



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SD-15-077

### **TITLE: In Support of Equity in Federal Funding for 1994 Land-Grant Institutions (Tribally Chartered College & Universities) and Indian Extension Agent Programs**

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#### NCAI HEADQUARTERS

1516 P Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20005  
202.466.7767  
202.466.7797 fax  
[www.ncai.org](http://www.ncai.org)

**WHEREAS**, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

**WHEREAS**, the Federal Government has a direct moral and legal responsibility to each of the federally recognized American Indian Tribes with which it signed treaties; and

**WHEREAS**, 75 percent of Tribal land today are either forests or agriculture land, and although it is only a fraction of their original territories, many Tribes still control significant land and water resources, which include extractable resources, fishing, livestock grazing, and agriculture; and

**WHEREAS**, the political and economic self-determination and self-sufficiency of these tribes depend on their ability to sustainability manage their land and natural resources and ensure that tribal members use these resources in sustainable ways that are informed by ongoing tribally-led research; and

**WHEREAS**, American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments and the United States Government have chartered 37 Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) to ensure that high quality, culturally-based Tribal higher education, community-relevant research, and community-outreach services are accessible to American Indian and Alaska Native people; and

**WHEREAS**, the Equity in Education Land-grant Status Act of 1994 was enacted as a means for ensuring that Tribes and their Tribal Colleges – designated in said law as the 1994 land-grant institutions -- had the educational, research, and fiscal resources they needed to protect and manage their forests, waterways, and agriculture lands and related resources; and

**WHEREAS**, the 1994 Extension program, as well as the federally recognized Tribes extension program (FRTEP), are tasked with strengthening communities through vitally needed outreach programs designed to foster economic development, community resources, family and youth development, natural resources stewardship, agriculture, and health and nutrition awareness; and

**WHEREAS**, despite a well-documented need over the past 20 years, all of the 1994 land-grant programs, as well as FRTEP, are grossly underfunded— far below the funding levels necessary to fulfill their responsibility so far below their state and other counterparts as to raise significant questions of equity; and

**WHEREAS**, in his Fiscal Year 2016 budget request to Congress, the President proposed to fund the 1994 tribal college land-grant institutions at **\$4.7 million** for extension programs, awarded *competitively* among 32 TCUs, many of whom serve areas larger than several states, and he proposed just **\$3 million** for the federally recognized Tribes extension program; yet, in contrast, the fifty 1862 institutions (state land-grants) would receive **\$300 million** in *formula*-driven extension funds; and the President proposed nearly **\$50 million** for the 1890s (18 Historically Black Colleges and Universities); and

**WHEREAS**, that same year, the President proposed **\$1.9 million** for the competitive 1994 research program, while requesting **\$256.2 million** for the 1862s (states) – an *increase of \$12.5 million*, and **\$60.5 million** for 1890s (HBCU)—an *increase of \$8 million*; and

**WHEREAS**, this disparity and inequity in funding is unconscionable and unexplainable, particularly given the national resource management challenges facing our Tribes, the decades of a lack of adequate and sustain information on USDA programs and opportunities among American Indian farmers, fishers, and ranchers which cumulated in the *Keepseagle v. Vilsack* class action suit, and more than 150 years of funding inequities between state and tribal extension and land-grant research programs.

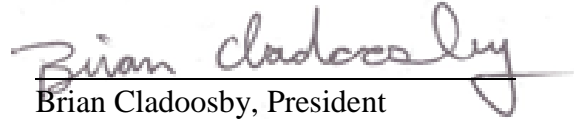
**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Congress of the American Indian (NCAI) calls upon the President and the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to ensure that the 1994 land-grant programs and the federally recognized Tribes extension program receive equitable treatment within the Department so that they are better equipped to meet the extensive need in Indian Country, and more important, that the programs are *equitably* funded vis-à-vis the State (1862) and Historical Black Colleges and Universities (1890) programs; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the NCAI calls upon the President, to make a firm statement on the need for equity in Tribal land-grant and extension programs; 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 2015 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Town and Country Resort, San Diego, CA, October 18-23, 2015, with a quorum present.

  
Brian Cladoosby, President

**ATTEST:**

  
Aaron Payment, Recording Secretary