



National Indigenous Women's Resource Center

## STATEMENT ABOUT SEXUAL HARRASSMENT #METOO and WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

The National Indigenous Women's Resource Center, Inc. (NIWRC) is a Native nonprofit organization that was created specifically to serve as the National Indian Resource Center (NIRC) Addressing Domestic Violence and Safety for Indian Women. Our Vision is to restore safety for Native women and their communities by upholding the inherent sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples. As a national and leading organization in this space, we would be remiss in light of recent allegations regarding sexual harassment within the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) organization, in remaining silent about the need to create a safe working environment for all Native women where equality, respect, and institutional integrity are paramount. With respect to the #metoo movement, in which NIWRC has been an active participant, we will continue to take a firm stand against all forms of harassment and gender-based violence in our communities, in our homes, and in the many professional spaces that our sisters occupy.

As professional women, we recognize our individual sovereign and inalienable right to respect, equality, and safety. NIWRC seeks to educate the general public and members of congress, in addition to tribal leaders and tribal coalitions/advocates, on gender-based violence in all of its forms (including sexual harassment/workplace issues), as it relates to Indigenous understandings of its root causes. Sexual harassment is simply another avenue in which a native woman can be victimized through the current power and control dynamic that is at play in gender and in race.

Sexual harassment and workplace inequality, hostility, or predation is wholly unacceptable. No organization is immune from assessing, with due diligence and through robust investigation, where it stands relative to the working environment it creates, tolerates and enables. We must all engage in this ongoing litmus test and demand that our partners, including NCAI, do the same. We trust that our partners are committed to fulfil their responsibility to evaluate and take very seriously any claims of sexual harassment, inequality, or workplace hostility. It is imperative to the good work that we collectively do, the changes that we advocate for, and the survivors that we all seek to honor and serve. We must further prioritize and center the voices of those who bravely speak up and hold perpetrators accountable including those who enable any form of violence in our work environments.

We must also remember that the mentality of ownership or devaluing over native women's bodies, ideas and spaces does not occur only from 9-5. We have a long road ahead of us with the 2018 fight to Reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. This important work cannot be undermined. The NIWRC will continue to work diligently to educate about these critically important issues, which affect us both professionally and personally.

Respect for women continues to be an important value at the heart of our Native traditions. We call upon all organizations to embody this value and to move forward in accordance with its spirit.

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