

AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH**2006****BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA****A PROCLAMATION**

WHEREAS, North Carolina is home to eight American Indian tribes: the Coharie, the Eastern Band of Cherokee, the Haliwa-Saponi, the Lumbee, the Meherrin, the Occaneechi Band of Saponi, the Sappony, and the Waccamaw-Siouan; and

WHEREAS, these tribal governments and four urban American Indian center organizations located in Charlotte, Fayetteville, Greensboro, and Raleigh uniquely address the most critical issues confronting North Carolina American Indian citizens, such as school dropout rates higher than the general population, elevated unemployment and poverty rates, lack of safe and affordable housing, health disparities, and increasing higher education attainment levels; and

WHEREAS, 99,551 American Indians live in North Carolina, according to Census 2000, giving the state the largest American Indian population east of the Mississippi and the eighth largest American Indian population in the country; and

WHEREAS, American Indians have inhabited this land for at least 12,000 years and have shared their knowledge of the land and its resources since discovering European settlers who landed on our shores; and

WHEREAS, this year the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, a state agency created by the North Carolina General Assembly, celebrates its 35th anniversary of advocacy and service for the American Indian people of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, across the state we continue to celebrate American Indian culture and heritage through songs, dances, arts, crafts, and traditional spirituality; and

WHEREAS, the traditions of their ancestors continue to be the foundation for the contemporary lifestyles of today's American Indian citizens;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, MICHAEL F. EASLEY, Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim the month of November 2006, as "AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH" in North Carolina and urge our citizens to recognize and celebrate the many achievements and contributions made by the native inhabitants of North Carolina.

MICHAEL F. EASLEY

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in Raleigh this twenty-seventh day of October in the year of our Lord two thousand and six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.