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2D SESSION

S. RES. 561

Recognizing National Native American Heritage Month and celebrating the heritages and cultures of Native Americans and the contributions of Native Americans to the United States.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 19, 2012

Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. INOUE, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. TESTER, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Mr. JOHANNES) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs

RESOLUTION

Recognizing National Native American Heritage Month and celebrating the heritages and cultures of Native Americans and the contributions of Native Americans to the United States.

Whereas from November 1, 2012, through November 30, 2012, the United States celebrates National Native American Heritage Month;

Whereas Native Americans are descendants of the original, indigenous inhabitants of what is now the United States;

Whereas the United States Bureau of the Census estimated in 2009 that there were almost 5,000,000 individuals in the United States of Native American descent;

Whereas Native Americans maintain vibrant cultures and traditions and hold a deeply rooted sense of community;

Whereas Native Americans have moving stories of tragedy, triumph, and perseverance that need to be shared with future generations;

Whereas Native Americans speak and preserve indigenous languages, which have contributed to the English language by being used as names of individuals and locations throughout the United States;

Whereas Congress has recently reaffirmed its support of tribal self-governance and its commitment to improving the lives of all Native Americans by enhancing health care services, increasing law enforcement resources, and approving settlements of litigation involving Indian tribes and the United States;

Whereas Congress is committed to improving the housing conditions and socioeconomic status of Native Americans;

Whereas the United States is committed to strengthening the government-to-government relationship that it has maintained with the various Indian tribes;

Whereas Congress has recognized the contributions of the Iroquois Confederacy, and its influence on the Founding Fathers in the drafting of the Constitution of the United States with the concepts of freedom of speech, the separation of governmental powers, and the system of checks and balances between the branches of government;

Whereas with the enactment of the Native American Heritage Day Act of 2009 (Public Law 111–33; 123 Stat. 1922), Congress—

(1) reaffirmed the government-to-government relationship between the United States and Native American governments; and

(2) recognized the important contributions of Native Americans to the culture of the United States;

Whereas Native Americans have made distinct and important contributions to the United States and the rest of the world in many fields, including the fields of agriculture, medicine, music, language, and art, and Native Americans have distinguished themselves as inventors, entrepreneurs, spiritual leaders, and scholars;

Whereas Native Americans have served with honor and distinction in the Armed Forces of the United States, and continue to serve in the Armed Forces in greater numbers per capita than any other group in the United States;

Whereas the United States has recognized the contribution of the Native American code talkers in World War I and World War II, who used indigenous languages as an unbreakable military code, saving countless Americans; and

Whereas the people of the United States have reason to honor the great achievements and contributions of Native Americans and their ancestors: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) recognizes the month of November 2012 as
3 National Native American Heritage Month;

4 (2) recognizes the Friday after Thanksgiving as
5 “Native American Heritage Day” in accordance with
6 the Native American Heritage Day Act of 2009
7 (Public Law 111–33; 123 Stat. 1922); and

1 (3) urges the people of the United States to ob-
2 serve National Native American Heritage Month and
3 Native American Heritage Day with appropriate
4 programs and activities.

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