

Congress enacts the Indian Citizenship Act Signed on June 2, 1925

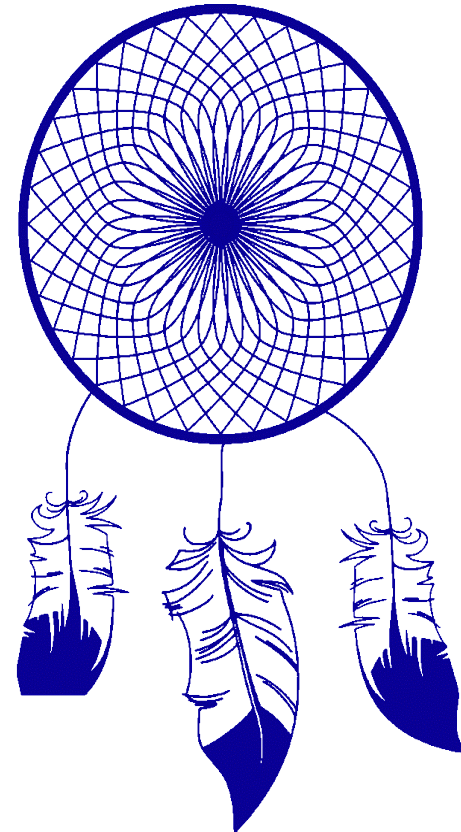
Think about this—Do you understand how special our right to vote is? We celebrated in 2019-20 the 100th anniversary of women receiving the right to vote, but American Indians continued to wait. Read more about the Congressional Act that would begin to change that.

With Congress' passage of the Indian Citizenship Act in 1924, the United States confers citizenship on all Native Americans born within the territorial limits of the country. **However, this did not guarantee all American Indians the right to vote, because voting was governed by state law. Many American Indians did not get the right to vote until the Civil Rights Act of 1957 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.**

Before the Civil War, citizenship was often limited to Native Americans of one-half or less Indian blood. In the Reconstruction period, Congress sought to accelerate the granting of citizenship to friendly tribes, though state support for these measures was often limited. In 1888, most Native American women married to U.S. citizens were conferred with citizenship, and in 1919 Native American veterans of World War I were offered citizenship. In 1924, the Indian Citizenship Act, an all-inclusive act, was passed by Congress.

Source: Smithsonian, November-December, 2022

Which states did not provide voter rights after the 1924 act? Stay tune for next month's Table Tent.



Provided by the
Iowa Society Daughters of the American Revolution
Commemorative Events 2022-2024

How the Native American Vote Continues to be Suppressed After 1924 Act (Signed on June 2, 1925)

Even with the passing of the 1924 act, Native Americans were still prevented from participating in elections because the Constitution left it up to the states to decide who has the right to vote. It took over forty years for all fifty states to allow Native Americans to vote. For example, Maine was one of the last states to comply with the Indian Citizenship Act, even though it had granted tax paying Native Americans the right to vote in its original 1819 state constitution. In 1948, the Arizona Supreme Court struck down a provision of its state constitution that kept Indians from voting. In 1957, Utah repealed a law that had denied Native Americans living on reservations the right to vote. And in 1962, the New Mexico Supreme Court found that Navajos living on a reservation are allowed to vote.

Despite these victories, Native people were still prevented from voting with poll taxes, literacy tests and intimidation. In 1965, with passage of the Voting Rights Act and subsequent legislation in 1970, 1975, and 1982, many other voting protections were reaffirmed and strengthened.

A setback in 2013 was a US Supreme Court decision to eliminate the Justice Department's authority to block changes to voting laws in states with histories of discrimination. In 2019, a federal commission found that at least 23 states had enacted "newly restrictive statewide voter laws."

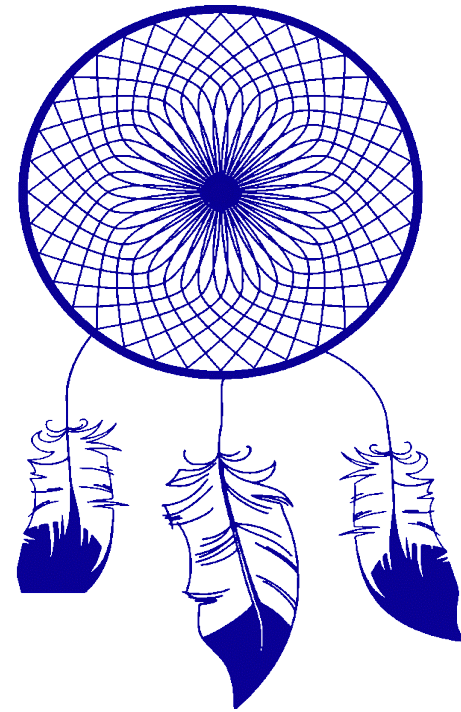
Next month--What is the Iowa story of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924?

Source

American Bar Association

Patty Ferguson-Bohnee, author

The faculty director of the Indian Legal Program and director of the Indian Legal Clinic at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law. She is a voting rights attorney and leads the Arizona Native Vote—Election Protection Project.



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Iowa American Indians want to Participate and Vote

Follow up to 100th Anniversary of the signing of the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act

There are 1,678 caucus rooms in the state of Iowa. Only one is located in Native Indian Country. Since 1999, the Meskwaki Settlement, home to the Sac & Fox of the Mississippi in Iowa, has been designated as its own caucus precinct. Located about an hour northeast of Des Moines, the Meskwaki are the only federally recognized tribe in Iowa.

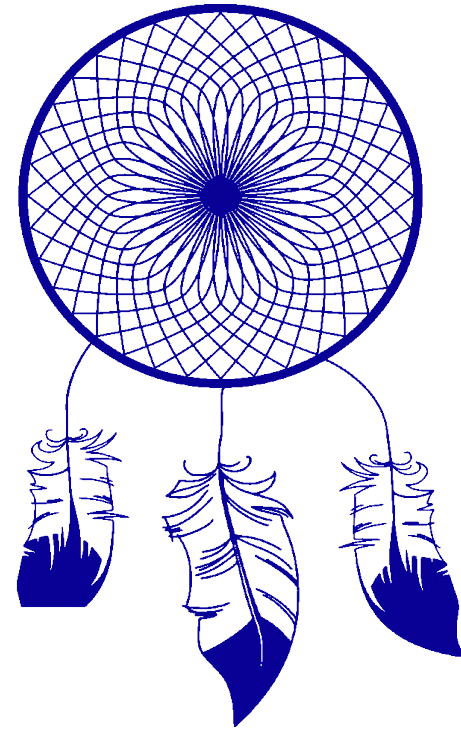
“We may be Meskwaki Indians but we are also Iowans; we take our little caucus very seriously,” said Johnathon Buffalo, Meskwaki tribal historic preservation officer. Residents of the Meskwaki Settlement located in Tama County, however, have often felt overlooked in both Iowa and U.S. elections.

“Our people have only recently begun to show more interest in participating in caucuses,” said Donnielle Wanatee of the Meskwaki Tribe. Wanatee is 2020 precinct Democratic chairperson for the Meskwaki Settlement.

“Traditionally, we haven’t been that engaged in the political process. People don’t believe that their voice matters to the state of Iowa or the country at large,” she said.

Before 1999, Settlement residents caucused in nearby non-Native communities depending on the geographic location of their homes. The Settlement has definitely been overlooked by local, state and national politics; politicians seldom reached out. Tribes have gained attention from politicians craving the social currency associated with indigenous led environmental advocacy and awareness. According to Meskwaki Tribal Chairman Dawson Davenport, the Indigenous vote has gained importance overall our country.

Source: February, 2020, Indian Country Today (ICT), a nonprofit news organization



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