

# NIEA Statement on Racially Charged Incident in Reno, Nevada

## NIEA Supports the Reno Sparks Indian Community



On behalf of the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) the largest and oldest organization advocating for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students, schools and communities, we write to express our deep concern and outrage at the recent assault and hate crime that was committed against the Reno Sparks Indian Colony, Nevada Tribes, and the community who were engaged in a peaceful rally and march to protest Columbus Day and calling for the city and state to replace this federal holiday to honor Indigenous People's Day. NIEA has long supported Indigenous People's Day, having passed a resolution just last year as an appropriate way to name what is now known as Columbus Day. We are particularly concerned that our tribal and urban Indian communities continue to experience a legacy of historical trauma from the generations of federal policies meant to dispossess and terminate our very existence.

On October 5-8, NIEA recently held our 47th Annual Convention in Reno. Five years ago our membership chose Reno as the host site to bring over 1,200 Native educators, tribal government officials, students, school leaders and organizations together to collectively support education resources, equity, and options for Native students. This gathering was co-sponsored by the Reno Sparks Indian Colony, the 18 federally recognized reservations and colonies in Nevada, and the Reno Convention and Planning Bureau and convened at the Sierra Grand Resort and Hotel/Convention Center. The Convention was an incredible gathering of love, sharing best practices, networking, and cultural sharing. We also know that Native students face some of the most difficult circumstances that often affect graduation rates and life outcomes. Research has shown Native students who are valued and respected in their cultural and historical identity experience greater levels of success and options. We also know

that every student and family has a right to express and advocate for themselves and their community.

Numerous videos and testimony shared across social media clearly shows the truck driving into the peaceful protester on Indigenous People's Day was an unprovoked and pre-mediated attack on our community, relatives and those attending the rally. We demand that urgent action is taken to ensure justice is provided for those members who were injured and traumatized by this horrific and intentional attack: investigating this race-based violence and denial of rights perpetrated upon the protestors is the right first and immediate step. NIEA has also begun the process of contacting our allies to ensure this will not happen again.

In the spirit of healing and reconciliation we support the local Native community in urging that the city take the following steps:

1. Work in true proactive healing with the Reno Sparks Indian Colony, all tribes in Nevada and indigenous students attending public schools and institutions of higher learning;
2. Collaborate with tribal leaders, educators, and cultural leaders to develop and implement a culturally relevant and responsive curriculum;
3. Set a clear pathway to train, hire and retain more Native teachers and professors;
4. Ensure Native voices are at the table in all civic and social events to educate Nevadans on the incredible accomplishments and history of the tribes in Nevada; and
5. Work to change Columbus Day to recognize and honor Indigenous People Day.

We encourage Indian Country and Native communities across our nation to continue their work to support the education, health and welfare of all our Native children, families, people, lands and natural resources.

***About The National Indian Education Association (NIEA)***

*NIEA is the Nation's most inclusive advocacy organization advancing comprehensive culture-based educational 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 convene educators 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. For more information visit [www.niea.org](http://www.niea.org).*



