



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

March 22, 2016

Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell
Chair, Arts, Parks and the Los Angeles River Committee
200 N. Spring Street STE 480
LA CA 90012

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Jacqueline Pata
Tlingit

NCAI HEADQUARTERS
1516 P Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005
202.466.7767
202.466.7797 fax
www.ncai.org

RE: NCAI SUPPORT FOR CHANGING THE NAME OF COLUMBUS DAY TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

Dear Councilmember O'Farrell:

On behalf of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the oldest, largest, and most representative organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments, I write to express our support for changing Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day in the City of Los Angeles, California. Founded in 1944 in response to U.S. policies of assimilation and termination towards tribal peoples, one of NCAI's founding principles sought to educate the general public regarding American Indian and Alaska Native governments, peoples, and rights.

The ongoing perception that Christopher Columbus "discovered" America fails to recognize the hundreds of millions of Indigenous peoples that already inhabited the North, Central, and South Americas. Furthermore, the documented atrocities committed by Christopher Columbus against Indigenous peoples do not warrant a day of celebration. Today American Indian and Alaska Native people comprise just less than two percent of the U.S. population, yet our people continue to experience the highest rates of crime, violence, and economic disparity.

Indigenous peoples across the world have persevered and continue efforts to preserve and practice traditional lifeways, such as the exercise of languages, cultural and religious practices and ceremonies, traditional games, and traditional subsistence. Acknowledging past and current atrocities committed towards Indigenous peoples is the first step in establishing respect and understanding for a marginalized and historically silenced population.

We express our most sincere gratitude for your efforts to raise awareness, understanding, and acceptance of the historic and ongoing contributions Indigenous peoples have made to nearly every facet of today's society.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Pata
Executive Director
National Congress of American Indians

Att: NCAI Resolution PDX-11-027, "Support to Change Columbus Day, (2nd)
Monday of October) to Indigenous Peoples' Day



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PDX-11-027

TITLE: Support to Change Columbus Day, (2nd Monday of October) to Indigenous Peoples' Day

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, 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 Indigenous people of the lands which would later be known as the Americas were not discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492; and

WHEREAS, a true and accurate account of the residence and occupation of the Americas by Indigenous people since time immemorial, and long before Christopher Columbus sailed, is necessary to set the historical record straight and to respect the culture, language and traditional life ways of our Indigenous ancestors; and

WHEREAS, having the citizens of the United States of America recognize and celebrate the heritage of indigenous peoples is necessary to respect their history and unite all peoples together.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI supports the change of Columbus Day (2nd Monday of October) to a legal holiday to be known in the future as Indigenous Peoples' Day; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Indigenous Peoples' Day shall be dedicated to the remembrance of the Indigenous peoples who have contributed greatly to the Tribes and the United States of America; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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NORTHWEST
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Quinault Indian Nation

PACIFIC
Don Arnold
Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians

ROCKY MOUNTAIN
Scott Russell
Crow Tribe

SOUTHEAST
Larry Townsend
Lumbee Tribe

SOUTHERN PLAINS
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Joe Garcia
Ohkay Owingeh

WESTERN
Ned Norris, Jr
Tohono O'odham Nation

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Jacqueline Johnson Pata
Tlingit

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CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2011 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Oregon on October 30 – November 4, 2011, with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary