

The INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL of the FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES

A Resolution Opposing Proposed Modifications to Oklahoma's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan, Calling for Tribal Consultation, and Preserving Local Governance

Resolution No. 26-07



Chuck Hoskin Jr.
Principal Chief

WHEREAS, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes (ITC) is an organization that unites the tribal governments of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole Nation, representing approximately 877,000 Indian people throughout the United States; and



Bill Anoatubby
Governor

WHEREAS, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Public Law 113-128, establishes a federal-state-local workforce system designed to provide employment, education, and training services through designated local workforce development areas and Local Workforce Development Boards pursuant to Sections 106 and 107 of WIOA; and



Gary Batton
Chief

WHEREAS, WIOA's statutory framework is intended to ensure that workforce services are responsive to regional labor markets, promote employer engagement, and maintain accountability through locally governed workforce systems involving Chief Local Elected Officials; and



David W. Hill
Principal Chief

WHEREAS, tribal citizens of the Five Civilized Tribes rely on workforce programs authorized under WIOA for access to job training, employment services, and career pathways that are essential to economic mobility and self-sufficiency; and



Sena Yesslith
Chief

WHEREAS, Local Workforce Development Boards across Oklahoma have served as important partners to tribal nations by coordinating services, engaging employers, and ensuring that workforce strategies reflect the needs of rural and tribal communities; and

WHEREAS, on January 27, 2026, the Governor of Oklahoma issued notice of intent to designate the State as a single statewide local workforce development area, which would eliminate existing Local Workforce Development Boards and centralize workforce governance at the state level; and

WHEREAS, this proposed restructuring represents a significant departure from the locally driven governance model established under WIOA and raises substantial concerns regarding compliance with federal statutory requirements, including those governing local workforce areas, Local Workforce Development Boards, and the authority of Chief Local Elected Officials; and

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WHEREAS, the elimination of local workforce boards would remove local decision-making authority, reduce regional representation, and risk diminishing the responsiveness of the workforce system to the needs of rural and tribal communities across Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, tribal communities, including those represented by the ITC, already face barriers related to geography, transportation, infrastructure, and access to services, and centralizing workforce governance may exacerbate these challenges and reduce access to critical workforce services; and

WHEREAS, the tribal nations represented by the ITC have not been engaged in formal, meaningful government-to-government consultation regarding these proposed changes, despite their direct and substantial impact on tribal citizens and tribal workforce partnerships; and

WHEREAS, meaningful tribal consultation is a fundamental component of the government-to-government relationship and is necessary to ensure that tribal priorities and perspectives are incorporated into policies that affect tribal communities; and

WHEREAS, concerns have also been raised regarding the use of WIOA waivers to implement broad structural changes, potential conflicts of interest in consolidated state roles, and reduced transparency and accountability within a centralized workforce system; and

WHEREAS, the ITC supports efforts to improve coordination, efficiency, and performance within Oklahoma's workforce system, provided such efforts are conducted in full compliance with federal law and preserve meaningful local and tribal participation.

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes opposes the proposed modifications to Oklahoma's WIOA State Plan that would eliminate Local Workforce Development Boards and centralize workforce governance in a manner inconsistent with the statutory framework and intent of WIOA.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes calls upon the State of Oklahoma to pause implementation of any workforce governance changes until full compliance with federal law is ensured and meaningful government-to-government consultation with Tribal Nations has occurred.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes urges the State of Oklahoma to preserve Local Workforce Development Boards and

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maintain a locally driven workforce system that reflects regional labor market needs, supports rural communities, and ensures continued partnership with tribal nations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes calls upon the State to engage in formal, meaningful, and timely government-to-government consultation with tribal nations regarding any proposed changes to workforce governance, service delivery, or funding structures under WIOA.

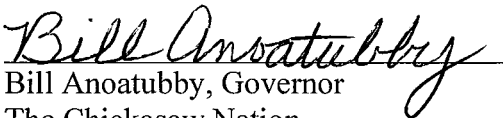
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes urges the U.S. Department of Labor to provide oversight and guidance to ensure that any proposed State Plan modifications or waiver requests comply fully with WIOA and do not undermine the statutory structure, intent, or accountability provisions of the law.

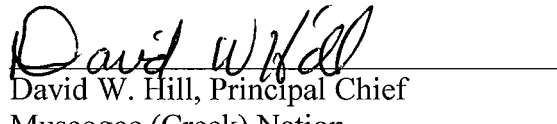
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes requests that the U.S. Department of Labor carefully review any proposed governance changes to ensure that tribal communities are not adversely impacted and that equitable access to workforce services is maintained.

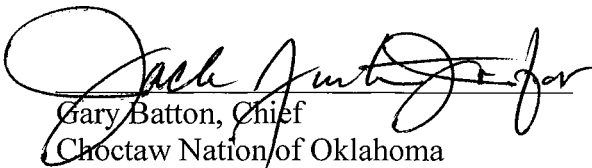
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes reaffirms its commitment to working collaboratively with federal, state, and local partners to strengthen Oklahoma's workforce system in a manner that respects tribal sovereignty, promotes economic opportunity, and ensures that tribal citizens have access to high-quality workforce services.

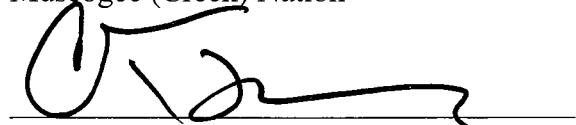
CERTIFICATION


The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes meeting in Thackerville, Oklahoma on this 10th day of April, 2026, by a vote of _____ for _____ against and _____ abstentions.


Bill Anoatubby, Governor
The Chickasaw Nation


David W. Hill, Principal Chief
Muscogee (Creek) Nation


Gary Batton, Chief
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma


Chuck Hoskin Jr., Principal Chief
Cherokee Nation


Sena Yessli, Chief
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma