

October 24, 2020

Fellow Lumbee Tribe Members,

When President Trump visits Robeson County today, he will bring promises of resources and recognition we as a tribe have sought for over 130 years. He will not be the first elected official to make such promises, but he is the one using our generations-long quest for recognition to boost his electoral chances.

In contrast, here's what we have learned over many years: Vice President Joe Biden truly supports full federal recognition of the Lumbee people. He did so as a Senator in 1992 and in the [first months of the Obama-Biden Administration](#) in 2009, and he stands with us still today. Nearly a month before President Trump, Joe Biden took action to reaffirm [his longstanding support](#) of the Lumbee tribe's push for federal recognition. And unlike Donald Trump, Joe Biden is a man of his word.

Joe Biden coupled his statement of support with the rollout of the [Biden-Harris Plan for Tribal Nations](#), a plan that will make far-reaching investments in Indian Country and addresses a wide range of concerns we as Lumbee people have been fighting to address. The Biden campaign has a North Carolina [Tribal Leadership Council](#) to hear directly from Lumbee and other tribes, which tells us that the Biden-Harris administration is invested in addressing the issues that most concern us.

As we speak, the COVID-19 pandemic is ravaging our community. It is devastating our livelihoods and endangering the lives of our brothers and sisters. A testament to the true grit of our community, we've taken to fighting this virus head-on.

But this was done without the support of federal aid. Because of our partial federal recognition, we have been shut out from COVID-19 help provided through Indian Health Services (IHS). Where was Donald Trump's support for federal recognition earlier this year, when we had no way to obtain this lifesaving help?

Joe Biden's plan to address COVID-19 in our community would both increase IHS funding and allow us to access its resources. And while Trump tries to overturn the Affordable Care Act, which made permanent the foundational authority for the Indian Health Service, Biden will defend and build on it. As a federally recognized tribe, we would have what we need to combat this pandemic and live healthy, productive lives.

Even before the pandemic, Robeson County was in desperate need of economic revitalization. Joe Biden has a [detailed plan](#) to create the kind of good-paying jobs that allowed our grandparents and parents to achieve the American Dream and to invest in infrastructure from roads and bridges to schools to broadband.

With legislation sponsored by Congressman G.K. Butterfield, a Biden-Harris White House would usher in the support that our community deserves. And, he would build on the efforts of the Obama-Biden Administration, which were instrumental in rebuilding trust, good faith, and respect for the tribal-federal relationship, unlike President Trump who has repeatedly stood against tribes from trying to disestablish a tribal reservation to rolling back protections for natural and cultural treasures.

When the President visits this weekend, we cannot view this trip in a vacuum. Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are the only candidates that will carry through their fight for the Lumbee Tribe. This election, join us in choosing real leadership over continued empty promises.

Signed,

Kara Boyd
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