

Santee Sioux Nation

COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS / MUSEUM

Chairman: Roger Trudell
Vice Chairman: David Henry
Treasurer: Robert Campbell
Secretary: Cora Jones



108 Spirit Lake Avenue West
Niobrara, NE 68760-7219

March 12, 2008

**Senator Ben Nelson
U.S. Senate
248 Russell Office Building
Washington, DC 20510**

Dear Senator Ben Nelson:

I write to inform you that my Nation, the Santee Sioux Nation, recognizes your critical position within the Energy and Commerce Committee. We urge you to Oppose all congressional legislation seeking to punish the Cherokee Nation for its March 2007 vote to limit Cherokee citizenship to those who descend from Indians listed on their 1906 federally authorized base roll (the "Dawes Rolls").

We strongly denounce and object to this legislation, which includes California Congresswoman Diane Watson's bill (H.R. 2824) to terminate the Cherokee Nation and related coercive amendments to eliminate federal funding to the Nation. If passed, such legislation would cut federal funding that enables vital assistance to those in need for health care, housing, education and other social services.

The Santee Sioux Nation has approximately 2,500 citizens in Nebraska and we join other Nations within the State who are also contacting the House Energy and Commerce Committee members who have jurisdiction H.R. 1328. We unite to vocalize our disapproval of this scorched-earth legislation.

Congress needs to know that Indian Country is waking up to this issue, with coalitions of Nations and individual nations rising up to oppose this legislation. We proudly join the National Congress of American Indians, which represents more than 250 federally recognized tribes, the Native American Caucus of the California Democratic Party, the United South and Eastern Tribes, INC. and the Assembly of First Nations, which represents more than 600 nations located within Canada's borders, in decrying legislation of this nature.

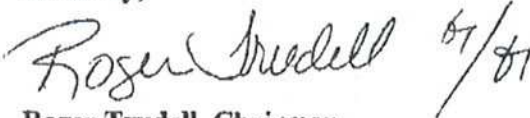
Numerous decisions and actions by courts, the Executive Branch, and Congress have protected the rights of self-determination and self-governance for Indian tribes. This included the right of Indian peoples to decide for themselves who can and cannot be members of their tribes. Indeed, courts have called this right the independent political communities.

Especially troubling to Indian Country is that H.R. 2824 is a throwback to the Termination Era of the 1940s and 1950s, when it was official U.S. policy to eradicate Indian tribes and seize their property.

We urge you to join us in opposing a Cherokee specific amendment in H.R. 1328 and related legislation. We hope you will meet with our friend, Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chad Smith, to hear the facts about the Cherokee people's decision to return to what they once were – an Indian tribe made of Indians – and the potential ramifications of this termination legislation and disabling amendments.

We believe that Native American opposition to congressional efforts to terminate the Cherokee Nation will only intensify. If the second-largest nation in the United States could be targeted by a congressional vendetta, we are all at risk.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Roger Trudell in cursive, with the date 07/07 written to the right.

Roger Trudell, Chairman
Santee Sioux Nation

cc: Senator Chuck Hagel
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