

UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.

RESOLUTION NO. 93-01DC

OPPOSITION OF THE ABOLISHMENT OF THE
SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

- WHEREAS,** the United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated (USET) is an inter-tribal organization comprised of twenty (20) federally recognized tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET, Inc. Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member tribe, as the Board of Directors is comprised of delegates from the member tribes leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs has been a permanent Committee of the United States since 1984 and was a temporary Committee for seven (7) years before that; and
- WHEREAS,** throughout almost the entirety of its existence, the United States Senate has always had a full Committee on Indian Affairs; and
- WHEREAS,** the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs is literally 'select' in name only, having full legislative authority and being a permanent Committee; and
- WHEREAS,** the Constitution of the United States (Article I, Subsection 8) specifically charges the Congress with the responsibility of dealing with Indian tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** the relationship that Indian nations have with the United States - stemming from the Constitution, Treaties, Executive Orders and Acts of Congress - is uniquely legal in nature requiring Congressional actions on many issues that would not in other circumstances require legislation, (simple land transactions, etc.); and
- WHEREAS,** because of the significant role that the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs has played in recent years and the increasingly important role tribal governments are having on national and regional issues, Committee membership has increased dramatically going from a Committee of five (5) members a few years ago to a Committee with eighteen (18) members in the 103rd Congress; and
- WHEREAS,** the Indian Affairs Committee has been one of the most active Committees in the Senate, holding as many or more hearings and mark-ups and reporting out as many or more bills that become law than any Committee in the entire Senate; and
- WHEREAS,** the two (2) principal agencies of the Federal government for Indian tribes - the Bureau of Indian Affairs within the Interior Department and the Indian Health Service

within the Health and Human Services Department - have a combined budget of almost \$3 billion annually, and the need for constant oversight; and

WHEREAS, the jurisdiction of the Indian Affairs Committee and the nature of bills referred to it (health care, taxation, education, water rights, land claims, gaming, economic development, etc.) cuts across the line of most Committees of the Senate including areas that if fractionated would go to no less than the Senate Committees on Judiciary, Labor and Human Resources, Environment and Public Works, Energy and Natural Resources and Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the abolishment of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee would in all likelihood require a creation of a least two (2) new Subcommittees within two (2) of the standing Committees resulting in almost no cost savings to the Senate; and

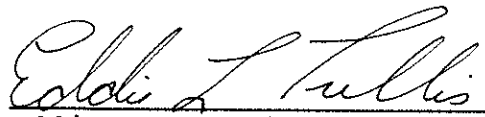
WHEREAS, history has shown that the federal law and policies that have had the most devastating impact on Indian tribes have been those that were enacted or promulgated without real knowledge or expertise in the field of Indian law; and

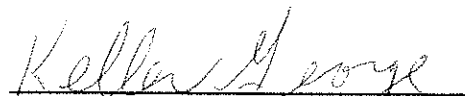
WHEREAS, it would therefore be a serious error and an abdication of the United States legal and moral responsibilities for the United States Senate to now abolish the Committee on Indian Affairs and thereby vest jurisdiction in Committees that have not routinely dealt with tribal governments.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of USET meeting in Washington, DC this 22nd day of February 1993, do hereby go on record as strongly objecting to any attempt to abolish the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs and do urge our Senators to vote against any such amendment or legislation.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly approved at the Board of Directors meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Washington, DC, on February 25, 1993.


Eddie L. Tullis, President
United South and Eastern
Tribes, Inc.


Keller George, Secretary
United South and Eastern
Tribes, Inc.