

UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.


RESOLUTION NO 93-08DC

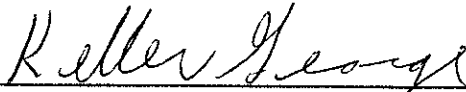
SUPPORT AMENDMENTS TO THE AMERICAN INDIAN  
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT

- 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 American Indian Religious Freedom Act was enacted by the Congress and signed by the President in 1978; and
- WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court in two (2) recent decisions has ruled that the First Amendment does not protect American Indian religious practices; and
- WHEREAS, in the first, *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association*, the Court ruled in favor of paving a U.S. Forest Service road through lands sacred to the Karok, Yurok and Tolowa tribes of northern California; and
- WHEREAS, in the second, *Employment Division of Oregon v. Smith*, the Court denied Alfred Smith unemployment benefits after his having been terminated from his job because of his participation in the Native American Church and its peyote rituals; and
- WHEREAS, the Association for American Indian Affairs has spearheaded an effort by groups, including the Native American Rights Fund, the National Congress of American Indians, the National Indian Education Association, among others to draft amendments to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act to speak to the religious freedoms recently denied by the U.S. Supreme Court, including the protection of sacred sites, the religious use of peyote, the religious rights of American Indian prisoners, the religious use of eagles, and to require that other American Indian religious practices subject to the traditional First Amendment "balancing test".
- NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of USET hereby endorses Congressional efforts to strengthen the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

## 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.