



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #TUL-04-095

TITLE: In Support of Graduating Students Wearing Items of Cultural Significance During Graduation Ceremonies

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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, 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, National Indian Education Association (NIEA) as the largest national Indian organization of American Indians, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian educators, administrators, parents, and students in the United States, provides a forum to discuss and act upon issues affecting the education of Indian and Native people; and

WHEREAS, through its unique relationship with Indian nations and tribes, the federal government has established programs and resources to meet the educational needs of American Indians, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiians, residing on and off their reserved or non-reserved homelands; and

WHEREAS, graduation is a time of celebration and honor for many American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students and families, considering the historically low graduation rates of Native students from high school; and

WHEREAS, there has been a significant increase in policies that regulate “appropriate attire” for students participating in graduation ceremonies and the intent of these policies is to instill a dress code that is respectful of the student and to prevent defamation of the cap and gown typically worn by graduating students; and

WHEREAS, many of the graduation dress codes do not recognize the sacred and cultural items many Native students wear in times of ceremonies and honor and as a result, destruction and damage of sacred items has occurred at the hands of school officials zealously enforcing the dress code policies; and


WHEREAS, there have been a number of reported instances where Native students wearing items of cultural significance have been denied participation in graduating ceremonies due to the dress code.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI supports the right of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students to express cultural pride during graduation activities and opposes any efforts made by school jurisdictions that do not allow for Native students to dress in a manner reflective of Native tradition or culture; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

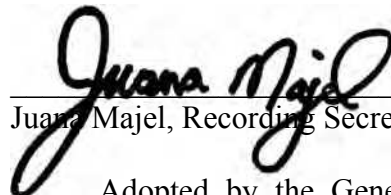
CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2005 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the 62nd Annual Convention in Tulsa, Oklahoma on November 4, 2005 with a quorum present.



Joe Garcia, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel, Recording Secretary

Adopted by the General Assembly during the 2005 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians held from October 30, 2005 to November 4, 2005 at the Convention Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma.