As the leader in tribal consensus around a vision for strong and thriving tribal nations, NCAI communicates extensively on tribal priorities. These resources create exceptional value and leverage for our members. In the past 12 months, NCAI has crafted the following materials to give voice to the priority issues driven by the unified voice of our membership:

**LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY**

Executive Council Winter Session Briefing Packets
Tribal Unity Impact Days Briefing Packets
Policy Updates in Spring and Fall

**PARTNERSHIP FOR TRIBAL GOVERNANCE**

Tribal Food Sovereignty and Food Production: A Resource Directory for Indian Country
NCAI School Mascot Tracking Database: The Current Numbers

**LEGAL**

Since last year, NCAI has routinely weighed in on important issues affecting Indian Country, including matters involving: Indian health care, treaty and restrictive settlement interpretation, statutory interpretation, trust litigation, environmental justice, law enforcement authority, protection of sacred places, gaming, tribal corporations, and tribal regulatory authority. NCAI has partnered with many tribal nations and tribal organizations in this work, including, but not limited to: the United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund, the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, the California Tribal Chairperson’s Association, the Great Plains Tribal Chairman’s Association, the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes, the All Pueblo Council of Governors, and the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes and each of their respective member tribes. Our collective work ensured that Indian Country stood together to protect tribal rights before courts across the Nation. Our partners at the Native American Rights Fund were critical to this effort, as were countless tribal leaders and attorneys. NCAI looks forward to another productive year in 2021. For more information on our work before the courts, please visit our Legal Filings database or contact NCAI general counsel, Derrick Beetso at dbeetso@ncai.org.
POLICY RESEARCH CENTER

Becoming Visible: A Landscape Analysis of State Efforts to Provide Native American Education for All

Intellectual Property Rights and Tribal Nations

American Indian and Alaska Native Youth in the Juvenile Justice System: A Guide to Data

Decennial Census: Key Uses of the Data

American Indian and Alaska Native Youth in the Juvenile Justice System: A Guide to Data

Review of Available Data and Literature on Services for American Indians and Alaska Native Victims of Crime

First Kids 1st Data Resource Book

COVID-19 and State Data Disaggregation

NCAI COVID-19 Situation Summaries

2020 Census Response Rates

2020 Native Vote Reports

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Native Vote 101 Resources

Voter Action Toolkit

Indian Country Counts Toolkit
WHY NCAI?

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) is now in its 77th year. Founded in 1944, NCAI is the oldest, largest, and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) organization serving the broad interests of tribal nations, governments, and communities. NCAI answers the call of its founders to serve as the unified voice of tribal nations to protect and advance tribal sovereignty.

NCAI provides the governments and leaders of those nations a powerful platform for consensus-based policy development and advocacy. In doing so, it protects tribal self-governance and treaty rights; promotes economic development, health, and welfare of tribal communities; and educates the public toward a better understanding of tribal nations.

NCAI’s effectiveness in strengthening tribal sovereignty and advancing Indian Country’s priorities is rooted in the wisdom and involvement of our diverse membership. This includes a growing number of tribal governments, tribal citizens, and Native organizations from across the country.

Working in partnership, NCAI and its members amplify the collective voice of tribal nations to achieve a brighter future for Indian Country and its generations to come.

If you are not already an NCAI member or contributor, please join us.

MEMBERSHIP

Help NCAI continue its difference making work by becoming a new member, or renewing your membership!

Seventy-seven years ago, when NCAI was founded, the new organization brought together tribal leaders and tribal citizens to speak with one voice to protect tribal sovereignty. NCAI has been successful in this mission because of the membership of and partnerships with tribal nations, villages, individuals and organizations. Our membership enriches our unified national voice, enhances our ability to engage in educational outreach, and supports legal, legislative, and administrative advocacy.

NCAI’s membership is representative of the strength and resilience of Indian Country. NCAI strives to ensure that all tribal communities and people are well-informed about all issues affecting the welfare of tribal nations. Collectively, we work to strengthen tribal sovereignty for the prosperity of tribal communities and nations.
NCAI’s voting membership is comprised of tribal nations and individuals who have met the eligibility criteria and paid dues as outlined in Article III of the NCAI Bylaws. Members are determined to be in good standing upon having fulfilled the requirements of the Credentials Committee.

Joining is fast and easy! Visit the Membership portal on our website or call us today!

**BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP**

1. **TRIBAL MEMBERSHIP:**
   - Ability to submit and sponsor a resolution
   - Have a weighed vote based on tribal enrollment numbers
   - Receive NCAI Broadcasts, Alerts, and Publications to two (2) emails.
   - *Open to any recognized tribe or other identifiable group of American Indians by the Department of the Interior, Court of Claims, the Indian Claims Commission or a State. Please visit the NCAI website page on Membership for the full terms of eligibility.*

2. **INDIAN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP:**
   - Receive NCAI Broadcasts, Alerts, and Publications to one (1) email
   - Reduced conference and Convention rates for the Membership Year
   - One (1) Vote during elections.
   - *Any person of Indian and/or Alaska Native ancestry in the United States or a Native of Alaska is eligible for individual membership. For the purpose of membership an Indian is a person recognized as a member by an Indian tribe, or combination of tribes and bands recognized by the U.S. Department of the Interior, the Indian Claims Commission, Court of Claims, or a State.*

3. **INDIVIDUAL ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP:**
   - Receive NCAI Broadcasts, Alerts, and Publications to one (1) email
   - Reduced conference rates for the Membership Year.
   - *Non-Indian applicants may be admitted to non-voting associate membership upon the payment of annual dues as fixed by the Bylaws.*

4. **ORGANIZATION ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP**
   - Receive NCAI Broadcasts, Alerts, and Publications to two (2) emails
   - Reduced conference rates for two (2) people for the Membership Year
   - *Organizations may be admitted to non-voting associate membership upon the payment of annual dues as fixed by the By-Laws.*

For further membership information, visit [http://bit.ly/NCAIMembership](http://bit.ly/NCAIMembership). For questions, contact Keona Royal, NCAI Membership Coordinator, at kroyal@ncai.org or (202) 466-7767.
THANK YOU«
TO OUR 2020 DONORS AND SPONSORS

Every day NCAI is doing work that positively impacts Indian Country. This work would not be possible without the generosity and vision of tribal nations, leaders, and citizens; foundations; businesses; and our other key allies. Shaped by the consensus of its members, NCAI remains on the forefront of national policy and legal strategy. Investing in NCAI returns countless benefits. We are deeply grateful to the following partners for their investment in NCAI:

- Act Blue Charities
- Aetna Foundation, Inc.
- Agua Fund, Inc
- Amazon
- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Bank of America
- Bay and Paul Foundation
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bush Foundation Eco Systems
- Crooked Media, Inc.
- Department of Defense
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Justice
- Directors Philanthropy Fund
- Facebook
- Fidelity Charitable
- Ford Foundation
- Good Medicine Comedy Show
- Google
- Harrington Investments, Inc
- Indian Health Service NARCH
- Indian Health Service NIHOE
- Indian Health Service T.R.A.I.L
- INGAA Foundation
- Jeep Iroquois Tribe
- Jewish Community Foundation Los Angeles
- Johns Hopkins
- Key Bank - Native American Financial Services
- Knight Foundation
- Lincoln-Sudsbury Regional District
- National Center for Victims of Crime
- National Indian Health Board
- National Indian Health Outreach and Education (NIHOE) Program
- National Philanthropic Trust
- National Philanthropic Trust
- Network For Good
- New Venture Fund
- Pledgeling Foundation
- Provident Credit Union
- QGiv
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- SALSA
- Schwab Charitable
- Stadler Family Charitable Foundation
- The Bay and Paul Foundation
- The Benevity Fund
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- Unidos US
- United Christian Parish
- University of Colorado
- University of Minnesota
- Vanguard Charitable
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- W.K. Kellogg Foundation - Racial Equity Anchors
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