

# **PRESS RELEASE: Tribal Organizations Urge Administration to Respect Tribal Sovereignty and Uphold Trust and Treaty Obligations Amid Executive Actions**

Category: Press Release

written by NCUIH | February 3, 2025

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (February 3, 2025)** – A coalition of Tribal organizations, representing Tribal Nations and their citizens and communities, is calling on the Administration to ensure that recent executive actions do not undermine the unique sovereign political status of Tribal Nations as sovereign nations with which the federal government has trust and treaty obligations, or disrupt federal funding that flows from those relationships for essential Tribal programs.

Following the issuance of multiple executive orders and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) directives, concerns arose over freezes on federal funding that Tribal Nations and Tribal organizations, including urban Indian organizations, rely on to provide critical healthcare, economic development, education, and social services to Tribal communities. While OMB has since rescinded the initial memorandum, questions remain about how federal agencies will interpret and implement the Administration's executive orders and policies moving forward.

Tribal Nations are not special interest groups—they are sovereign governments with a unique legal and political relationship with the United States and with their own Tribal communities. The trust and treaty obligations of the federal government are political and debt-based in nature. Tribal Nations' sovereignty and the federal government's delivery on its trust and treaty obligations must not become collateral damage in broader policy shifts.

The coalition emphasizes that federal funding for Tribal programs is not discretionary, but rather a legal mandate owed under the United States' trust and treaty obligations and the many statutes that carry them out. The organizations urge the Administration to explicitly recognize Tribal sovereignty and trust and treaty obligations in the implementation of all executive orders and priorities and to ensure that federal agencies provide clear guidance that protects Tribal programs from unnecessary disruption.

As the Administration advances its priorities, it must do so in a way that respects Tribal sovereignty, strengthens self-determination, and delivers on trust and treaty obligations. We stand ready to work with federal partners to ensure that all policies and decisions uphold the government-to-government relationship between the U.S. and Tribal Nations.

The coalition will continue to advocate for Tribal sovereignty and fulfillment of the trust and treaty obligations and ensure that the voices of Indian Country are heard in Washington. A full copy of the sign-on letter can be found here: <https://qrco.de/letter2225>.

## **List of National Tribal Organizations**

American Indian Higher Education Consortium

Association on American Indian Affairs  
Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians  
California Tribal Chairpersons Association  
Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council  
Great Plains Tribal Chairmans Association  
Indian Gaming Association  
Inter-Tribal Association of Arizona  
Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes  
Native American Finance Officers Association  
National American Indian Court Judges Association  
Native American Rights Fund  
National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers  
Native Forward Scholars Fund  
National Congress of American Indians  
National Council of Urban Indian Health  
National Indian Child Welfare Association  
National Indian Education Association  
National Indian Health Board  
Northern California Tribal Chairperson's Association  
Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council  
Self-Governance Communication & Education Tribal Consortium  
Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association  
United South and Eastern Tribes

**January 31, 2025** - [National Council of Urban Indian Health Calls for Protection of Indian Health System Funding](#)

## **About NCUIH**

The National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) is a national representative for the 41 Urban Indian Organizations contracting with the Indian Health Service under the *Indian Health Care Improvement Act*. NCUIH is devoted to the support and development of high quality and accessible health and public health services for American Indian and Alaska Native people living in urban areas.

NCUIH respects and supports Tribal sovereignty and the unique government-to-government relationship between our Tribal Nations and the United States. NCUIH works to support those federal laws, policies, and procedures that respect and uplift Tribal sovereignty and the government-to-government relationship. NCUIH does not support any federal law, policy, or procedure that infringes upon or in any way diminishes Tribal sovereignty or the government-to-government relationship.

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