



September 17, 2021

The Honorable Kai Kahele
United States House of Representatives
1205 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Representative Kahele:

We are writing on behalf of the undersigned Tribal Nation organizations to voice our support for H.R. 2226, the Remove the Stain Act. The bill would rescind the Medals of Honor awarded to members of the 7th Cavalry who participated in the Wounded Knee Massacre on December 29, 1890. The Wounded Knee Massacre took place between unarmed Native Americans and soldiers, who were heavily armed with standard issue army rifles and four Hotchkiss guns with 37 mm barrels capable of firing 43 rounds per minute. Nearly two-thirds of the Lakota People who were massacred were unarmed women and children who were participating in a ceremony to restore their traditional homelands. Poor tactical placement of the soldiers meant that most of the casualties suffered by the United States troops were inflicted by friendly fire.

Major General Nelson Miles said a “[w]holesale massacre occurred and I have never heard of a more brutal, cold-blooded massacre than that at Wounded Knee” and recognized that the 7th Cavalry had killed a very large number of women and children. Despite General Miles contemporaneous statements and findings, the United States awarded 20 Medals of Honor to soldiers of the U.S. 7th Cavalry for their participation in the Wounded Knee Massacre. These Medals dishonor the brave American soldiers who in fact "distinguished himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty" as required to be eligible to receive a Medal of Honor.

In 2001, the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Council called upon the United States to revoke the Medals of Honor from the soldiers of the U.S. 7th Cavalry for the massacre of unarmed men, women, children, babies, and elders of the Minnicoujou Band of the Great Sioux Nation on December 29, 1890, at Wounded Knee Creek. Since that resolution many Intertribal organizations have passed similar resolutions supporting the revocation of those Medals of Honor. Again, we renew our request that the Medal be revoked.

Innocent, unarmed, men, women, and children under a white flag of truce were massacred by the 7th Cavalry. The United States compounded the horror of murder by awarding 20 medals of honor to the 7th Cavalry soldiers for bravery. A pervasive sadness exists on the Cheyenne River Reservation and Pine Ridge Reservation, the home of many descendants of the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890. There has never been closure to the sad and horrible massacre where innocent, unarmed men, women, and children were massacred under a white flag of truce.

We support the passage of HR 2226, the Remove the Stain Act. Please contact me if you need any further information or wish to discuss further.

Sincerely,

Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians

Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Association

Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes

National Congress of American Indians

National Indian Gaming Association

United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund