



National  
Caucus of  
Native  
American  
State  
Legislators

# **BYLAWS**

## **OF THE**

### **NATIONAL CAUCUS OF NATIVE AMERICAN STATE LEGISLATORS**

#### **ARTICLE I**

##### **Name and Office**

###### Section 1.

The title of this organization shall be the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators (hereinafter “the Caucus”).

###### Section 2.

The primary office shall be located where determined by the Caucus. The Caucus may be staffed by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), as funding allows.

#### **ARTICLE II**

##### **Objectives**

###### Section 1.

The goals and objectives of the Caucus are, but are not limited:

- A. To provide a forum for discussion, education and increased communication among American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian legislators (hereinafter “Caucus members”);
- B. To increase awareness among non-Native legislators of the Native cultures in the United States, including cultural diversity;
- C. To improve the effectiveness and amplify the voice of Caucus members in their individual state legislatures;
- D. To identify and prioritize issues for joint advocacy that Caucus members, representing their respective constituents and tribal governments, can bring before their state legislatures;
- E. To support establishment and maintenance of the state-tribal communication and policy processes;
- F. To encourage open dialogue, understanding and cooperation between the sovereign Native American governments and state governments based on respect for individual and sovereign rights;

- G. To more fully inform and educate non-Native legislators and others of the legal and sovereign status and potential of Native people and communities throughout the nation;
- H. To identify and propose legislation and administrative actions to eliminate barriers to achievement of a better quality of life for Native people;
- I. To advocate for appointments and election of Native people to positions of influence in all levels and branches of government, to the benefit of Native citizens;
- J. To act as an advisory body for the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) on issues affecting Native populations;
- K. To advocate for active participation by Native people in their traditions, governments and representative structures;
- L. To provide training and resources for newly elected Caucus members ; and
- M. To work with Tribal governments, state and other governments, Caucuses and issue focused organizations on issues of mutual concern.

### **ARTICLE III**

#### **Membership**

There may be several membership classifications within the Caucus.

#### A. Regular members.

Regular members are state legislators who are Native Americans, including Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians.

Regular members are state legislators who are presently serving in office.

Regular members are state legislators who are dedicated to achieving the goals of the Caucus. Each regular member has one vote and the right to run for any elected office within the Caucus.

#### B. Members Emeritus.

A member emeritus can include Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian State Legislators for up to two years beyond their official term of office in their respective states.

A member emeritus retains all rights and privileges as full Caucus members except they cannot hold any office within the Caucus including the position of Committee Chair or Committee Vice Chair.

A member emeritus must notify the Chairperson of the Caucus of their intentions to continue such membership and must disclose their future employment within three months after their term of office expires. Continued membership would be at the discretion of the Chairperson and Executive Committee.

C. Associate Members.

Associate members are non-Native legislators who support the advancement of Native populations and are dedicated to achieving the goals of the Caucus. Associate members hold the same rights as regular members and may participate in any Caucus function; however, they have no vote and cannot hold any office within the Caucus.

D. The Caucus may create other classifications of membership and the rules and regulations governing those classifications.

**ARTICLE IV**  
**Meetings**

Section 1.

The Caucus shall meet at least two times per calendar year, subject to funding, for the Caucus' Annual Meeting, in conjunction with the NCSL Annual Meeting and in conjunction with the NCAI Annual Meeting when possible. Meeting dates and Caucus events may be determined by the Caucus members during the Caucus' Annual Meeting.

Section 2.

The presiding officers may call a special meeting of the Caucus pursuant to a request by no fewer than three regular members. The meeting shall occur within 10 days after the request to convene the meeting is officially filed with the chair. The subject matter of the special meeting shall be fully disclosed at the time of filing the request, and no other matter shall be addressed unless added by the presiding officers. Special meetings may be held by any appropriate mechanism.

Section 3.

All Caucus members shall receive notice of any meeting. If applicable, notice shall include notification of officer elections, nominations, by law changes and list of resolutions for action.

Section 4.

Each official act of the Caucus shall be approved by a vote of the majority of regular members present and voting when a quorum is met. "Present" shall mean appearing in person or appearing by other mechanism such as telephone, email and video.

Section 5.

A quorum shall be 10 percent of the regular Caucus membership, as long as at least one is an officer.

Section 6.

Rules of conduct for Caucus meetings shall be developed and adopted by the Caucus.

Section 7.

Any regular member may bring a resolution before the Caucus. Resolutions must be received by the Caucus Chairperson and Committee Chair a minimum of 5 business days prior to a meeting. Emergency resolutions can be brought before the Caucus with the support of the Chair and the appropriate Committee Chair.

**ARTICLE V**  
**Officers**

Section 1.

The Caucus officers shall be the chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, treasurer and peacekeeper. Officers shall be selected with consideration to regional and gender diversity. Officers shall be regular members of the Caucus. Officers will serve until their replacement takes office.

Section 2.

The elected officers of the Caucus shall receive no salaries.

Section 3.

Any vacancy shall be filled only for the unexpired term of the vacant office. The Caucus will take nominations once notified of the vacancy and a meeting will be scheduled to fill the vacancy.

Section 4.

Officers may be removed by a majority vote when a quorum is present at a meeting.

**ARTICLE VI**  
**Committees**

Section 1.

The Caucus may create an executive committee that shall then act as the administrative body of the Caucus. Duties and authority shall be delegated to the executive committee by the Caucus to the extent it deems necessary to carry out the goals and objectives identified in these bylaws. The executive committee shall develop and adopt any rules deemed necessary to accomplish its assigned duties and present them to the Caucus for approval.

Section 2.

The Caucus may create committees; regional, tribal or other divisions; and membership classes in addition to those created in these bylaws, and shall grant any body so created the necessary authority to carry out its assigned duties.

Caucus Committees will have a Chair and Vice Chair. These positions will be appointed by the Caucus Chair. The Committees will alert the entire Caucus of meetings and keep meeting records. Committee actions will not be considered final until the full Caucus votes on the action.

Section 3.

Committee Chairs and Committee Vice Chairs may be removed by a majority vote when a quorum is present at a meeting.

**ARTICLE VII**  
**Executive Committee**

Section 1. Membership

The Executive Committee shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Peacekeeper with the Chairperson serving as Chair.

Section 2. Powers

The Executive Committee shall have the authority to act for the Caucus in any way, which the Executive Committee is authorized to act, except that it is not authorized to amend the By-Laws, nor to reverse any action taken by the Caucus. Information on actions taken by the Executive Committee will be shared with the full Caucus.

### Section 3. Meetings

The Executive Committee shall meet at the call of the Chairperson. Meetings can be held by conference call.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Elections**

Elections will be held every two years beginning with the Fall 2008 election. Nominations must be made a minimum of 5 business days prior to the opening of the meeting. All regular members and members emeritus in good standing may vote. Members may nominate themselves. Votes may be cast by email, fax or via conference call should a physical meeting not be held.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Terms of Office**

The term of office for the officers shall be for two years from the time of their election.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **Bylaw Amendments**

These bylaws may be amended by a vote of the majority of regular members present and voting. "Present" shall mean appearing in person or appearing by other mechanism such as telephone, email and video.