

111TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. J. RES. 20

To honor the achievements and contributions of Native Americans to the United States, and for other purposes.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 10, 2009

Mr. BACA introduced the following joint resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

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## JOINT RESOLUTION

To honor the achievements and contributions of Native Americans to the United States, and for other purposes.

1        *Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives*  
2        *of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3        **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4        This Act may be cited as the “Native American Her-  
5        itage Day Act of 2009”.

6        **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7        Congress finds that—

8                (1) Native Americans are the descendants of  
9        the aboriginal, indigenous, native people who were

1 the original inhabitants of and who governed the  
2 lands that now constitute the United States;

3 (2) Native Americans have volunteered to serve  
4 in the United States Armed Forces and have served  
5 with valor in all of the Nation's military actions  
6 from the Revolutionary War through the present  
7 day, and in most of those actions, more Native  
8 Americans per capita served in the Armed Forces  
9 than any other group of Americans;

10 (3) Native American tribal governments devel-  
11 oped the fundamental principles of freedom of  
12 speech and separation of governmental powers that  
13 were a model for those that form the foundation of  
14 the United States Constitution;

15 (4) the Founding Fathers based the provisions  
16 of the Constitution on the unique system of democ-  
17 racy of the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy,  
18 which divided powers among the branches of govern-  
19 ment and provided for a system of checks and bal-  
20 ances;

21 (5) Native Americans have made distinct and  
22 significant contributions to the United States and  
23 the rest of the world in many fields, including agri-  
24 culture, medicine, music, language, and art, and Na-  
25 tive Americans have distinguished themselves as in-

1 ventors, entrepreneurs, spiritual leaders, and schol-  
2 ars;

3 (6) Native Americans should be recognized for  
4 their contributions to the United States as local and  
5 national leaders, artists, athletes, and scholars;

6 (7) nationwide recognition of the contributions  
7 that Native Americans have made to the fabric of  
8 American society will afford an opportunity for all  
9 Americans to demonstrate their respect and admira-  
10 tion of Native Americans for their important con-  
11 tributions to the political, cultural, and economic life  
12 of the United States;

13 (8) nationwide recognition of the contributions  
14 that Native Americans have made to the Nation will  
15 encourage self-esteem, pride, and self-awareness in  
16 Native Americans of all ages;

17 (9) designation of the Friday following Thanks-  
18 giving of each year as Native American Heritage  
19 Day will underscore the government-to-government  
20 relationship between the United States and Native  
21 American governments;

22 (10) designation of Native American Heritage  
23 Day will encourage public elementary and secondary  
24 schools in the United States to enhance under-  
25 standing of Native Americans by providing curricula

1 and classroom instruction focusing on the achieve-  
2 ments and contributions of Native Americans to the  
3 Nation; and

4 (11) the Friday immediately succeeding  
5 Thanksgiving Day of each year would be an appro-  
6 priate day to designate as Native American Heritage  
7 Day.

8 **SEC. 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIVE AMERICAN HERIT-**  
9 **AGE DAY.**

10 Congress encourages the people of the United States,  
11 as well as Federal, State, and local governments, and in-  
12 terested groups and organizations to observe Native Amer-  
13 ican Heritage Day with appropriate programs, ceremonies,  
14 and activities, including activities relating to—

15 (1) the historical status of Native American  
16 tribal governments as well as the present day status  
17 of Native Americans;

18 (2) the cultures, traditions, and languages of  
19 Native Americans; and

20 (3) the rich Native American cultural legacy  
21 that all Americans enjoy today.

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