



MILLE LACS BAND OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS  
*Executive Branch of Tribal Government*

RESOLUTION 05-04-02-94

A RESOLUTION CALLING UPON THE SENATE INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO AMEND S. 1021, THE NATIVE AMERICAN FREE EXERCISE OF RELIGION ACT.

WHEREAS, the preservation and protection of the sacred, traditional beliefs and practices of the People of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe are of tantamount concern to the Mille Lacs Band, and are the basis for our governance, way of life, and very survival; and,

WHEREAS, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians has adopted Resolution 05-03-101-93, calling upon the Congress to adopt legislation ensuring that the United States protect and preserve the right of all American Indians to believe, express and exercise his or her traditional religion; and,

WHEREAS, to achieve the goal of American Indian religious freedom, the Honorable Daniel K. Inouye, a great friend of all American Indians, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian peoples, has made it his greatest goal to advance passage of legislation which protects the religious rights of all Native Americans, and has introduced S. 1021, a bill which derived from Indian Country; and,

WHEREAS, to ensure that all Native Americans, regardless of their official, legal status as enrolled members of a federally recognized tribe, can exercise their Fifth Amendment right to religious freedom. Senator Inouye has incorporated language within S. 1021 defining "Indian Tribe" which is extremely broad, not only including state-recognized tribes, but including groups and individuals which have filed a petition for federal acknowledgement, which only requires sending a letter of intent to the Secretary; and,

WHEREAS, the Mille Lacs Band is extremely concerned that the existing definition of "Indian Tribe" would set a dangerous legal precedent conferring the status and powers of an "Indian Tribe", however limited, to groups of individuals before the federal government has had the opportunity to determine their legal status as a federally recognized Indian tribe; and,

WHEREAS, the Mille Lacs Band is also extremely concerned that in a sincere effort to right past wrongs concerning the discrimination against American Indians who wish to exercise their right to religious freedom, that the Congress not inadvertently and unintentionally commit into law language which has the potential to cause further exploitation of American Indian religious beliefs, through conferring a "protected" status on groups and individuals who commonly exploit our beliefs, have stolen from us, and threatened our elders.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mille Lacs Band is committed to working with the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to remedy this difficult issue and achieve passage of legislation protecting American Indian Religious Freedom, and strongly supports Senator Inouye's efforts and commitment to this issue generally.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mille Lacs Band calls upon Senator Inouye and the Committee on Indian Affairs to amend the definition of "Indian Tribe" as reflected in S. 1021, to ensure that the rights of members of federally recognized American Indian Tribes, Alaska Native Villages and Native Hawaiian Organizations are protected.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe recognizes that Senator Inouye is concerned about protecting the rights of American Indians who reside in the State of California, where unique circumstances have merited California-Indian specific language in other legislation as well as a recent Act of Congress to address the specific concerns of California Indians, and therefore the Band supports language giving special consideration to the specific, unique status of American Indians in the State of California, as well as other terminated tribes.


BE IT FURTHER & FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Mille Lacs Band cannot support the existing language because it is too broad, it would set a dangerous legal precedent with regard to the governing power of groups and individuals who are not federally recognized, and give legal protections to and increase the current trend of the numerous individuals who are not members of any Indian tribe or community, but have been exploiting our spiritual beliefs, including recently stealing sacred items belonging to the Mille Lacs Band, threatening our elders, and holding illegitimate ceremonies for profit.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we, the Administrative Policy Board hereunto cause to have set the hand of the Chief Executive to this resolution and forwarded to the Band Assembly for concurrence.

  
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Marge Anderson, Chief Executive

WE DO HEREBY CERTIFY, that the foregoing resolution was duly concurred with and adopted at a regular session of the Band Assembly in Legislative Council assembled, a quorum of legislators being present held on the 8th day of October, 1993 at Vineland, Minnesota by a vote of 3 FOR, 0 AGAINST, 0 SILENT.

IN CONCURRENCE, with the action of the Chief Executive, we, the Band Assembly hereunto cause to have set the signature of the Speaker of Assembly to be affixed to this resolution.

  
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David Matrious, Speaker of Assembly

OFFICIAL SEAL OF THE BAND