



National Congress of American Indians



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Media Release

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NCAI Rolls Out 2008 Native Vote Initiative at Annual Convention in Denver

DENVER—November 12, 2007—The National Congress of American Indians rolled out its 2008 Native Vote initiative today announcing an aggressive plan to count every Indian vote in the 2008 elections and to create a national infrastructure and network for empowering the Native Vote throughout the United States.

“We have to ramp up our voter participation initiative in 2008,” said NCAI President Joe A. Garcia. “Increasing civic participation among American Indian and Alaska Native communities is imperative to protecting sovereignty and ensuring Native issues are addressed on every level of government.”

NCAI’s Native Vote target states include: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Nevada, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Washington, and Wisconsin.

“We are working in partnership with tribes to encourage them to merge enrollment lists with the voter files in their states. We want to make sure every time we register someone to vote that it is recorded in a database and to ensure we can contact every new Native registrant and get them to the polls,” said NCAI Executive Director Jacqueline Johnson.

The cornerstone of NCAI’s Native Vote is to conduct trainings in tribal communities all across the country so that there is no longer reliance on outside entities engaging in electoral strip-mining on tribal land. “We are training grassroots volunteers in order to build a lasting infrastructure in our communities. We want tribal members on the ground, talking to neighbors and running their own campaigns to build lasting power in Indian Country,” said Johnson.

“Our national Native Vote coalition is building partnerships with tribal, regional and national organizations to execute a comprehensive national strategy,” said NCAI Native Vote Field Director Peggy Flanagan. “This is an opportunity to share our best practices with one another and really mobilize the Native Vote in 2008.”

NCAI’s Native Vote 2008 includes four core initiatives:

1.) Native Vote GOTV Trainings: providing tribal communities with training to educate, engage, and mobilize Native voters in their communities. These trainings will help tribes create **Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV)** plans and create databases of all registered Native American voters in their community.

2.) Native Vote Election Protection Project: ensuring the fairness of voting laws and protecting Native voters on Election Day.

3.) Candidate Education: educating candidates on the federal, state and local level on the issues most important to Indian Country.

4.) Native Vote Media Campaign: communicating Native Vote message to local, regional and national media in the Native and non-Native media to engage the base and educate the general public.

For more information, contact Peggy Flanagan at pflanagan@ncai.org or Adam McMullin at amcmullin@ncai.org.

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