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NIEA Resolution 07-12

TITLE: Recognition of the unique status of Native American Languages in the United States, and accommodate current federal policy regarding Native American Languages promote imminent Federal Education Law regarding the Unique Status of Native American Languages

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

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

WHEREAS, in 1990, Congress passed the Native American Languages Act (NALA) which established a unique federal policy relative to use in publicly supported education of the Native American languages spoken in this country before 1492; and

WHEREAS, there have been cases since the passage of NALA in which Native American student use and instruction through Native American languages has been restricted in federally supported education programs due to lack of specific language relative to the provisions of NALA and other federal legislation regarding Native American Languages Federally funded education programs including the No Child Left Behind Act;

Now therefore be it resolved that the National Indian Education Association calls upon the United States Congress to continue supporting the rights of Native communities and tribes to develop and use their indigenous languages and that federal and public schools and other educational institutions receiving federal educational funding be held accountable for any failure to support this national policy including clarification in the imminent reauthorization of No Child Left Behind to assure that Native American students speaking Native American languages have access to Federally supported education when using and learning Native American languages in educational programs funded by the federal government;

Be it further resolved that the National Indian Education Association directs its governing board to distribute this emergency resolution to the members of Congress drawing attention to any specific areas No Child Left Behind inconsistent with the federal policy established in the 1990 Native American Languages Act.