



# USET

SOVEREIGNTY PROTECTION FUND

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*Transmitted Electronically*

November 16, 2023

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
S-221 U.S. Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20510

## **Re: Tribal Governments Appointment to U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission**

Dear Leader Schumer,

On behalf of the United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF), we write today to respectfully request that you fill the vacant U.S. Semiquincentennial Commissioner seat with an individual representing the unique perspective of Tribal governments, the sovereigns who pre-date the establishment of the United States. While there are sure to be many qualified candidates to consider, there are attributes beyond education or persona that would not just diversify but inform the outlook and provide a critically important Tribal Nation perspective to the Commission, thus strengthening the comprehensiveness and thoroughness of the event.

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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

With the multiplicities of perspectives to represent, and only thirty-two Commissioner seats, we understand the challenge to incorporate all voices. However, telling the story of America isn't complete without first acknowledging and incorporating the truths of America's First People; including our complex, unique, and sacred relationship. Today's America only exists because of the contributions and sacrifices of America's First People—our ancestral homelands that became the foundation of America and the vast natural resources that are part of America's economic power. A Tribal Nations representative to the Commission

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<sup>1</sup> USET SPF member Tribal Nations include: Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas (TX), Catawba Indian Nation (SC), Cayuga Nation (NY), Chickahominy Indian Tribe (VA), Chickahominy Indian Tribe—Eastern Division (VA), Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana (LA), Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana (LA), Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (NC), Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians (ME), Jena Band of Choctaw Indians (LA), Mashantucket Pequot Indian Tribe (CT), Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe (MA), Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida (FL), Mi'kmaq Nation (ME), Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MS), Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut (CT), Monacan Indian Nation (VA), Nansemond Indian Nation (VA), Narragansett Indian Tribe (RI), Oneida Indian Nation (NY), Pamunkey Indian Tribe (VA), Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township (ME), Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point (ME), Penobscot Indian Nation (ME), Poarch Band of Creek Indians (AL), Rappahannock Tribe (VA), Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (NY), Seminole Tribe of Florida (FL), Seneca Nation of Indians (NY), Shinnecock Indian Nation (NY), Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana (LA), Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe (VA) and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) (MA).

***Because there is Strength in Unity***

would join existing federal representatives who are also Tribal citizens to help ensure that our contributions to the story of America are interwoven into this project in an appropriate, accurate, and respectful manner. In closing, the delicacy of telling honest realities in a celebratory space, such as those that comprise Native American history, requires respectful discourse best informed by citizens of Tribal Nations—including someone representing Tribal governments. While the America250 Anniversary celebrates the inception of the United States government, it is but an intersection for Tribal governments as we have inhabited these lands since time immemorial. These two stories, entwined in modern kaleidoscope during this milestone event, have a complicated history and nuanced implications that extend beyond the badge of diversity. The political implications inherent in a Nation-to-Nation relationship cannot be subtracted from this narrative and are therefore best navigated by seating an individual representing Tribal Nations as a Commissioner, in addition to our Native American federal partners.

USET SPF is hopeful that as an advocate for the Native voices in your home state and Tribal Nations across Indian Country, that you'll respectfully consider our request. Your attention is both valuable and in demand, and therefore all the more appreciated. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact Ms. Liz Malerba, USET SPF Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs, at [LMalerba@usetinc.org](mailto:LMalerba@usetinc.org) or 615-838-5906. We look forward to seeing the voices of Tribal Nations informing this paramount event.

Sincerely,



Kirk Francis  
President



Kitcki A. Carroll  
Executive Director