

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 597

Recognizing the heritage, culture, and contributions of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women in the United States.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 19, 2024

Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. BUTLER, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. RISCH, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. ROUNDS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. SMITH, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the heritage, culture, and contributions of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women in the United States.

Whereas the United States celebrates National Women's History Month every March to recognize and honor the achievements of women throughout the history of the United States;

Whereas an estimated 4,718,255 American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women live in the United States;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women—

(1) have helped shape the history of their communities, Tribes, and the United States;

(2) have fought to defend and protect the sovereign rights of Native Nations; and

(3) have demonstrated resilience and courage in the face of a history of threatened existence, constant removals, and relocations;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women contribute to their communities, Tribes, and the United States through military service, public service, and work in many industries, including business, education, science, medicine, literature, and fine arts, including Pablita “Tse Tsan” Velarde, a Santa Clara Pueblo artist and painter whose art work depicted traditional Pueblo life and preserved Pueblo stories and knowledge, and whose paintings were commissioned for display at Bandelier National Monument;

Whereas, as of 2023, more than 4,400 American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women were bravely serving as members of the Armed Forces of the United States;

Whereas, as of 2023, more than 20,800 American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women were veterans who made lasting contributions to the Armed Forces of the United States;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women broke down historical gender barriers to enlistment in the military, including—

(1) Laura Beltz Wright, an Inupiat Eskimo sharpshooter of the Alaska Territorial Guard during World War II;

(2) Minnie Spotted Wolf of the Blackfeet Tribe, the first Native American woman to enlist in the United States Marine Corps in 1943; and

(3) Marcella LeBeau of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, a decorated veteran who served as an Army combat nurse during World War II and received the French Legion of Honour for her bravery and service;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have made the ultimate sacrifice for the United States, including Lori Ann Piestewa, a member of the Hopi Tribe who was the first Native American woman to be killed in action while serving on foreign soil and the first woman serving in the Armed Forces of the United States to be killed in the Iraq War in 2003;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have contributed to the economic development of Native Nations and the United States as a whole, including Elouise Cobell of the Blackfeet Tribe, a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, who—

(1) served as the treasurer of the Blackfeet Tribe;

(2) founded the first Tribal-owned national bank;

and

(3) led the fight against Federal mismanagement of funds held in trust for more than 500,000 Native Americans;

Whereas, as of 2020, American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women owned an estimated 161,500 businesses;

Whereas, as of 2020, Native women-owned businesses employed more than 61,000 workers and generated more than \$11,000,000,000 in revenue;

Whereas American Indian and Alaska Native women have opened an average of more than 17 new businesses each day since 2007;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have made significant contributions to the fields of medicine and health, including—

(1) Susan La Flesche Picotte of the Omaha Tribe, who is widely acknowledged as the first Native American to earn a medical degree; and

(2) Annie Dodge Wauneka of the Navajo Nation, who—

(A) advocated for better public health, education, and living conditions on the Navajo Nation leading to her becoming 1 of the first female council members for the Navajo Nation in 1951; and

(B) was the first Native American to receive a Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have contributed to important scientific advancements, including—

(1) Floy Agnes Lee of the Santa Clara Pueblo, who—

(A) worked on the Manhattan Project during World War II; and

(B) pioneered research on radiation biology and cancer;

(2) Native Hawaiian Isabella Kauakea Yau Yung Aiona Abbott, who—

(A) was the first woman on the biological sciences faculty at Stanford University; and

(B) in 1997, was awarded the Gilbert Morgan Smith medal, the highest award in marine botany from the National Academy of Sciences; and

(3) Mary Golda Ross of the Cherokee Nation, who—

(A) is considered the first Native American engineer of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration;

(B) helped develop spacecrafts for the Gemini and Apollo space programs; and

(C) was recognized by the Federal Government on the 2019 1 dollar coin honoring Native Americans and their contributions;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have achieved distinctive honors in the art of dance, including Maria Tallchief or Wa-Xthe-Thon-ba of the Osage Nation, who—

(1) was the first major prima ballerina of the United States and was a recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Kennedy Center; and

(2) was recognized by the Federal Government on the 2023 1 dollar coin with her sister Marjorie Tallchief of the Osage Nation, Yvonne Chouteau of the Shawnee Tribe, Rosella Hightower of the Choctaw Nation, and Moscelyne Larkin of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma and the Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, collectively known as the “Five Moons”, for the legacy they left on ballet;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have accomplished notable literary achievements, including Northern Paiute author Sarah

Winnemucca Hopkins, who wrote and published 1 of the first Native American autobiographies in United States history in 1883;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have regularly led efforts to protect their traditional ways of life and to revitalize and maintain Native cultures and languages, including—

(1) Esther Martinez, a Tewa linguist and teacher who developed a Tewa dictionary and was credited with revitalizing the Tewa language;

(2) Mary Kawena Pukui, a Native Hawaiian scholar who published more than 50 academic works and was considered the most noted Hawaiian translator of the 20th century;

(3) Katie John, an Ahtna Athabascan of Mentasta Lake, who was the lead plaintiff in lawsuits that strengthened Native subsistence fishing rights in Alaska and who helped create the alphabet for the Ahtna language;

(4) Edith Kenao Kanaka‘ole, a Native Hawaiian language and cultural practitioner who—

(A) founded her own hula school, Hālau o Kekuhi;

(B) helped develop some of the first courses in Hawaiian language and culture for public schools and colleges; and

(C) was recognized by the Federal Government on the 2023 quarter honoring her significant contributions and accomplishments perpetuating Native Hawaiian culture and arts; and

(5) Dr. Gladys Iola Tantaquidgeon, a Mohegan medicine woman and anthropologist, who worked for 50 years at the Tantaquidgeon Indian Museum in Connecticut, the

oldest Native American owned and operated museum in the United States, which she founded with her father and brother to preserve the culture and history of their Tribe, and which contributed to the Tribe's Federal recognition in 1994;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have excelled in athletic competition and created opportunities for other female athletes within their sport, including Rell Kapoliokaehukai Sunn, who—

(1) was ranked as longboard surfing champion of the world; and

(2) co-founded the Women's Professional Surfing Association in 1975, the first professional surfing tour for women;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have played a vital role in advancing civil rights, protecting human rights, advocating for land rights, and safeguarding the environment, including—

(1) Elizabeth Wanamaker Peratrovich, Tlingit, a member of the Lukaax__ádi clan in the Raven moiety with the Tlingit name of K__aax__gal.aat, who—

(A) helped secure the passage of House Bill 14, commonly known as the Anti-Discrimination Act of 1945 (H.B. 14, Laws of Alaska. 17th Regular Session, Territorial Legislature. Feb. 16, 1945), in the Alaska Territorial Legislature, the first anti-discrimination law in the United States; and

(B) was recognized by the Federal Government on the 2020 1 dollar coin honoring Native Americans and their contributions;

(2) Zitkala-Sa, a Yankton Dakota writer and advocate, whose work during the early 20th century helped

advance the citizenship, voting, and land rights of Native Americans; and

(3) Mary Jane Fate, of the Koyukon Athabascan village of Rampart, who—

(A) was the first woman to chair the Alaska Federation of Natives;

(B) was a founding member of the North American Indian Women’s Association; and

(C) was an advocate for settlement of Indigenous land claims in Alaska;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have succeeded as judges, attorneys, and legal advocates, including—

(1) Eliza “Lyda” Conley, a Wyandot-American lawyer and the first Native woman admitted to argue a case before the Supreme Court of the United States in 1909; and

(2) Emma Kailikapiolono Metcalf Beckley Nakuina, a Native Hawaiian who served as the first female judge in Hawaii;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women are dedicated public servants, holding important positions in the Federal judicial branch, the Federal executive branch, State governments, and local governments;

Whereas American Indian and Alaska Native women have served as remarkable Tribal councilwomen, Tribal court judges, and Tribal leaders, including Wilma Mankiller, who—

(1) was the first woman elected to serve as Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation;

(2) fought for Tribal self-determination and the improvement of the community infrastructure of her Tribe; and

(3) was recognized by the Federal Government on the 2022 quarter honoring her legacy of leadership for Native people and women;

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women have also led Native peoples through notable acts of public service, including—

(1) Kaahumanu, who was the first Native Hawaiian woman to serve as regent of the Kingdom of Hawaii; and

(2) Polly Cooper, of the Oneida Indian Nation, who—

(A) walked from central New York to Valley Forge as part of a relief mission to provide food for the Army led by General George Washington during the American Revolutionary War; and

(B) was recognized for her courage and generosity by Martha Washington;

Whereas the United States should continue to invest in the future of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women to address the barriers those women face, including—

(1) access to justice;

(2) access to health care; and

(3) opportunities for educational and economic advancement; and

Whereas American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women are the life givers, the culture bearers, and the caretakers of Native peoples who have made precious contributions, enriching the lives of all people of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) celebrates and honors the successes of
3 American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawai-
4 ian women and the contributions those women have
5 made and continue to make to the United States;
6 and

7 (2) recognizes the importance of providing for
8 the safety and upholding the interests of American
9 Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women.

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