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Statement in Recognition and Honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Highlighting the Need to Renew the Meaning and Application of His Work in Our March Towards Justice & Equality

(Nashville, TN)— As our nation pauses today to honor and respect the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., it is incumbent upon every American to engage in soul searching and reflection to measure our individual actions against the principles of justice and equality for all. The last several months have served as a stark and unfortunate reminder of the injustice and inequality that continues to plague our great nation; a plague which has denied us of the dream of achieving the self-evident truths as reflected in our Declaration of Independence.

In the wake of the tremendous societal and political unrest that has unfolded across our country, it is evident how much more progress must be made. In honor of Dr. King's work and ultimate sacrifice, his profound teachings must take on renewed meaning and application as part of our solution moving forward. As individuals, we must turn from injustice and embrace equality in the way we interact with each other. As a nation, we must hold ourselves fully accountable to the fact that our self-evident truths have remained beyond reach for far too many Americans, for far too long. We must hold all those who stand in the way of peace, justice, and equality accountable for their direct and intentional obstruction of our progression towards absolute exemplification of the founding principles of our democracy.

On April 16, 1963, despite the circumstances of his wrongful detainment, Dr. King once again spoke truth to power and offered us all light upon the path of righteousness as part of his [Letter from A Birmingham Jail](#):

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly...I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes...Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and

half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood...Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.”

While Dr. King’s dream has not yet been fully realized, and while our current reality reflects our worst nightmares, a bleak future is not a foregone conclusion to our story. There is much hope that remains for our democracy to be better and stronger, but we must demonstrate the will and desire for that change. We must lead with the simple act of respect and reverence for all of humanity, all of creation, and for Mother Earth. We must all stand up and act in the furtherance of justice and equality, as opposed to standing on the sideline of tolerance and complacency. Finally, we must all strive to eradicate nefarious distractions and rationalizations and commit ourselves to adherence to life’s simple truths...right is right and wrong is wrong. This must be our moral compass and any complication beyond this simple truth is merely immoral and unethical justification. This is a responsibility and power that each of us possess.

United South and Eastern Tribes (USET)

Established in 1969, the United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. (USET) is a non-profit, inter-Tribal organization representing thirty-three (33) federally recognized Tribal Nations, from the Northeastern Woodlands to the Everglades and across the Gulf of Mexico. USET is dedicated to enhancing the development of Tribal Nations, and improving the capabilities of Tribal governments, improving the quality of life for Indian people through a variety of technical and supportive programmatic services.

USET Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF)

The USET Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF) is a non-profit, inter-Tribal organization advocating on behalf of thirty-three (33) federally recognized Tribal Nations from the Northeastern Woodlands to the Everglades and across the Gulf of Mexico. USET SPF is dedicated to promoting, protecting, and advancing the inherent sovereign rights and authorities of Tribal Nations and in assisting its membership in dealing effectively with public policy issues.

Because there is strength in Unity