



National Indian Education Association

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NIEA RESOLUTION #06-13

Title: SUPPORT FOR LEGISLATION AND INCREASED FUNDING FOR NATIVE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) was established in 1969 for the purpose of advocating, planning, and promoting the unique and special educational needs of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; and

WHEREAS, 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, in Native communities across the country, Native languages are in rapid decline and it is estimated that only twenty indigenous languages will remain viable by the year 2050; and

WHEREAS, the key to stemming the loss of Native American languages is by significantly increasing support for Native American language immersion programs and programs designed to build towards language immersion. It is well proven that language immersion programs are one of the few effective ways to create fluent speakers in Native languages; and

WHEREAS, data shows that Native students who go through an immersion program perform substantially better academically than Native students who have not gone through such a program; and

WHEREAS, enacted in 1990, the Native American Languages Act (NALA) reversed the federal government's previous policy of eliminating Native American languages and instead, established a federal policy to preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedoms of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages; and

WHEREAS, in 1992, the Congress amended the Native American Programs Act to create a Native American languages grant program within the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) in the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and

WHEREAS, the only federal agency that provides grants for Native American language immersion programs is ANA and funding through ANA has typically been less than \$400,000.00 a year to support language immersion programs; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 4766, the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Act of 2006 passed the U.S. House of Representatives on suspension with broad bi-partisan support on September 27, 2006; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 4766 has received broad bi-partisan support in the U.S. Senate and has been placed on the unanimous consent calendar in the Senate; and

WHEREAS, the National Indian Education Association, the National Congress of American Indians, the Native Hawaiian Education Association, the Alaska Federation of Natives, the United South and Eastern Tribes, the National Indian Head Start Directors Association, and dozens of tribes and regional tribal organizations have weighed in with strong support for H.R. 4766.

NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED, that NIEA does hereby support H.R.4766 as passed by the House of Representatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NIEA urges the Senate to pass H.R.4766 as passed by the House of Representatives when Congress convenes in November.

CERTIFICATION

I do hereby certify that the following resolution was dully considered and passed by the NIEA Board of Directors on November 30, 2006 at which a quorum was present.

Verlie Ann Malina Wright

Dr. Verlie Ann Malina Wright, President (2006-07)
National Indian Education Association