



NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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NIEA RESOLUTION 2012-2

TITLE: Reauthorization of the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act

WHEREAS, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) was established in 1970 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 Natives, and Native Hawaiians, residing on and off their reserved or non-reserved homelands; and

WHEREAS, the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-394, H.R. 4766) expires in FY 2012 and must be reauthorized and fully funded as an investment in cultural and language preservation; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Act is to preserve and increase fluency in Native American languages, as Native American languages are in rapid decline and are not spoken anywhere else in the world; and

WHEREAS, preserving native languages is integral to preserving indigenous knowledge based on thousands of years of observation and application of natural laws and is essential to addressing challenges facing our country and global community today; and

WHEREAS, linguists estimate that, at the current rate of decline, there may be only 20 Native American languages remaining by the year 2050 and if they are not preserved, they will disappear forever; and

WHEREAS, the Act amends the Native American Programs Act of 1974 to allow the Administration for Native Americans, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to award grants to support and strengthen Native American language immersion programs, including language nests, language survival schools, and language restoration programs; and

WHEREAS, in addition to creating fluency, Native language immersion programs have been shown to promote higher academic success for students who participate in Native language immersion programs compared to their Native peers who do not participate in these programs; and



WHEREAS, the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs recently held a mark-up on the Native American Language Preservation Act which was favorably acted upon in support of Native American Languages; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, NIEA does hereby urge the U.S. Congress to reauthorize and fund the Native American Languages Preservation Act as an investment in the Cultural and Language Revitalization goals of the tribes throughout Indian Country.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Heather Shotton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Heather Shotton
President