

NATIONAL CAUCUS OF NATIVE AMERICAN STATE LEGISLATORS

RESOLUTION REGARDING ARIZONA HOUSE BILL 2281

The National Caucus of Native American State Legislators (NCNASL) is made up of American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian State Legislators from 18 states and is organized to provide a forum for discussion, education and increased communication. Additionally, the NCNASL identifies and proposes legislation and administrative actions to eliminate barriers to achievement of a better quality of life for Native people.

WHEREAS the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators was formed in 1992 and formally established in its current form in 2005, with the goals of increasing awareness of the diverse Native American cultures in the United States, encouraging open dialogues, understanding, and cooperation, between state and tribal governments, and is concerned with the accurate teaching of American history from the perspective of all parties to that history, and

WHEREAS the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators has long sought to include an accurate representation of the history of American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian peoples in school curriculum, and

WHEREAS the teaching of American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian history, language, and culture to members of those groups is vital to the preservation of the history of our people and our way of life, and

WHEREAS the only way to promote cultural understanding between American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian peoples and those of other cultural traditions is through the truthful teaching and exploration of the historical differences between them, and

WHEREAS the Arizona Legislature has passed and Gov. Janice K. Brewer has signed into law HB2281, which seeks to limit the teaching of classes or courses that “promote resentment toward a race or class of people,” and

WHEREAS this policy will impact the ability of all students to learn about American history from different perspectives which may arouse negative feelings, and

WHEREAS the exploration of students’ feelings about their own cultural history is critical to both the preservation of our unique heritage and the healing of wounds that continue to divide our people, and

WHEREAS the Declaration of Independence itself refers to native peoples as “merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions,” and

WHEREAS the uniform application of this policy will serve to stifle and sterilize discussion of historical events in the state of Arizona and any other state where a similar policy is adopted, to a point where minority viewpoints will be eradicated entirely, and

WHEREAS such a stifling of alternative viewpoints runs contrary to the American spirit of free expression, academic freedom and intellectual inquiry,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE NATIONAL CAUCUS OF NATIVE AMERICAN STATE LEGISLATORS that the inherent sovereignty of Tribes as recognized through historical treaties and legal relationships that exist between Tribal Nations and the United States of America is undeniable; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators stands opposed to HB2281 for these and other reasons, and will vigorously oppose the efforts of other states to adopt the same or similar policies, on the grounds that such policies represent a threat to the preservation of our respective cultures and traditions.

Sponsored by: Sen. Albert Hale (AZ)

Approved date is: June 25, 2010

Committee of Jurisdiction: Education

Certified by Committee Chair:

Certified by Caucus Chair: Rep. John McCoy (WA)

Ratified certified by: The NCNASL, June 25, 2010

Distribution List: President
Members of Congress
National Congress of American Indians