

The Wichita and Affiliated Tribes

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WT-25-80

RESOLUTION

Urging Formal Consultation and Protection of Funding for Tribally Controlled Schools

- WHEREAS,** the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes (Wichita, Keechi, Waco, and Tawakoni) (the "Tribe") possess substantial inherent sovereign powers and have exercised those powers since time immemorial; and
- WHEREAS,** the Tribe has a duly established Tribal Government recognized by the Secretary of the Interior; and
- WHEREAS,** Article V of the Wichita Governing Resolution authorizes and empowers the Wichita Executive Committee of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes to act in all matters of business on behalf of the Tribe; and
- WHEREAS,** the United States has a clear trust and treaty responsibility to Tribal Nations for the education of Indian children, as established through the U.S. Constitution and treaties, and reaffirmed in statutes, executive actions, and judicial decisions; and
- WHEREAS,** Executive Order (EO) 14191, "Expanding Educational Freedom and Opportunity for Families," seeks to provide school choice options for students Nationwide, including those attending Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools and Tribally Controlled Schools; and
- WHEREAS,** 48,000 Native students are currently enrolled in BIE-operated or Tribally Controlled Schools, which serve as the fulfillment of the federal government's trust responsibility to Indian education; and
- WHEREAS,** the chronic underfunding of BIE and Tribally Controlled Schools has historically limited the ability of Tribal Nations to provide high-quality, culturally informed education options, impacting the future of Tribal Nations and Native students; and
- WHEREAS,** Congress has already established a school choice system for Tribal communities through the Tribally Controlled Schools Act of 1988 (P.L. 102-97), reinforcing Tribal self-determination and sovereignty in education; and
- WHEREAS,** any additional development of school choice programs for Indian children must secure separate funding, ensuring that existing funds dedicated to Tribally Controlled Schools and BIE are not depleted or redirected to state education agencies, which would undermine Tribal sovereignty; and

WHEREAS, the current Indian School Equalization Program (ISEP), which funds the core operations of BIE and Tribally Controlled Schools, must remain intact and adequately funded to support Native students; and

WHEREAS, 168 of the 183 Bureau-funded schools are located in rural or remote areas with few, if any, viable alternative education options, making the stability of BIE funding critical to Native students and their communities; and

WHEREAS, Tribal Nations must be formally consulted in any decision-making process regarding the implementation of EO 14191 to ensure that the federal trust responsibility to Indian education is fully upheld; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes calls upon the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Education to ensure that any implementation of EO 14191 includes formal consultation with Tribal Nations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any Federal program encouraging school choice for Native students should not reduce or redirect existing federal funding for BIE and Tribally Controlled Schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any expansion of school choice programs for Native students must be designed in partnership with Tribal Nations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes urges Congress and the Administration to uphold their trust and treaty obligations by protecting and enhancing federal funding for BIE and Tribally Controlled Schools, ensuring Native students receive the education they are legally and morally owed.

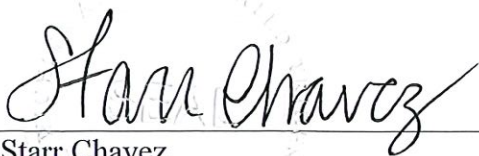
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes Executive Committee hereby authorizes President Amber Silverhorn-Wolfe or Vice President Tasha R. Mousseau in her absence, to sign this resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Wichita Executive Committee of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes of Oklahoma on **February 25, 2025**, in Anadarko, Oklahoma, by a vote of 5 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions, a quorum being present.

Attest:

Approved:



Starr Chavez
Secretary



Tasha R. Mousseau
Vice President