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P.O. Box 948 • Tahlequah, OK 74465-0948  
918-453-5000 • www.cherokee.org

Office of the Chief

**Chuck Hoskin Jr.**  
*Principal Chief*

**Bryan Warner**  
*Deputy Principal Chief*

December 9, 2019

Subcommittee on Indigenous Peoples of the United States  
Natural Resources Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Gallego, Ranking Member Cook, and members of the subcommittee:

As Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, I write to you today to express my opposition to H.R. 1964, to provide for the recognition of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, and for other purposes, known as the “Lumbee Recognition Act.” The Cherokee Nation, which maintains a historic and continual government-to-government relationship with the United States, is the largest federally recognized tribal government in the United States. Since time immemorial, the Cherokee Nation has exercised the sovereign rights of self-government on behalf of the Cherokee people, and today, we are 380,000 citizens strong and span 7,000 square miles in northeastern Oklahoma.

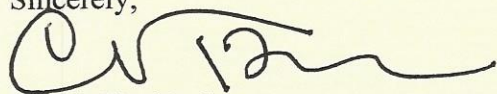
H.R. 1964 is of grave concern to the Cherokee Nation because the bill circumvents the existing process for federal recognition of Indian tribes. The Department of the Interior’s Office of Federal Acknowledgement (OFA) was established by Congress—this very body—in 25 CFR Part 83 to bring integrity, fairness, and legitimacy to the process of federal recognition. The Office of Federal Acknowledgement’s process applies uniform methodology to every petitioning group seeking federal recognition. Using anthropological, genealogical, and historical research methods to review and evaluate petitions, the process is thorough, as Congress intended. The process ensures that all federally recognized Indian tribes are, in fact, Indian tribes as defined by federal law.

As the elected leader of the largest sovereign Indian nation in the United States, I take our sovereignty, our way of life, and our unique identity as Cherokee people seriously. I reject any and all attempts to threaten our government-to-government relationship with the United States, and the sovereignty we have maintained since time immemorial.

As a citizen of the United States, much like I am a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, I have great respect for our institutions. Processes put in place by our democratically elected leaders, and carried out by our great institutions, must be followed. The Office of Federal Acknowledgement

was put in place to make decisions regarding the status of petitioners who seek recognition as Indian tribes. I believe we must uphold this process, and that is why I oppose H.R. 1964.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CHUCK HOSKIN JR.', written in a cursive style.

Chuck Hoskin Jr  
Cherokee Nation Principal Chief