



All Pueblo  
Council of  
Governors

Officers:  
Wilfred Herrera, Jr., Chairman  
Governor Phillip A. Perez, Vice-Chair  
David M. Toledo, Secretary

*Via Email*

Acoma June 16, 2021

Cochiti The Honorable Mimi Stewart  
Senator New Mexico District 17  
President Pro Tempore

Isleta New Mexico State Senate  
313 Moon Street N.E.

Jemez Albuquerque, New Mexico 87123

Laguna The Honorable Brian Egolf  
House Representative New Mexico District 47  
Speaker of the House

Nambe New Mexico House of Representatives  
Suite 104, State Capitol

Ohkay Owingeh Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Picuris Dear Honorable Madam Pro Tempore Stewart and Honorable House Speaker Egolf,

Pojoaque On behalf of the All Pueblo Council of Governors, I write to express my dismay and disbelief upon reading the disparaging comments about Native Americans made by Ms. Rachel Gudgel, director of the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC). The type of comments about Native people that her staff complained of are both offensive and inexplicable, especially at a time when race relations and reconciliation is at the national forefront. While numerous complaints made against her were brought to the attention of legislative leaders, the full details surrounding Ms. Gudgel's intolerable behavior and comments are still unknown. The APCG formally requests that the findings contained in the investigative report prepared by attorney Thomas Hnasko be made public and given redress; and that Ms. Gudgel be removed from her position as Director of the LESC.

Sandia As you know, Ms. Gudgel, as the Director of the LESC, plays a very powerful and influential role in state government. The Director – along with staff – study, develop and make recommendations to the LESC on policy and legislative outcomes that affect the public education of all children, including Native students. Given Ms. Gudgel's racist attitude towards Native American culture and Indian education, it is very reasonable to believe she is racially biased and will continue to undermine the enormous legislative efforts by tribal leadership, families, and students to resolve the systemic problems identified in the *Yazzie/Martinez* court ruling.

Taos Further, all 23 tribes in New Mexico have expressed full support for the implementation of the Tribal Remedy Framework, a comprehensive set of recommendations and solutions that address the unique educational needs of Native students. Our efforts to secure sufficient state funding, resources, and final passage of legislation, however, have been stonewalled over the past three legislative sessions. Most concerning to APCG, now, is that our tribal efforts, which call for an innovative and culturally responsive approach for closing the achievement gap – as required by New Mexico Indian Education Act - have been sullied by Ms. Gudgel's

Zia

Zuni



# All Pueblo Council of Governors

Officers:  
Wilfred Herrera, Jr., Chairman  
Governor Phillip A. Perez, Vice-Chair  
David M. Toledo, Secretary

indigenous cultural intolerance. Her remarks translate that Native people are not deserving of nor sophisticated enough to formulate a comprehensive education plan to benefit Native children.

Acoma

Cochiti

Isleta

Jemez

Laguna

Nambe

Ohkay Owingeh

Picuris

Pojoaque

Sandia

San Felipe

San Ildefonso

Santa Ana

Santa Clara

Santo Domingo

Taos

Tesuque

Ysleta Del Sur

Zia

Zuni

We understand the allegations of racial bias and staff complaints about management style were investigated fully by Thomas Hnasko, an attorney hired by legislative leaders and paid for with public funds. As you know, the final report contains substantial information about the allegations made by members of Ms. Gudgel's immediate staff. What's baffling, however, is to learn that so few lawmakers have read the report, including members of the LESC, many of whom now say they were unaware of the allegations and the contents of the highly secret report. Without knowing the full details surrounding the remarks uttered by Ms. Gudgel about Native Americans and potentially other communities of color, it's difficult to trust in the actions of legislative leaders; let alone Ms. Gudgel, who continues to advise the LESC. Tribal leaders want the general public to read and determine for itself if the "leadership coaching" and the two-week suspension rendered by legislative leaders were just and sufficient, given the magnitude and seriousness of what has surfaced so far. The public at large, including tribal communities, has a right to know the full story in order to fully restore trust within state and tribal relations.

Further, nothing can be gained by having Ms. Gudgel continue in her position. We expect a public apology both to her staff and to Native American students, their families and tribal leaders for her comments. We respectfully ask that the leadership in the New Mexico legislature remove her as director of the LESC.

Our hope is that she will be replaced by someone who knows our state, its tribes, the education needs of our children, and can offer fair, sound, and unbiased advice when it comes to education policy that addresses the needs of students and the concerns of parents and New Mexico's tribes.

Sincerely,

Wilfred Herrera Jr., Chairman  
All Pueblo Council of Governors

CC: Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham  
All Pueblo Council of Governors  
Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez  
Jicarilla Apache Nation President Ed Velarde  
Mescalero Apache Tribe President Gabe Aguilar  
Senate Majority Floor Leader Peter Wirth  
House Majority Floor Leader Sheryl Williams Stapleton  
Senator William Soules, Co-Chair LESC  
Rep. Andres Romero, Co-Chair LESC  
LESC Members