

SJR62 INTRODUCED



1 SJR62
2 V7S7DLV-1
3 By Senator Allen
4 RFD: RULES
5 First Read: 25-Feb-26



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SJR___ ENCOURAGING THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS TO EMBRACE ALABAMA'S STATE-RECOGNIZED TRIBES.

WHEREAS, the Alabama Indian Affairs Commission has notified the Alabama Legislature that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), a private organization dedicated to advancing and representing American Indian and Alaska Native populations, has recently broken with long-standing practice and denied Alabama's state-recognized tribes the ability to continue as Tribal Members in NCAI; and

WHEREAS, NCAI's denial deprives Alabama's state-recognized tribes of the rights, privileges, and benefits of Tribal Membership, including valuable legislative and policy insights and networking opportunities at the annual conference, all while disrespecting the tribes' status as Indians; and

WHEREAS, NCAI's denial of Tribal Membership is driven by these tribes' status as state-recognized and by NCAI's insistence that it should be able to look behind this state's recognition process to ascertain the legitimacy of the state's recognized tribes; and

WHEREAS, the state has long exercised its sovereign right to recognize tribes and provide for the state's relationship with the same; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alabama duly recognizes the



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29 Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Echota Cherokee Tribe of
30 Alabama, Cherokee Tribe of Northeast Alabama, Machis Lower
31 Creek Indian Tribe of Alabama, Southeastern Mvskoche Nation,
32 Cher-O-Creek Intra Tribal Indians, Mowa Band of Choctaw
33 Indians, Piqua Shawnee Tribe, and the United Cherokee Ani
34 Yua Wiya; and

35 WHEREAS, of these tribes, only the Poarch Band of
36 Creek Indians is also recognized by the United States
37 government, and the tribe was recognized first by the state;
38 and

39 WHEREAS, the Alabama Indian Affairs Commission,
40 established by the state in the Davis-Strong Act (Ala. Act
41 No. 1984-257) is itself a testament to the state's respect
42 for, and interest in, the state's recognized tribes and
43 Indian residents; and

44 WHEREAS, a substantial majority of the commissioners
45 are representatives of the state-recognized tribes, with
46 each tribe recommending one representative to the Governor
47 for appointment; and

48 WHEREAS, the other commissioners are an Alabama
49 resident who is a member of a federally recognized Indian
50 tribe, a member of the Senate appointed by the Lieutenant
51 Governor, a member of the House of Representatives appointed
52 by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and an
53 appointee of the Governor; and

54 WHEREAS, the Commission's key role is as a link
55 between the State of Alabama and its recognized tribes and
56 Indians; and



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57 WHEREAS, the Commission recently celebrated its 40th
58 Anniversary, a milestone we commemorated in Ala. Act No.
59 2024-362; and

60 WHEREAS, the purpose of the Commission is to deal
61 fairly and effectively with Indian affairs, to bring local,
62 state, and federal resources into focus for the
63 implementation or continuation of meaningful programs, to
64 provide aid and assistance to Indian communities, to promote
65 recognition of the right of Indians to pursue cultural and
66 religious traditions, and to provide a path for future
67 recognition of tribes; and

68 WHEREAS, the Commission holds regular meetings that
69 facilitate information sharing, including via presentations
70 by, and connections to, government entities like the Alabama
71 Department of Public Health and the United States Census
72 Bureau; and

73 WHEREAS, the Commission has for decades administered
74 a scholarship program for Indian children, which has
75 distributed more than \$100,000 annually for the last decade;
76 and

77 WHEREAS, more recently, the state has funded grants
78 to the state-recognized tribes, and these grants are
79 distributed by the Commission; and

80 WHEREAS, the Commission has served the public at
81 large by working with state and local governmental entities
82 to prevent unauthorized individuals from usurping the name
83 of a dormant governmental entity where that name could
84 suggest to the public that the individuals were a bona fide



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85 Indian tribe in the eyes of the state when they were not
86 (see AIAC Resolution No. 2023-01); now therefore,

87 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
88 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That we encourage the National
89 Congress of American Indians to embrace Alabama's
90 state-recognized tribes, recognizing them as eligible for
91 Tribal Membership in the organization for the benefit of the
92 tribes, the NCAI, and the general residents of the State of
93 Alabama.

94 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this
95 Resolution be provided to the National Congress of American
96 Indians for due and proper consideration.