



## USET-Close Up Youth Sovereignty Statement

For over 20 years, USET and Close Up have partnered during USET's Impact Week Meetings in Washington, bringing Tribal Nation member Youth to DC where students are involved in the democratic process through current issue debates, collaborative learning, and the development of citizenship skills while also engaging with the USET Board of Directors.

### STATEMENT:

*The defense of the sovereignty of federally recognized Tribal Nations is by far the most important issue in Indian country today. Tribal sovereignty is essential to Tribal identity. When Tribal Nations are weakened, so are the surrounding communities whose economy and infrastructure benefit from Tribal sovereign status. One central element of the threat to sovereignty is the general lack of knowledge of Indigenous People. As indigenous youth, we strongly support adding Indigenous culture and history classes in school systems across the nation. The addition of these classes will encourage indigenous youth to speak with a more intentional and educated voice and develop as strong, outspoken leaders. Indigenous People are competent and capable of governing ourselves. We have and always will exist.*

***Passed by Board of Directors on Thursday, February 8, 2018 during the 2018 Impact Week Meeting in Washington D.C.***

