



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PSP-09-044

TITLE: In Support of the Rights of Native Americans to Participate in the SBA 8(A) Program

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WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, 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, Indian and Alaska Native Tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, and Native Hawaiian Organizations, for the purposes of this resolution, are collectively referred to as Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, Indian reservations, Native Hawaiian communities, and Alaska Native villages, for the purposes of this resolution, are collectively referred to as Native communities; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Government has a unique legal and political relationship with Tribes, Alaska Native Corporations and Native Hawaiian Organizations, which is recognized in the U.S. Constitution, statutes, and Supreme Court decisions; and

WHEREAS, Congress has a legitimate interest in promoting the economic and political self-sufficiency of Native Americans as a way to fulfill the Government's unique obligations towards Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, providing access to federal contracting opportunities to qualified Native companies provides critical incentives that stimulate economic growth in Native communities, provides economic opportunities for Native American businesses, provides educational scholarships, and encourages entrepreneurs; and

WHEREAS, Congress has held many hearing that seek to address and redress the overwhelming poverty and unemployment experienced by Native Americans both on and off the reservations that arises from their historical relationship with the Federal Government; and

WHEREAS, Native communities suffer from some of the worst poverty in this country, with unemployment levels up to 75% and, because of the lack of resources, there are few individual entrepreneurs in Native communities; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Government buys over \$200 billion in goods and services annually, and has a statutory goal of awarding at least 23 percent of its purchases to small and disadvantaged businesses; and

WHEREAS, one of the most successful Federal initiatives has been to include Native Americans in the Small Business Administration's 8(a) program; and

WHEREAS, Native Americans have only recently become successful participants in the 8(a) program and Native communities are just beginning to experience the benefits of the program; and

WHEREAS, there have been attempts made to modify these rights without Native American input and without consideration of the Federal Government's unique obligations to Native Americans and the economic benefits that Federal contracting dollars have provided to Native communities; and

WHEREAS, that the National Congress of American Indians recognizes that the participation of Native Americans in the SBA 8(a) program has been an important tool in building a strong Native economy; and

WHEREAS, that the NCAI recognizes the past contributions of Members of Congress and the Administration to work positively with Native Americans to improve the 8(a) program for all participants and protect the rights of Native Americans in the program; and

WHEREAS, that the NCAI recognizes that the participation of Native Americans in the National economy and in government programs designed to meet the needs of Native communities is critical to all parties and is based on the fact that Native Americans have, historically, been unfairly and dramatically underrepresented among the various classes of 8(a) contractors contracting with the Federal Government.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby respectfully request the continued support of Congress to maintain Native Americans rights in the 8(a) program for the benefit of Native communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the delegates of the 2009 Annual Conference of the National Congress of American Indians, that the NCAI respectfully requests the United States Congress hold hearings in Washington, D.C. and examine the economic and social needs of America's Native communities and the success of Federal programs intended to address those needs; and


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI urges the Administration to continue to consult with Native Americans on any changes to the 8(a) program that may affect our businesses and communities pursuant to Executive Order 13175; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI strongly opposes any congressional amendment, regulatory changes or other means to diminish, alter, denounce or abolish the current rights established in the Federal procurement system, allowing Native Americans to create economic development for the benefit of their respective Native communities, without input from the Native community; 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 2009 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Palm Springs Convention Center in Palm Springs, California on October 11-16, 2009, with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary