



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
GOVERNOR BILL RICHARDSON



For Immediate Release
October 15, 2009

Contact: Caitlin Kelleher
505-476-2299

Governor Bill Richardson Proclaims “President Joe Garcia Day”

SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson has issued a proclamation declaring October 15, 2009 “President Joe Garcia Day” in honor of his tenure as President of the National Congress of American Indians. Today is the final day of Garcia’s second term as President of the National Congress of American Indians. Joe A. Garcia, of Ohkay Owingeh, is also the Chairman of the All Indian Pueblo Council which serves the 19 pueblos in New Mexico.

“Joe Garcia is a true champion for Native Americans across the United States,” said Governor Richardson. “I want to extend my deep appreciation to Joe for his important and lasting contributions to New Mexico and to our country.”

The National Congress of American Indians is the largest national Indian organization representing over 250 Tribal Nations from throughout the United States. Joe Garcia has been actively involved with NCAI since 1995 and has served two terms as President of the organization.

“President Garcia is a remarkable leader who has worked diligently on behalf of Indian nations, tribes and pueblos in New Mexico and throughout the country,” said Indian Affairs Secretary Alvin Warren. “His ongoing service inspires and compels us all to continue working to strengthen state-tribal relations.”

Full text of the Governor’s Proclamation follows:

PROCLAMATION HONORING PRESIDENT JOE GARCIA

WHEREAS, President Joe Garcia (*Sokuwa Owing T’aa*) has for fourteen years been an effective and passionate champion of Native Nations as President, First Vice President and Southwest Area Vice-President of the National Congress of American Indians, the oldest, largest and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization in the country; and,

WHEREAS, President Garcia understands and embodies the vital importance of Native American languages, cultures and traditions as a member, lifetime Councilmember, three-term Governor and traditional leader of Ohkay Owingeh; and,

WHEREAS, with the precision and skill befitting of his experience as an electrical engineer, President Garcia has worked throughout his career to build strong and enduring relationships among tribal governments and between Native Nations and the federal government; and,

WHEREAS, as a tribal leader and as the elected Chairman of the All Indian Pueblo Council President Garcia has been integral to the strengthening of state-tribal relations in New Mexico, particularly through his support for the elevation of the Indian Affairs Department to cabinet-level and the enactment of the 2009 State-Tribal Collaboration Act; and,

WHEREAS, President Garcia has been awarded the New Mexico Distinguished Public Service Award in 1995 and the Luminaries Award from the New Mexico Community Foundation in 1998 as well as many other prestigious awards; and,

WHEREAS, President Garcia is a mentor, relative and friend to many here in New Mexico and across the country and I was honored that he swore me in for my second term as Governor of the State of New Mexico on January 1, 2007; and,

WHEREAS, it is fitting that, at the conclusion of his second term as President of NCAI, the State of New Mexico extends appropriate recognition and deep appreciation to President Garcia for his many important contributions to Native pueblos, tribes, nations and to all the people of our state and country.

NOW THEREFORE I, Bill Richardson, Governor of the State of New Mexico, do hereby proclaim Thursday, October 15, 2009 as:

“President Joe Garcia Day”

Throughout the State of New Mexico.

###