



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

September 12, 2023

NOTICE: Proposed Amendments to NCAI Constitution

Honorable Tribal Leaders and NCAI Membership:

As you are likely aware, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) will be hosting its 80th Annual Convention & Marketplace from November 12-17, 2023, in New Orleans, Louisiana. I am writing to inform you that in addition to the typical business of the Congress—including elections of NCAI leadership—the upcoming Convention will include a vote on proposed changes to the NCAI Constitution.

I. Process for Proposing Amendments to the NCAI Constitution

Pursuant to Article VII of the NCAI Constitution:

This Constitution may be amended by a two thirds (2/3) vote of the total registered tribal and individual members at the Annual Convention. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the national NCAI office not later than three months prior to the Annual. All proposed amendments shall be submitted by the national office to the membership no later than two months prior to the Annual Convention. Before forwarding, the Executive Committee may review proposed amendments and make recommendations to the membership regarding whether the amendment is in order and promotes the purpose of NCAI to advocate for the interests of all tribes. Consideration of Constitutional amendments shall take priority over any other business during Constitutional Conventions.

In accordance with this provision, the national NCAI office received two (2) separate proposals to amend the NCAI Constitution at the 2023 Annual Convention.

The Executive Committee reviewed both proposals independently and determined that both proposed amendments were in order (i.e. both proposed amendments

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were properly received by the national office “not later than three months prior to the Annual”) and has chosen to not make any recommendation on whether the proposed amendments promote “the purpose of NCAI to advocate for the interests of all tribes.”

II. Substance of Proposed Amendments to the NCAI Constitution

The text of the two proposed constitutional amendments to the NCAI Constitution (including the letter that accompanied each proposal) will be available on the NCAI website at:

<https://www.ncai.org/events/2023/11/12/80th-annual-convention-marketplace>.

Given the similar nature of the two proposed amendments to the NCAI Constitution, the Executive Committee—after consulting with the NCAI Parliamentarian—has reached out to the sponsor of each proposed amendment to see if they will consent to consolidating their proposals into a single proposed amendment. Combining the two proposals can only be done with the consent of both sponsors and *if* this takes place, another notice will go out with the new combined proposed text.

III. Process for Debating Proposed Amendments to the NCAI Constitution

Creating space for debate on any changes to the NCAI governing documents is, of course, critical. Given the scope and substance of the proposed changes, there are undoubtedly many issues to consider and many Tribal Nations and individual members will wish to weigh in on the matter. In the interest of balancing the need for debate with the logistical realities and time limitations of the NCAI Annual Convention, the NCAI Executive Committee has decided on the following processes to assist in having a robust, respectful, and full debate of the issue:

- **Debate at the Annual Convention.** The NCAI Executive Committee has reserved the full use of the General Assembly session on Tuesday, November 14, 2023—running from 8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. CST—for debate of the proposed amendments to the NCAI Constitution. The NCAI Executive Committee is continuing to work with the NCAI Parliamentarian to provide additional guidance on the structure for that debate and additional information will be forthcoming.
- **Debate Prior to the Annual Convention.** Even with an entire General Assembly session dedicated to debate, it will inevitably be difficult to allow everyone to speak on the issue who wishes to do so. Thus, the



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Executive Committee has authorized the creation of a webpage on the NCAI website to house formal written comments by NCAI members in good standing that either support or oppose one or both of the proposed amendments to the NCAI Constitution. Information on how NCAI members-in-good-standing can submit their comments for publication on the NCAI website can be found here: <https://forms.gle/FitxVxXhU5mUnRYT6>.

IV. Process for Voting on Proposed Amendments to the NCAI Constitution

The Executive Committee—after consulting with the NCAI Parliamentarian—has authorized the vote on all proposed amendments to the Constitution to take place via secret ballot in conjunction with the NCAI leadership elections on Thursday, November 16, 2023. On that date, all NCAI members in good standing will be able to vote on the proposed constitutional amendments between 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. CST. As is the case with other votes, Tribal Nation members can send one delegate to cast a weighted vote on their behalf and all eligible individual members can cast their own non-weighted vote. Additional information about the election process will be provided by the NCAI Elections Committee in the upcoming weeks.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, NCAI thanks you for your continued support and involvement. This year's Annual Convention & Marketplace will be critically important for NCAI's future. In addition to conducting elections and debating the proposed amendments to the Constitution, there will be updates from federal partners and Native organizations, discussions on policy priorities, dozens of breakout session opportunities, and a chance for us to work together towards fulfilling NCAI's mission of defending tribal sovereignty. We look forward to seeing all of you in New Orleans this November, and to working with each of you in the coming years as we work collectively to advance the sovereignty of all Tribal Nations.

Siokwil,

Fawn Sharp

President, National Congress of American Indians