UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.

RESOLUTION NO 93-08DC

SUPPORT AMENDMENTS TO THE AMERICAN INDIAN
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT

WHEREAS, the United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated (USET) is an inter-tribal organization comprised of twenty (20) federally recognized tribes; and

WHEREAS, the actions taken by the USET, Inc. Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member tribe, as the Board of Directors is comprised of delegates from the member tribes leadership; and

WHEREAS, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act was enacted by the Congress and signed by the President in 1978; and

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court in two (2) recent decisions has ruled that the First Amendment does not protect American Indian religious practices; and

WHEREAS, in the first, Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association, the Court ruled in favor of paving a U.S. Forest Service road through lands sacred to the Karok, Yurok and Tolowa tribes of northern California; and

WHEREAS, in the second, Employment Division of Oregon v. Smith, the Court denied Alfred Smith unemployment benefits after his having been terminated from his job because of his participation in the Native American Church and its peyote rituals; and

WHEREAS, the Association for American Indian Affairs has spearheaded an effort by groups, including the Native American Rights Fund, the National Congress of American Indians, the National Indian Education Association, among others to draft amendments to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act to speak to the religious freedoms recently denied by the U.S. Supreme Court, including the protection of sacred sites, the religious use of peyote, the religious rights of American Indian prisoners, the religious use of eagles, and to require that other American Indian religious practices subject to the traditional First Amendment "balancing test".

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of USET hereby endorses Congressional efforts to strengthen the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.
CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly approved at the Board of Directors meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Washington, DC, on February 25, 1993.

Eddie L. Tullis  Keller George
Eddie L. Tullis, President Keller George, Secretary
United South and Eastern United South and Eastern
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