

Let's enforce all 31 articles in 1866 Treaty

— I read state Rep. Mike Shelton's March 12 column in the Phoenix. Although I find it somewhat ironic that the representative would use the same tone used to counter the 1960's Civil Rights and Black Power movements, I have to agree with his support of our Cherokee treaty rights.

By believing "we should preserve the treaties between our federal government and the tribes and respect tribal sovereignty," does he mean all the provisions of the 1866 Treaty? Article 9 grants freedmen and their descendants' citizenship. Article 31 reaffirms "all treaties heretofore ratified," leaving intact our nation's boundaries. Article 8 prohibits the granting of a "license to trade goods, wares or merchandise" by the United States "unless approved by the Cherokee National Council."

Article 26 contains "The United States guarantee to the people of the Cherokee Nation the quiet and peaceable possession of their country," and "They shall also be protected against interruptions or intrusion from all unauthorized citizens of the United States who may attempt to settle on their lands or reside in their territory."

Article 27 states, "And all person not in the military service of the United States, not citizens of the Cherokee Nation, are to be prohibited from coming into the Cherokee Nation, or remaining in the same, except as herein provided; and it is the duty of the United States Indian agent for the Cherokees to have such persons, not lawfully residing or sojourning therein, removed from the nation."

I take it "those of us in the Oklahoma government" will not object to the enforcement of all 31 articles of the 1866 Treaty. Shelton's constituents would not be affected as the district he represents is outside our nation's boundary.

My high school civics teacher pointed out that the U.S. Constitution reserves treaty-making powers to the federal government and prohibits entering into a treaty by any of the states.

Just for clarity, I am not a member of the Cherokee Nation government, nor am I a nation employee. I am just a regular old Cherokee citizen expressing his opinion.

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