

## **National Congress of American Indians** **Election Procedures**

**To: Membership of the National Congress of American Indians**  
**Fr: Juanita Ahtone, Elections Committee Chair**  
**Re: Elections for National Congress of American Indians**  
**NCAI Annual Session – Oct. 30 to Nov. 4, 2005 – Tulsa, OK**  
**Dt: October 26, 2005**

This is an election year for the National Congress of American Indians, and I would like to encourage all tribal leaders and members of NCAI to participate in the elections at the Annual Session in Tulsa. NCAI is a great organization with a very important mission: to work in unity with Indian tribes for the protection of tribal sovereignty and treaty rights and to promote the welfare of Indian people. It is up to all of us to elect the members of the Executive Committee who will take on the responsibility to provide the leadership and ensure that this mission is accomplished. The following is some information about the procedures for the election:

**Registration and Membership** – In order to vote in the election, both tribal delegates and individual members must be members in good standing and registered at the conference. Membership dues and registration fees for the annual session are the major source of NCAI's annual budget so it goes to a great cause. I would like to encourage everyone to pre-register for the Annual Session and if you are going to be casting the votes for your tribe, please have your resolution from your tribal council in place. In order to cast the tribal votes, you must have a current resolution from your tribal council stating that you are the delegate for the tribe. You can find the registration forms and a model resolution at [www.ncai.org](http://www.ncai.org).

**Time Frames for Registration and Voting** – During the 2003 elections, we had a rush at registration at the very last minute before voting began on Thursday morning. It was chaotic, so we have established a deadline for registration prior to the voting. The deadline for registration is Wednesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 pm. This deadline will be printed in the agenda so all are on notice.

**Administrative Board Elections** -- NCAI elects its President, First Vice-President, Treasurer and Recording Secretary with voting by the entire membership. Nominations for these offices will be received in the General Assembly on Wednesday, November 2 at approximately 10:30 am. The election will be held on Thursday, November 3, in the morning, and we expect to start promptly at 10:00 am. All tribal delegates must be properly credentialed in order to cast the votes of their tribe. I would encourage each of you to be credentialed well before that time.

**Voting in the Regional Caucuses** - During the 2003 elections, we encountered some confusion about voting procedures for the Regional Caucuses for the Regional Vice Presidents. Many of the regions have a history of handling these elections somewhat informally: sometimes through consensus; sometimes through “one tribe, one vote; or sometimes with a “one person, one vote.” It really has been up to the caucus to decide how to run its own elections and we do not intend to

interfere. These days, however, there seems to be more competition in elections in the regional caucuses – and there were some requests for clearer rules on voting in the regional caucuses.

The NCAI Constitution provides the process by which Regional Vice Presidents shall be elected. The Constitution is clear that individual Indian members in good standing are eligible to participate in the regional caucus elections. But the Constitution also indicates that all elections should be conducted according to the weighted voting system where each Indian individual member is entitled to one vote and each member tribe is entitled to 100 to 180 votes, depending upon the enrollment of the Tribe. In the past, it has not generally been the practice that the regional caucuses would use this weighted voting system, but it should be utilized if the caucus is unable to agree on how to run its election. The current Regional Vice Presidents should clarify the procedures before the election. Please contact me if you would like assistance in facilitating the regional election.

**Volunteers** -- The elections committee will need two volunteers from each of the Regional Caucuses to assist us in administering the election. Having volunteers from each Region ensures that the elections are administered fairly and that we have enough assistance to complete the work efficiently. The volunteers should meet at 1:30 pm on Tuesday in the Resolutions Room. We have contracted with an election services company that will handle the printing of ballots and electronic ballot counting under the direction of the Elections Committee.

**Invoices** – The practice of issuing invoices creates significant problems with non-collection and revenue loss for NCAI. At the same time, the organization has a long-standing practice of using invoices to accommodate tribal leaders who may have had a mix-up on registration or dues, and have traveled long distances to the meeting. The NCAI Executive Committee has decided that we will continue to allow invoicing on a case-by-case basis, but will not allow voting unless the registration and dues are paid in advance.

**Unregistered Members** – At the election two years ago in Albuquerque, a number of people who are members of NCAI (they had paid their dues) but had not registered for the conference were requesting to vote. The NCAI Constitution is clear that registration at the conference is required.

**Vendors** - A question arose during the 2003 elections as to whether vendors who had paid for a booth in the trade show are considered “registered” and able to vote. Registering for the conference is not the same as participating in the trade show as a vendor. The vendor contracts are clear that separate registration is required for the conference if you wish to vote in elections.

**Speakers** – Invited speakers are not required to pay registration fees for the day they are speaking. Their name badges have a ribbon that says “speaker” but they do not get a “registrant” ribbon unless they register and pay the fee. Some questions arose about whether speakers are registered and can vote. I would clarify for speakers that they must register separately if they wish to vote.

Thank you on behalf of the Elections Committee.

**National Congress of American Indians**  
**ELECTION PROCEDURES**  
**(excerpts from Constitution and By-Laws)**

**Election of Officers**

Only tribal government officials or delegates in good membership standing shall qualify for nomination, election or office for the Administrative Board Officers or Area Vice-President. Any registered member in good standing is eligible to nominate others and participate in the election process. The President (or session Chair) shall turn the Chair over to the Election Committee Chairman. No member of the Election Committee shall be a candidate for any office.

NCAI Officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.

**PRESIDENT:** The President shall preside at all conventions of the organization and meetings of the Executive Council and shall exercise other duties delegated to him by the Executive Council.

**VICE PRESIDENT:** The First Vice President shall assume the responsibilities of the President in the absence or incapacity of the President, and shall carry on such other duties as are assigned by the Executive Council.

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** The Recording Secretary shall perform the duties set forth in the Constitution usually performed by a secretary, and such additional duties as shall be prescribed by the Executive Council. He/She shall provide copies of the minutes of all actions by the Annual Convention, Executive Council, Executive Committee, and Administrative Board to the Executive Committee by postmark or electronic delivery within (30) days of the action.

**TREASURER:** The Treasurer is responsible for all funds of the organization and be bonded by a surety company in amount approved by the Executive Committee. He/She shall provide monthly financial reports to the Executive Committee and provide for an annual audit by a Certified Public Accountant and submit a report to the Executive Committee within (15) days of receipt of the report designated by electronic delivery.

**AREA VICE-PRESIDENTS:** Alaska Area, Eastern Oklahoma Area, Great Plains Area, Midwest Area, Northeast Area, Northwest Area, Pacific Area, Rocky Mountain Area, Southeast Area, Southern Plains Area, Southwest Area, Western Area. These (12) Area Vice-Presidents shall be responsible for coordination of National Congress of American Indians activities in their areas. He/She should serve in a leadership role in fundraising and membership activities in their areas and act as a liaison between the tribal and individual members in their area and the officers and other members of the Executive council. This person shall also carry out the duties by the Executive Council and/or Executive Committee.

- A. Nominations: Nominations of officers shall begin no later than 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 3, 3005.

1. Nominations of officers shall be in the following order:
  - i. President
  - ii. First Vice-President
  - iii. Recording Secretary
  - iv. Treasurer
2. The Election Committee Chairperson shall declare nominations open for the office of President
3. Nomination speeches shall be no longer than two (2) minutes. Individual making nominations must state their name, the Tribe they represent, and indicate that they are a member in good standing of NCAI. Nominations do not have to be seconded, and no seconding speeches shall be allowed.
4. After calling for nominations three (3) consecutive times, the Chairman may declare nominations closed without a motion. Motions to close nominations in order to block a nomination are not allowed.

B. Balloting by Tribal Delegates

The campaign speeches and the voting process shall begin no later than 1:30 p.m. on Thursday of an election year. Campaign speeches by candidates shall be no longer than five (5) minutes.

The balloting for all officers shall be by consolidated secret ballot. Each Tribal delegate shall be entitled to 100 to 180 votes in accordance with the table in Article III, Section 2, A(4) of the NCAI By-Laws.

C. Balloting by Indian Individual Members shall be entitled to cast one vote.

D. Robert's Rules of Order require that a majority of the votes must be cast for a candidate for him/her to be elected.

E. In the event a candidate does not get a majority of the delegate votes, another balloting will take place. Only the two (2) highest vote-getters for an office will be on the second ballot. Once a candidate gets a majority of the delegate votes, the Chair will request a motion to adopt the Election Committee report.

F. Area Vice-Presidents are elected in the Area Caucuses at a time specifically set aside for this purpose. Each caucus chair reports the results of caucus elections and make a motion to ratify their elections at the conclusion of the report:

“Mr. /Madam Chair the \_\_\_\_\_ Area has elected Mr. /Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ as our Area Vice-President and Mr. /Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ as the Alternate. I move and ask unanimous consent for the Convention to ratify our election.”