



## UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.

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USET Resolution No. 2007:012

### OPPOSITION TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 6043, CONGRESSIONAL LEGISLATION THAT WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT TRIBAL RIGHTS UNDER THE NATIVE AMERICAN GRAVES PROTECTION AND REPATRIATION ACT

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated (USET) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-four (24) federally recognized Tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member Tribe, as the Board of Directors comprises delegates from the member Tribes' leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990 and the regulations (43 CFR Part 10) that allow for its implementation address the rights of lineal descendants, Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations (parties with standing) to Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony, and cultural items; and
- WHEREAS,** the statute requires federal agencies and museums to provide information about Native American cultural items to parties with standing and, upon presentation of a valid claim, ensure the item(s) undergo disposition or repatriation; and
- WHEREAS,** the sanctity of the land and extant of ancient ancestral territories are paramount considerations in Tribal responsibility to safeguard the ancient burial sites of our shared ancestors; and
- WHEREAS,** since passage of NAGPRA and the discovery of Kennewick Man, elements of the scientific community have actively sought to limit the right of American Indian/Alaska Native Tribes/Villages to assume control of ancient AI/AN remains, so that the scientists themselves may examine those remains for personal and professional gains; and
- WHEREAS,** AI/AN Tribes/Villages have a sacred obligation to care for these ancient remains and denial of their right to do so prohibits them from exercising their religious practices; and
- WHEREAS,** scientific examination of these ancient remains is deeply offensive to AI/AN people and due to the lack of consent of the deceased, violates basic human rights; and
- WHEREAS,** NAGPRA was put in place to defend AI/AN rights, knowledge, understanding and interpretations, not amoral scientific values; and
- WHEREAS,** Congressman Doc Hastings (R-WA) introduced legislation on September 7, 2006 (H.R. 6043) that would create a new definition for "Native American" and would have the effect of eliminating the Tribal right to care for ancient AI/AN remains; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors strongly opposes passage of H.R. 6043 or any legislation with similar goals introduced in the 109<sup>th</sup> or any other Congress; and, be it further
- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors supports the passage of legislation to assure that the Tribal interest in protecting ancient remains is fully recognized and supported; and, be it further
- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors instructs the Executive Director and USET Culture and Heritage Committee to develop and implement a strategy to support Tribal rights and interpretations under NAGPRA in the Congress.

*"Because there is strength in Unity"*

USET Resolution 2007:012

**CERTIFICATION**

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Annual Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Choctaw, MS, on Thursday, October 12, 2006.



Keller George, President  
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.



Eddie L. Tullis, Secretary  
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.