



Baltimore American Indian Center

113 South Broadway • P.O. Box 6171

Baltimore, Maryland 21231

410-675-3535 • 410-675-6909 (fax)

Email: info@baic.org

Talk Together

November 1, 2019

The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer
U.S. House of Representatives
1705 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Hoyer:

I write on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Baltimore American Indian Center (“BAIC”) asking that you co-sponsor H.R. 1964, legislation pending in the 116th Congress that would provide full federal recognition to the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina.

The Lumbee Tribe is comprised of approximately 60,000 members, a large majority of which live in the Tribe’s original territory in southeastern North Carolina. A significant number of tribal members, however, live in the state of Maryland (as discussed further below). The Tribe has been recognized as a self-governing Indian community by the State of North Carolina since 1885. In 1956, at the height of federal termination policy for Indian tribes, the U.S. Congress enacted legislation (70 Stat. 254) (the “Lumbee Act”) that essentially recognized and terminated the Lumbee Tribe all in one legislative act. H.R. 1964 would amend the Lumbee Act to extend full federal recognition to the Lumbee Tribe, finally putting the Tribe on equal footing with federally-recognized tribes across the country, and ending a quest for federal recognition that began more than a century ago. Indeed, since 1899, more than twenty bills have been introduced in the U.S Congress to recognize the Tribe.

Enactment of H.R. 1964 would be meaningful for Marylanders, as our state has been home for many Lumbee tribal members over the last 75 years. Following World War II, thousands of Lumbee Indians migrated from North Carolina to Baltimore City seeking jobs and a better quality of life. In 1968, Lumbee tribal members founded BAIC, a non-profit organization that has provided a range of services over the years to American Indians living in Maryland, including education, workforce development, childcare, healthcare, and senior citizen programming. BAIC continues to serve as a hub for the American Indian community’s social and cultural activities in Maryland. Although initially concentrating themselves in the Fells Point and Washington Hill neighborhoods of Baltimore City, many Lumbees now reside in Baltimore

County and neighboring counties in Maryland, and comprise a significant portion of the Maryland's American Indian population.

BAIC is grateful for your decision to co-sponsor Lumbee federal recognition bills in past Congresses, including the 108th (H.R. 898), 109th (H.R. 21), and 110th (H.R. 65). Those bills are similar to the currently-pending H.R. 1964, which BAIC also hopes you will support.

I have enclosed with this letter some additional information about the Lumbee Tribe and its efforts to obtain federal recognition that may be helpful as you consider H.R. 1964. We would be happy to talk further with you or your staff about this legislation if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Cox".

Linda Cox
BAIC Board Chair