

UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.


Resolution No. C-87-191

- WHEREAS, during 1987, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, one of the founding tribes of USET, conducted elections for its tribal council positions, at which time two Bureau of Indian Affairs employees in Cherokee, who were also tribal members, requested and were granted written permission from the BIA to run for tribal elective office; and,
- WHEREAS, two BIA employees were elected to seats on the Cherokee Tribal Council by their Indian communities and both were seated and have served since October 5, 1987; and,
- WHEREAS, following their election and seating, one of the two BIA employees was subsequently advised by the BIA that he was denied permission to serve on the Cherokee Tribal Council, on the grounds that such service constituted a conflict of interest with his duties as BIA employee; and,
- WHEREAS, the individual tribal employee is appealing this decision through the Department of Interior, several hundred voters on the Cherokee Indian Reservation, and the Tribal Council of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians has passed a resolution opposing this BIA action as interfering with integrity and sovereignty of the tribe; and,
- WHEREAS, the action of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in authorizing an Indian employee of the Bureau to file and run for office and then denying him permission to serve after his election, constitutes an improper infringement of tribal sovereignty, and is a direct interference with and obstruction of a individual tribe's political process; and
- WHEREAS, the denial of the right Indian employees by the Bureau to serve on tribal council deprives Indian tribes of experienced and qualified council members and is contrary to the long established policy of the federal government to support and strengthen Indian tribal governments.


NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT by the Executive Committee of the United South Eastern Tribes, Inc., in regular session assembled, with a quorum present, that USET does hereby protest and object to the attempt by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to deny one Larry Blythe, a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, the right to serve on the Cherokee Tribal Council, without resigning his position with the Bureau, after having been granted written permission by the Bureau to seek election to that office. This organization abhors action by the Bureau which infringes upon the operation of tribal governments, most especially the expression of the wishes and desires of Indian people in their democratic electoral process. This organization does further protest any policy of the Bureau of Indian Affairs which would purport to establish inflexible rules and policies concerning conflict of interest that would prohibit tribal members from service in tribal government because of their employment with the Bureau.

#### CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the United South & Eastern Tribes, Inc., Executive Board Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Nashville, Tennessee; December 16, 1987.

  
Joel M. Frank

President  
United South & Eastern Tribes

  
Harold Tarbell

Secretary  
United South & Eastern Tribes