

UNITED SOUTHEASTERN TRIBES
Resolution No. USET 5-72

A resolution requesting action from the Office of Economic Opportunity concerning the Choctaw Legal Services Program.

WHEREAS, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians has experienced substantial and consistent difficulty in maintaining and operating its Choctaw Legal Services Program for the past year, and

WHEREAS, actions by the Office of Legal Services, Office of Economic Opportunity have been primarily responsible for their long-run difficulties and have tended to work against the concept of Indian self-determination and Indian control of Indian projects, and

WHEREAS, certain representatives of the OLS, OEO have consistently approached the Choctaw Tribe in an arbitrary and condescending manner with what has been an apparently deliberate intent to:

- (a) Coerce the Choctaw Tribe (as the grantee) into agreeing to implement certain major administrative changes not required by OEO regulations, including a trial merger of the Choctaw Legal Services with the North Mississippi Rural Legal Services Program (a non-Indian project),
- (b) Force the Choctaw Tribe to continue (in effect) this trial merger past the termination point--both on threat of losing OEO funding support for the Choctaw Legal Services Program.

WHEREAS, the Choctaw Tribe

- (a) has submitted a new program proposal for refunding of a Legal Services Program on January 20, 1972, which was designed in direct accordance with OLS, OEO recommendation
- (b) has been since advised by OLS, OEO that they do not intend to review or consider this proposal at this time, inspite of prior written commitments by several OEO officials that the revised Choctaw Legal Services Program would be given every consideration.
- (c) has requested that the OLS, OEO grant the Tribe a hearing on this matter.

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the United Southeastern Tribes, Inc., views the actions and attitudes of the OLS, OEO which produced this situation to be both

- (a) inconsistent with The Honorable Richard M. Nixon's (The President's) stated position in honor of Indian self-determination, and
- (b) a genuine threat to the self-determination efforts of the

Choctaw Tribe in particular, and of the United Southeastern Tribes, Inc., in general,

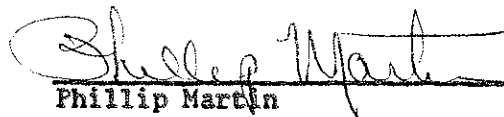
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the United Southeastern Tribes, Inc., does hereby request that Mr. Phillip Sanchez, Director, Office of Economic Opportunity, take immediate action to insure:

- (a) that recent improprieties with respect to the unauthorized transfer of Federal property assigned to the Tribal Council of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (under OEO grant No. CG-8081) be corrected
- (b) that the grantee status of the Choctaw Tribal Council be clarified by your office so that all parties concerned will understand that the Tribal Council is now (and has been) the grantee for the Choctaw Legal Services Program (grant No. CG-8081) since its inception--the (now nullified) tribal merger notwithstanding
- (c) that the OLS, OEO grant the Choctaw Tribe its hearing as requested on February 17, 1972
- (d) that the OLS, OEO favorably review the revised Choctaw Legal Services Proposal for refunding (submitted on February 20, 1972) as per the previous written commitments from OEO do do so,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of USET, Inc., does hereby request that our congressional representatives, NCIO, NCAI, and all appropriate Federal officials take immediate action in support of this resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at a regular meeting of the United Southeastern Tribes, Inc., and duly held at the Henry Grady Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia on March 1-3, 1972.



Phillip Martin
President
United Southeastern Tribes, Inc.



Howard Tommie
Secretary
United Southeastern Tribes, Inc.