



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 22, 2023

National Native Organizations Oppose Federal Shutdown

WASHINGTON, DC – A coalition of national Native organizations, collectively serving the interests of Tribal Nations and their citizens, joined in unison to oppose a federal government shutdown, spending cuts for tribal programs, and to remind Congress that Native lives are not a political bargaining chip.

“Tribal Nations paid, in full, for the duties owed and enforced by the United States. We paid with our lives, with our lands, with our resources, and with our ways of life. We paid long before political factions sought to divide this nation, and your debt is due. We continue to serve this nation’s military in the highest numbers of any U.S. demographic, and we put program dollars to better use for our people than the United States ever has. Congress must uphold its end of the deal. Native lives are not a political bargaining chip,” said Fawn Sharp, President of the National Congress of American Indians.

The United States has created a system where millions of Americans are uniquely reliant on federal appropriations. Tribal law enforcement and courts will switch to emergency operating plans. Primary, secondary, and higher education will switch to emergency operating plans. Tribal housing programs will switch to emergency operating plans. Life-saving programs for at-risk community members will switch to emergency operating plans. The unique history and political status of Tribal Nations and the government-to-government relationship with the United States means that no aspect of a shutdown happens in a vacuum for Indian

Country and all Tribal Nations are affected.

Past government shutdowns have taken the lives of Native citizens, harmed their well-being, and forced tribal governments, tribal organizations, and individual citizens to go into debt to cover the United States' broken promises. Without the historic enactment of advance appropriations for the Indian Health Service, all tribal programs would be facing, yet another, threat of government shutdown. Even still, critical and lifesaving programs will be disrupted throughout Indian Country, and Tribal Nations will pay to maintain operations in either borrowing costs or lives lost.

###

About the National Congress of American Indians:

Founded in 1944, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) is the oldest, largest, and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization in the United States. NCAI advocates on behalf of tribal governments and communities, promoting strong tribal-federal government-to-government policies. NCAI promotes an understanding among the general public regarding American Indian and Alaska Native governments, people, and rights. For more information, visit www.ncai.org.

About the American Indian Higher Education Consortium:

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) is the collective spirit and unifying voice of our nation's Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). AIHEC provides leadership and influences public policy on American Indian higher education issues through advocacy, research, and program initiatives; promotes and strengthens indigenous languages, cultures, communities, and Tribal Nations; and through its unique position, serves member institutions and emerging TCUs. For more information, visit www.aihec.org.

About the National American Indian Housing Council:

The National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) is member organization that represents the unified voice of tribal housing programs across the nation. Established in 1974, NAIHC has a long-respected history of providing effective advocacy and quality training and technical assistance as well as hosting annual events that showcase best practices from tribal housing programs across the country. NAIHC advocates for tribal self-determination and improving housing conditions in tribal communities by working with tribes, tribal housing authorities, and tribally-designated housing entities (TDHEs). Learn more at www.naihc.net.

About the National Council of Urban Indian Health:

The National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) is the national non-profit organization devoted to the support and development of quality, accessible, and culturally competent health and public health services for American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) living in urban areas. NCUIH is the only national representative of the 41 Title V Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) under the Indian Health Service (IHS) in the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCA). NCUIH strives to improve the health of the over 70% of the AI/AN population that lives in urban areas, supported by quality, accessible health care centers.

Visit www.ncuih.org.

About The National Indian Education Association (NIEA):

NIEA is the Nation's most inclusive advocacy organization working to advance comprehensive education opportunities for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Formed by Native educators in 1969 to encourage a national discourse on education, NIEA adheres to the organization's founding principles- to bring educators together to explore ways to improve schools and the educational systems serving Native children; to promote the maintenance and continued development of language and cultural programs; and to develop and implement strategies for influencing local, state, and federal policy and decision-makers. Through advocacy, capacity building, and education, NIEA helps Native students, and their communities, succeed. For more information

visit www.niea.org.

About the National Indian Health Board:

The National Indian Health Board (NIHB) serves all 574 federally recognized Tribal governments—both those that operate their own health care delivery systems through contracting and compacting, and those receiving health care directly from the Indian Health Service (IHS). Established by the Tribes to advocate as the united voice of federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes, NIHB seeks to reinforce Tribal sovereignty, strengthen Tribal health systems, secure resources, and build capacity to achieve the highest level of health and well-being for our People. Visit: www.nihb.org.

About the Native American Rights Fund (NARF):

NARF is a non-profit 501c(3) organization focused on applying existing laws and treaties to guarantee that federal and state governments live up to their legal obligations to Native Americans. Since 1970, [the Native American Rights Fund \(NARF\)](#) has provided specialized legal assistance to Native American tribes, organizations, and individuals nationwide to assert and defend the most important Native rights. In hundreds of major cases. NARF has achieved significant results in critical areas such as tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, natural resource protection, voting rights, and Indian education. Like us [on Facebook](#),

follow us [on Twitter @NDNrights](#), and visit us at www.narf.org to learn about the latest fights to promote justice and protect Native American rights.

About the Self-Governance Communication and Education Tribal Consortium:

The Self-Governance Communication and Education Tribal Consortium (SGCETC) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) consortium of Tribal nations that elected to use Self-Governance for the delivery of programs and services for their citizens and communities. SGCETC strives to assist all Tribal nations to achieve their own goals of self-government and seeks to ensure that the tenets and purpose of Self-Governance are accurately communicated and clearly understood by Congress, the Administration, Tribal nations and all other interested parties. For more information, visit <https://www.tribalsefgov.org>.