

111TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1551

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States should promote respect for and full application of the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples consistent with United States law.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 22, 2010

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA (for himself, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. HONDA, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States should promote respect for and full application of the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples consistent with United States law.

Whereas, on September 13, 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a landmark declaration outlining the rights of the world's 370,000,000 indigenous peoples in 70 countries;

Whereas the Declaration is a non-binding text, which sets out the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples,

as well as their rights to culture, identity, language, employment, health, and education, and encourages indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures, and traditions, and pursue their development in keeping with their own needs and aspirations;

Whereas the Declaration prohibits discrimination against indigenous peoples and promotes their full and effective participation in all matters that concern them, and their right to remain distinct and to pursue their own visions of economic and social development;

Whereas United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described the Declaration's adoption as "a historic moment when UN Member States and indigenous peoples have reconciled with their painful histories and are resolved to move forward together on the path of human rights, justice and development for all";

Whereas the Declaration was approved after 143 United Nations Member States voted in favor, 11 abstained and four, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States, voted against the text;

Whereas since the Declaration's adoption, Australia and New Zealand have reversed their positions and now endorse the Declaration;

Whereas in March 2010, the Government of Canada announced it would take steps to endorse the Declaration;

Whereas indigenous peoples continue to face disproportionate and dire poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, inadequate health care, violent crime, and discrimination around the world;

Whereas in November 2009, President Barack Obama invited representatives from each of the 564 indigenous tribes in

the United States to attend a White House Tribal Nations Conference;

Whereas nearly 500 tribal leaders participated in the most widely attended White House tribal meeting in United States history;

Whereas President Obama signed a memorandum on November 5, 2009, directing every Federal agency to develop plans to implement fully the Executive Order on “Consultation and Coordination with Tribal Governments”, which mandates that all agencies have an accountable process for meaningful and timely input by tribal officials in the development of regulatory policies that have tribal implications;

Whereas the United States supports the Initiative for Conservation in the Andean Amazon, a regional program designed to strengthen indigenous efforts to protect and conserve the Amazon rainforest;

Whereas the United States participates fully and actively in the Arctic Council, a high-level intergovernmental forum comprised of the eight Arctic countries where Arctic indigenous peoples, represented by Permanent Participant organizations, have co-equal roles; and

Whereas in an April 20, 2010, speech at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Ambassador Susan E. Rice, United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations, stated that, because “far more must be done—at home and abroad—to tackle [the challenges of indigenous peoples], expand the circle of opportunity, and work with our Native communities to ensure they enjoy the security and dignity that all citizens deserve . . . I am pleased to announce that the United

States has decided to review our position regarding the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples’’: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
2 representatives that—

3 (1) the Administration should continue to work
4 together with partners in indigenous communities
5 domestically and around the world to provide secu-
6 rity, prosperity, equality, and opportunity for all;

7 (2) the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous
8 Peoples provides an important framework for ad-
9 dressing indigenous issues globally;

10 (3) the Administration’s decision to conduct a
11 formal review of the Declaration on the Rights of In-
12 digenous Peoples and the United States’ position on
13 it is welcomed; and

14 (4) the United States should promote respect
15 for and full application of the provisions of the Dec-
16 laration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, con-
17 sistent with United States law.

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