



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SAC-21-008

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TITLE: Support For A National Native Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative

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

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

WHEREAS, the National United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY) Council represents Native American and Alaska Native youth who are members of the 325 affiliated youth councils that operate in 36 states; and

WHEREAS, the UNITY Executive Committee has been elected by the representatives of the National UNITY Council to act on its behalf between its yearly business meetings; and

WHEREAS, UNITY is committed to promoting the leadership development of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) youth; and

WHEREAS, UNITY's mission is to foster the Spiritual, Mental, Physical and Social development of American Indian and Alaska Native youth; and

WHEREAS, the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention reports suicide rates are high among all AI/AN populations, with forty percent of all AI/AN suicides involving youth ages 15 to 24 and

WHEREAS, in AI/AN communities, youth suicide contagion is common, where one suicide triggers others attempts, resulting in multiple suicides or attempts within a short time frame; and

WHEREAS, the UNITY "I Will Live" initiative works to bring further attention to the AI/AN suicide epidemic in the midst of the global COVID-19 Pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the reaffirmation of this initiative will inspire collective action, to bring about wellness and mental health cultural teachings to empower others to actively pursue a balanced lifestyle.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) endorses the implementation of the UNITY “I Will Live” Initiative and identify updated resources in an effort to reduce youth suicides in Indian Country; and

BE IT FURTHER 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 2021 Annual Conference of the National Congress of American Indians, held October 11-14, 2021, with a quorum present.



Fawn Sharp, President

ATTEST:



Aaron A. Payment, Recording Secretary