



GREAT PLAINS TRIBAL CHAIRMEN'S ASSOCIATION, INC.

US Post Office Box 988, Rapid City, SD 57709

March 25th, 2021

Dear Senators and Representatives:

The Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Association, Inc. is our Section 17 Intertribal Corporation that supports our 16 Indian nations and tribes in the Great Plains Region, North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska. With respect, we call upon you to join in the effort to enact the "Remove the Stain Act," which will soon be reintroduced by Senator Warren and Senator Merkeley.

In the last Congress, the Remove the Stain Act, S. 3164, was introduced in the Senate to remove the 20 Medals of Honor awarded by the United States to 7th Cavalry soldiers who participated in the Wounded Knee Massacre, mercilessly killing 300 Lakota—mostly unarmed women and children. For the United States of America, it is time to acknowledge that Native Americans have lived in our homelands from the beginning. In our Native belief, the Creator made the first man and the first woman here and we arose from this land. Our Native Peoples fought for our rights and we never surrendered our sovereignty, our right to self-government, or ceded our homelands.

In the 1803 Louisiana Purchase Treaty, the United States bought rights from France, but the French had no right to our lands. France told the United States that it had to make treaties with our Indian nations based upon mutual consent. Our Native Nations made treaties, and we reserved our homelands and our rights that flow from the Creator. The United States promised peace, friendship and fair commerce but soon sent out armies in violation of our treaties.

America must face the truth. America pledged its honor to maintain the peace, but sent the U.S. Army to massacre our Native villages when our people were sleeping at Ash Hollow. When the Cavalry came upon us at mid-day in the Powder River Country, we defeated the soldiers in battle and when we won the war, the United States entered another treaty that guaranteed our homeland. We defeated the 7th Cavalry at the Battle of the Rosebud and the Little Big Horn. Yet always more armies came. Today, some Lakota and Dakota continue to live in Canada—where they went during the wars so they could live in peace.

In 1890, the wars had come to an end. Yet, after the United States took more land, the Secretary of the Interior cut our rations. Then the BIA feared the Ghost Dance sending letters to Washington expressing their fright. Once again, the United States sent out its

armies to our homelands, which are guaranteed by treaty. The Wounded Knee Massacre was a terrible tragedy for the *Oceti Sakowin*—the Seven Council Fires of the Great Sioux Nation. The 7th Cavalry massacred 300 unarmed Lakota, mostly women and children. The United States gave out 20 Medals of Honor for this horrific tragedy.

Today, it's time for the United States to acknowledge that the Wounded Knee Massacre was a violation of our rights as human beings to live in peace in our own homelands. It's time for the United States to take back the 20 Medals of Honor. It's time for the truth.

Please join us in our quest for truth for our Native People by co-sponsoring and supporting enactment of the Remove the Stain Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. Gay Kingman".

A. Gay Kingman, Executive Director
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