



United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.  
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**USET Resolution No. 2009:064**

**POSITION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT CONSULTATION CONDUCTED BY THE  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated (USET) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-five (25) federally recognized Tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member Tribe, as the Board of Directors comprises delegates from the member Tribes' leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) peoples have a belief that honors the multifaceted role of women within Tribal societies and have historically protected the right of women to live free of violence or the threat of violence; and
- WHEREAS,** as a result of colonization, decades of federal law and policy has diminished the honored status, respect and safety of Native women; and
- WHEREAS,** AI/AN women are battered, raped and stalked at far greater rates than any other population of women in the United States; and
- WHEREAS,** the United States has felony jurisdiction over crimes by or against Indians, including homicide, rape, aggravated assault, and habitual domestic violence; however, perpetrators of such violent crimes against Native women are rarely, if at all, prosecuted; and
- WHEREAS,** the response of the United States to this violence is inadequate as demonstrated statistically in that 76% of adult sexual assault crimes referred to federal prosecutors are declined; and
- WHEREAS,** the unique legal relationship of the United States to Indian Tribes creates a federal trust responsibility to assist Tribal Governments in safeguarding the lives of Indian women; and
- WHEREAS,** the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 2006 directs the Attorney General to conduct an annual consultation with Indian Tribes and during such consultations, to solicit recommendations from Indian Tribes concerning: (1) the administration of Tribal funds and programs; (2) the enhancement of the safety of Indian women, including the protection from domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and (3) the strengthening of federal response to such violent crimes; and
- WHEREAS,** VAWA annual consultations were held in 2006, 2007, and 2008 and previous Attorney Generals have not attended nor directed the Associate Attorney General attend and conduct the mandated annual consultation; and
- WHEREAS,** Indian Tribes have in good faith attended past consultations and presented urgent time sensitive recommendations to enhance the response of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to increase the safety of Indian women; and
- WHEREAS,** recommendations of Tribal leadership compiled from the three years of consultations held during 2006, 2007, and 2008 have been submitted to Attorney General Holder; and
- WHEREAS,** the DOJ scheduled consultations and meetings with Indian Tribes that created a conflict for Tribal leadership attending the mandated VAWA consultation during 2007 and 2008; and

- WHEREAS,** the 2009 VAWA consultation has been scheduled during the same week as the USET Annual Meeting and 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration; and
- WHEREAS,** DOJ leadership includes key players such as the U.S. Attorney's from districts containing significant numbers of Indian Tribes, the Attorney General's Native American Issues Sub-Committee, Federal Bureau of Investigations, Office on Violence Against Women, Office on Tribal Justice, National Institute of Justice and others; and
- WHEREAS,** USET condemns violence against women and urges its member Tribes to formally act to eliminate this on Indian Country; and
- WHEREAS,** the future of AI/ANs rest in the capacity to preserve the safety, integrity, and well being of its members, including the right of women to live in a world free of violence; and
- WHEREAS,** it is necessary for USET as the leadership of the Tribal Governments, to be proactive in the defense of American Indian women to curtail and prevent violence against Native women; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors formally requests Attorney General Eric Holder to honor and attend the annual Tribal Violence Against Women Act consultation of 2010; and, be it further
- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors requests that Attorney General Eric Holder respond to the recommendations compiled from Tribal leaders during past consultations; and, be it further
- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors requests that the Attorney General direct key U.S. Department of Justice leadership with responsibility for the safety of Indian women to attend the annual 2010 Violence Against Women Act Tribal consultation; and, be it further
- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors requests that the Attorney General direct key U.S. Department of Justice leadership to meet with Tribal leadership and the USET representatives of the Tribal Justice Advisory Group on an on-going basis to address the critical issues and recommendations to enhance the safety of Indian women; and, be it finally
- RESOLVED** this resolution shall be the position of USET until it is favorably addressed by the Attorney General of the United States.

**CERTIFICATION**

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Annual Meeting, at which a quorum was present in Hollywood, FL on Thursday, October 29, 2009.



Brian Patterson, President  
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.



Robert McGhee, Secretary  
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

*“Because there is strength in Unity”*