

Truth in Testimony Disclosure Form

In accordance with Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5)* of the *Rules of the House of Representatives*, witnesses are asked to disclose the following information. Please complete this form electronically by filling in the provided blanks.

Committee: _____

Subcommittee: _____

Hearing Date: _____

Hearing :

Witness Name: _____

Position/Title: _____

Witness Type: ☐ Governmental ☐ Non-governmental

Are you representing yourself or an organization? ☐ Self ☐ Organization

If you are representing an organization, please list what entity or entities you are representing:

FOR WITNESSES APPEARING IN A NON-GOVERNMENTAL CAPACITY

Please complete the following fields. If necessary, attach additional sheet(s) to provide more information.

Are you a fiduciary—including, but not limited to, a director, officer, advisor, or resident agent—of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing? If so, please list the name of the organization(s) or entities.

Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) related to the hearing's subject matter that you or the organization(s) you represent have received in the past thirty-six months from the date of the hearing. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

Please list any contracts, grants, or payments originating with a foreign government and related to the hearing's subject that you or the organization(s) you represent have received in the past thirty-six months from the date of the hearing. Include the amount and country of origin of each contract or payment.

Please complete the following fields. If necessary, attach additional sheet(s) to provide more information.

- ☐ I have attached a written statement of proposed testimony.
- ☐ I have attached my curriculum vitae or biography.

* Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5), of the U.S. House of Representatives provides:

(5)(A) Each committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, require witnesses who appear before it to submit in advance written statements of proposed testimony and to limit their initial presentations to the committee to brief summaries thereof.

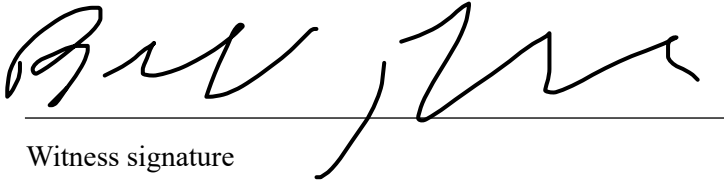
(B) In the case of a witness appearing in a non-governmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include— (i) a curriculum vitae; (ii) a disclosure of any Federal grants or contracts, or contracts, grants, or payments originating with a foreign government, received during the past 36 months by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness and related to the subject matter of the hearing; and (iii) a disclosure of whether the witness is a fiduciary (including, but not limited to, a director, officer, advisor, or resident agent) of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing.

(C) The disclosure referred to in subdivision (B)(ii) shall include— (i) the amount and source of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) related to the subject matter of the hearing; and (ii) the amount and country of origin of any payment or contract related to the subject matter of the hearing originating with a foreign government.

(D) Such statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the privacy or security of the witness, shall be made publicly available in electronic form 24 hours before the witness appears to the extent practicable, but not later than one day after the witness appears.

False Statements Certification

Knowingly providing material false information to this committee/subcommittee, or knowingly concealing material information from this committee/subcommittee, is a crime (18 U.S.C. § 1001). This form will be made part of the hearing record.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "B. J. [unclear]", written over a horizontal line.

Witness signature


Date

Brian Harris

Catawba Nation Leader | Experienced Administrator | Advocate for Tribal Sovereignty and Development

Professional Experience

Catawba Nation Service

- Housing Director – Oversaw housing programs serving tribal members; advanced initiatives to improve housing access and quality.
- Administrative Officer, Catawba Service Unit – Managed operations, procurement, and compliance; served as purchasing and referred care officer.
- Procurement Officer – Held Public Trust Endorsement; responsible for government purchasing with multiple credit cards issued in name.
- Executive Committee Member – Provided leadership and representation; served as liaison to Social Services, Housing/Head Start, Economic Development, EPA, and ICWA.
- ICWA Spokesperson – Represented the Nation on Indian Child Welfare Act matters.
- Judiciary Committee Member (current) – Active in tribal judicial governance.
- Other Committee Service: PRC Committee (Catawba Service Unit), Economic Development Board, Oversight Committee (Chair/Vice Chair; authored and passed bylaws), ISWA Housing Board (Chair), Veterans Committee (USET), Housing Board attendee (USET), Catawba Corporations Board.

Key Contributions:

- Played a pivotal role in establishing the Catawba Nation courts/justice system.
- Instrumental in gaming negotiations, ensuring strong contracts and fair terms.
- Advocated for seniors, foster programs, mental health, housing expansion, healthcare, and education initiatives.

Entrepreneurship

Small Business Owner – Logistics operations; managed business strategy, compliance, and growth.

Education

- York Technical College – Business Studies
- Faulkner State – Business Studies

Awards and Recognition

- Recipient of multiple awards and certificates recognizing service and contributions to Catawba Nation governance, administration, and community programs.

Personal Background

- Raised on the Catawba Reservation, deeply immersed in tribal culture and traditions.
- Extensive engagement with tribal members locally and globally to address priorities and foster inclusive policies.
- Known for balanced leadership style—humble and collaborative, yet strong and assertive when necessary.



The Catawba Nation
Office of Tribal Government
996 Avenue of the Nations • Rock Hill, SC 29730
p: (803) 366-4792

Testimony of Brian Harris, Chief of the Catawba Nation

Before the House Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources Hearing on H.R. 4463, a bill to amend the Catawba Indian Tribe of South Carolina Land Claims Settlement Act of 1993.

Chairwoman Hurd, Ranking Member Leger Fernandez, and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the Catawba Indian Nation, I would like to thank you for holding this hearing and for considering H.R.4463, a bill to amend the Catawba Indian Tribe of South Carolina Land Claims Settlement Act of 1993. We deeply appreciate Congressman Norman's leadership in introducing this important bill.

What the Bill Does

This bill strikes a portion of a single sentence from Section 7(d) of the Catawba Indian Tribe of South Carolina Land Claims Settlement Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-116). That clause currently prevents the Tribe from enrolling any new citizen unless that person is a lineal descendant of an individual on the 1962 final roll and has maintained "continued political relations" with the Tribe.

If enacted, this bill would restore to the Tribe the authority to determine its own citizenship criteria as outlined in its Constitution—a right that is fundamental to tribal sovereignty.

Why the Bill Is Needed

When Congress enacted the Settlement Act in 1993, it was to resolve the Tribe's longstanding land claims and provide for a monetary settlement. The federal eligibility standard included in Section 7(d) was designed to help the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other federal agencies identify individuals who were entitled to share in that distribution. In our view, it was not intended to permanently limit the Tribe's authority to define its political community.

Those monetary distributions were completed decades ago. The federal enrollment restriction has long since outlived its original purpose and now serves only to constrain the Tribe's ability to manage its own citizenship.

In addition, the clause imposes a vague standard—"continued political relations"—that is legally undefined and administratively difficult to apply. Tribal staff must interpret whether an applicant has demonstrated sufficient political connection to the Tribe, which could create confusion.

Impact of the Bill

We understand that some may be concerned about whether this bill would open the door to unchecked enrollment expansion. We want to be clear: it will not.

The Tribe's own Constitution remains in full force and will continue to govern citizenship. Under that Constitution, all applicants must prove lineal descent from individuals listed on either the 1943 or 1962 tribal rolls, and each application is verified through DNA testing and supporting documentation. These requirements are strict and rigorously enforced.

Moreover, over the past five years, the Tribe has admitted approximately 200 new citizens per year. Denials based on the federal clause have been rare. Most rejections result from a lack of documentary evidence or DNA results disproving claimed parentage. In short, this bill is unlikely to meaningfully alter the number of individuals enrolled each year.

Conclusion

Congress has long recognized that the right to determine membership lies at the heart of tribal sovereignty. This bill simply removes an outdated federal restriction that no longer serves a purpose and reaffirms that principle of self-determination.

We thank this Subcommittee for its attention to this matter and urge your support of H.R. 4463. We would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.