



UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.
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UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.

Resolution No. 2/95-19IMP

STRONG OPPOSITION TO S.292

- WHEREAS,** the United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated (USET) is an inter-tribal organization comprised of twenty-one (21) 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 United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) is an organization dedicated to protecting the sovereignty of the federally recognized Indian tribes of the southern and eastern United States; and
- WHEREAS,** the USET has continuously expressed concern about federal recognition being legislatively awarded to non-federally recognized groups of Indian descendants and has indicated through previous resolutions that such petitioners should be required to meet certain well established criteria; and
- WHEREAS,** a group calling itself the MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians of Alabama has continued to endeavor to circumvent the established process codified as 25 CFR, Part 83 and has instead gotten members of the Alabama congressional delegation to introduce bills that would legislatively recognize said group; and
- WHEREAS,** Senator Shelby has recently introduced S. 292, a bill to recognize the MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians; and
- WHEREAS,** on January 5, 1995, pursuant to research undertaken in Alabama by a nationally renown genealogist, the Bureau of Indian Affairs did publish in the Federal Register a "Proposed Finding Against Federal Acknowledgment of the MOWA Band of Choctaw" and based this finding on, among other things, the fact that "the petitioner's core ancestral families cannot document American Indian ancestral persons claimed as members of the MOWA's 'founding Indian community' "cannot be demonstrated to be Choctaw, or even American Indian and finally that only one percent of the petitioner's membership can document any American Indian ancestry; and

"Because there is strength in Unity"

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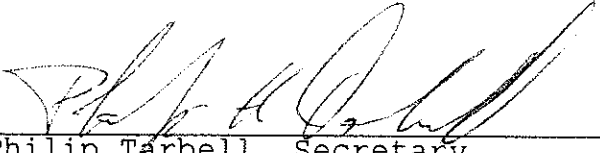
- WHEREAS**, the lack of accurate data backing up the MOWA's claim is so great that the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs last year corresponded to the Congress indicating that the MOWA's petition may well be "fraudulent"; and
- WHEREAS**, the awarding of federal recognition to such a group would be a great disservice to the Indian tribes of the United States and would diminish and demean the very concepts of government-to-government relations and tribal sovereignty; and
- WHEREAS**, the elected leaders of the federally recognized Choctaw tribes (Mississippi Band of Choctaw and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma) have strenuously objected to the MOWA's contention that they are descendants of the historical Choctaw tribe or in any significant manner descendants of the signatories to the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek and in fact have heard little of the group's existence other than in very recent years.
- NOW, THEREFORE BE IS RESOLVED** that the members of the United South and Eastern Tribes do hereby voice their strong opposition to S.292 and does hereby urge the Senate Indian Affairs Committee and the Congress as a whole to reject it.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the Washington Impact Week meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Washington, D.C., on February 23, 1995.



Keller George, President
United South & Eastern Tribes, Inc.



Philip Tarbell, Secretary
United South & Eastern Tribes, Inc.