

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

PROCLAMATION

Today we celebrate the 58th annual California Native American Day, remembering trailblazing tribal leaders through this year's theme, "Walking in Their Footsteps: Carrying Forward the Legacy of Strength and Sovereignty."

As we navigate increasingly uncertain times, strong leadership can serve as a beacon for those seeking reassurance that we can persist, resist and even thrive in the face of challenges. For many, a leader is more than human: they are a symbol of the strength of their community, their culture, and their beliefs. For many more, a leader is a close friend, mentor, or family member—someone who said a kind word during a hard time, reminded us of our humanity and made us believe we could do anything we set our mind to. And for most, a leader is someone we follow because we truly believe that they have our best interests at heart, that we can entrust our future generations to their informed judgment.

California Indian Country has long benefited from leaders known for their ability to embody these qualities. Since time immemorial, tribal leaders have skillfully shaped this place through commerce, diplomacy, and cultural heritage. Throughout the Spanish occupation almost 250 years ago, leaders like Toypurina stood up for their people and beliefs in the face of slavery and oppression. 175 years ago, as militia raids devastated tribal communities, Native American leaders throughout the state strategically led their people to safety and security, sowing the seeds of sovereignty that would lead to the thriving tribal nations we see today.

Almost 50 years ago, California tribal leaders mobilized Native American people from across the country on The Longest Walk from Alcatraz to Washington, D.C. to speak up in defense and advocacy of their peoples. A decade later, California tribal leaders would assert and uphold their inherent rights to self-govern before the United States Supreme Court. And today, leaders like the late Bo Mazzetti, Margie Mejia, and Marshall McKay continue to impact our collective culture deeply by advancing sovereignty, advocating for their people, and creating space for Californians to reckon with our complicated history to build a brighter, more inclusive future for all.

While we mourn the tribal leaders who are no longer with us, we take heart in the examples they have left for future leaders. The beauty of leadership is that anyone can embody the values needed to lead with strength, integrity, and humanity.


This California Native American Day, I encourage all Californians to embody the values of those tribal leaders who came before by pursuing justice and dignity for all who call this place home.

**NOW THEREFORE I, GAVIN NEWSOM**, Governor of the State of California, do hereby proclaim September 26, 2025 as "Native American Day."

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF** I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 24<sup>th</sup> day of September 2025.



  
GAVIN NEWSOM  
Governor of California

**ATTEST:**  
  
SHIRLEY N. WEBER, Ph.D.  
Secretary of State