

The INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL of the FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES

A Resolution Supporting the Rights of Native Students to Wear Regalia or Objects of Religious and Cultural Significance at Graduation Ceremonies

Resolution No. 23-09



Chuck Hoskin Jr.
Principal Chief

WHEREAS, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes (ITC) is an organization that unites the tribal governments of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations, representing approximately 815,000 Indian people throughout the United States; and



Bill Anoatubby
Governor

WHEREAS, Native American students, along with their families, deserve the right to express their religious freedom and unique heritage as citizens of sovereign nations, especially on occasions of great significance such as graduation ceremonies; and

WHEREAS, there have been occasions when Oklahoma public school systems have attempted to prohibit Native American students from displaying eagle feathers or other tribal regalia on their attire during graduation ceremonies; and



Gary Ballton
Chief

WHEREAS, eagle feathers hold a sacred place in the religion, culture, and history of our tribes and our citizens, and possession of this sacred item is protected and promoted by federal, state, and tribal laws and policies; and

WHEREAS, other objects with cultural and religious significance for Native American tribal members, including jewelry, beaded caps, stoles, or other religious symbols, are similarly protected; and



David W. Hill
Principal Chief

WHEREAS, multiple Oklahoma officials, including the current State Attorney General, have officially recognized that the Oklahoma Religious Freedom Act protects the right of Native American students to wear religious and culturally significant items at graduation; and

WHEREAS, this Resolution builds on ITC Resolution No. 21-14, which expressed support for Native American students to wear regalia or objects of religious and cultural significance on their graduation attire and called on Oklahoma public school systems to protect the rights of students to do so;

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes fully supports the rights of our Native American students to wear regalia or objects of religious and cultural significance, such as eagle feathers, on their graduation attire.



Lewis Johnson
Chief

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes urges the current Oklahoma Attorney General, Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Oklahoma public school systems throughout the state to clearly state

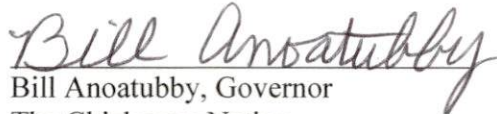
The INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL of the FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES

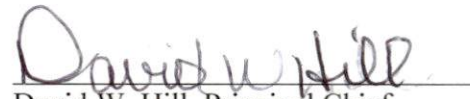
that Native American students are allowed to wear traditional tribal regalia or objects of religious and cultural significance at graduation ceremonies.


BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes supports Senate Bill 429, authored by Senator John Michael Montgomery and Representative Trey Caldwell, that will further clarify the rights of students to wear tribal regalia at graduation ceremonies in Oklahoma State statute.

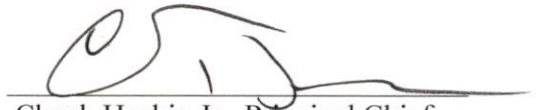
CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes meeting in Thackerville, Oklahoma on this 14th day of April, 2023, by a vote of All for 0 against and 0 abstentions.


Bill Anoatubby, Governor
The Chickasaw Nation


David W. Hill, Principal Chief
Muscogee (Creek) Nation


Gary Batton, Chief
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma


Chuck Hoskin Jr., Principal Chief
Cherokee Nation


Lewis J. Johnson, Chief
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma