TITLE: IN SUPPORT OF ESTABLISHING AND SUPPORTING PATHWAYS FOR NATIVE AMERICAN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) was established in 1970 for the purpose of advocating, planning, and promoting the unique and special educational needs of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; and

WHEREAS, NIEA as the largest national Native organization of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian educators, administrators, parents, and students in the United States, provides a forum to discuss and act upon issues affecting the education of Indian and Native people; and

WHEREAS, through its unique relationship with Native nations and tribes, the federal government has established programs and resources to meet the educational needs of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, residing on and off their reserved or non-reserved homelands; and

WHEREAS, there are more than 300 unique languages spoken in the United States today with more than half of those languages spoken by members of different Native American tribes; and

WHEREAS, of the 175 Native American languages still spoken in the United States, 90 percent of those languages are at risk of extinction; and

WHEREAS, the language of a people is integral to the transmission of Indigenous knowledge, practices, ways of believing, being and behaving; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Government advanced policies that systematically removed Native peoples from their ancestral lands, subjected Native peoples to forced cultural assimilation through government-mandated boarding and day schools, and, along with State Governments, practiced systematic and sanctioned genocide; and

WHEREAS, the passing of Native language and cultural practitioners exacerbated the interruption of traditional knowledge and skills to be passed from generation to generation; and

WHEREAS, after more than a century of assimilation, genocide, and linguicide, the United States Congress has passed several critical bills for the preservation, protection, and promotion of Native American languages; and

WHEREAS, NIEA recognizes that teachers, principals, school leaders, and staff that serve American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students must be prepared and equipped to meet and
advance the unique cultural, linguistic, and educational needs of such students in order to meet the rigorous cultural and State academic standards; and

**WHEREAS**, while the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20. U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) currently supports the funding of bilingual education programs that develop Native American language skills, a Native American teacher education pathway is needed to strengthen the best practices in Native language learning; and

**WHEREAS**, a Native American teacher education pathway would significantly reduce Native teacher shortages and retention issues that continue to hinder immersion and bilingual programs from meeting the unique needs of Native American students and communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Native Americans hold a distinct political status in terms of the education of their students and are the object of reclamation and retention efforts operated at the Federal, Tribal, State, and territorial levels, and aligned with the Native American Languages Act (25 U.S.C. 2901 et seq.), as well as parallel school and community-based efforts; and

**WHEREAS**, Native Americans have legal authority as sovereign nations to certify our own educators; and

**WHEREAS**, Native language medium and immersion education schools are best practice for enhancing learning outcomes in academics, strengthening cognitive ability, and deepening empathy and effective interpretive skills in Native American students; and

**WHEREAS**, thirty years of research demonstrates that the benefits of proficiency in Native American languages positively affect the following outcomes: (1) academic achievement, retention rates, and school attendance; (2) local and national achievement test scores; (3) well-being, self-esteem, and self-efficacy; and (4) resilience to addiction and the prevention of risky behaviors; and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Indian Education Association urges the United States Congress to pass any and all authorizing and appropriating legislation necessary for the establishment and adequate resourcing of a Native American teacher education pathway, including any amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-329);

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NIEA urges the Department of Education to advocate in support of such legislation that establishes and resources a Native American teacher education pathway and to support the effective implementation of such pathway.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of NIEA until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

**CERTIFICATION**

I do hereby certify that the following resolution was duly considered and passed by the National Indian Education Association on [insert date] at which a quorum of the membership was present.