



Federally Recognized  
October 3, 1950

UNITED KEETOOWAH BAND  
of CHEROKEE INDIANS in OKLAHOMA

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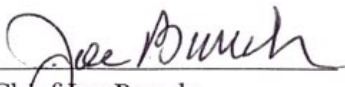
September 29, 2022

Statement for the Record of United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma Chief Joe Bunch concerning the Oversight Hearing "Examining Oklahoma v. Castro-Huerta: The Implications of the Supreme Court's Ruling on Tribal Sovereignty" held before the House Natural Resources Committee's Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States.

Chairwoman Leger Fernández, Ranking Member Obernolte, and honorable members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma, I thank you for this opportunity to submit this statement for the record in the Subcommittee's September 20, 2022 hearing regarding the recent Supreme Court decision in *Oklahoma v. Castro-Huerta*.<sup>1</sup>

The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma, a federally recognized Tribe located on the Cherokee Reservation in Oklahoma, is a successor-in-interest to the historic Cherokee Nation, the body politic who entered into the treaties establishing the Oklahoma Cherokee Reservation and accordingly, possesses jurisdiction on the Cherokee Reservation in Oklahoma. While the Subcommittee received testimony from Sara Hill, Attorney General of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, regarding the impacts of *McGirt v. Oklahoma*,<sup>2</sup> the Subcommittee must be aware that the Cherokee Reservation in Oklahoma belongs not only to the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma but also equally to the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma. While we do not disagree with Ms. Hill's testimony regarding the plight of tribal law enforcement and judicial programs on the Cherokee Reservation resulting from *McGirt* and *Castro-Huerta* and while we do not disagree that legislation is necessary to restore and protect tribal sovereignty of all Tribes, we assert that any legislation must be deliberate and recognize and respect the tribal sovereignty of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma and must not diminish or impair our inherent authority on the Cherokee Reservation in Oklahoma.

Additionally, as a Tribe who is affected and impacted by the *McGirt* and *Castro-Huerta* decisions, it is imperative that the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma be adequately included in the Bureau of Indian Affairs' distribution of the \$62m enacted funding for such affected and impacted Tribes.

  
Chief Joe Bunch