

To: Liz Appel
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Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw

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My suggestion on the new criteria for federal acknowledgment is to have more common sense on the historical tribes issues we are facing. How many of the already federally recognized tribes and or how many European families can go back two hundred years and identify their ancestors, if they have been displaced like we have for the past two hundred years plus? We have been displaced ever since the white man came to our country and took it from us. We have been running for our lives and finally about 180 years ago we settled in a small area where fishing and farming was good. Also, a great hiding place to hide from the government soldiers. Families were separated and never came back together. As for the movement of the Indians, we didn't have a writing or reading language, so we couldn't leave a note to let anyone know where we were going or did we want anybody to know where we were going.

The French gave us names and every time someone would come for any reason, the spelling of our name would change. The government knows that we are Biloxi, Chitimacha and Choctaw, but yet if we can't find our roots then we are not an Indian tribe, according to the government. My grandparents, my parents and myself went through the discrimination phase and it's still happening today. My children and grandchildren have to hear all that garbage that is out there in this white man's world.

We were denied an education because we were Indians, today the government refuses to acknowledge us as a tribe because we can't find our historical tribe. The government separated us, so the burden should be on the government's back to identify us as a tribe.

We know who we are, we are Choctaw, comes from oral history, not from birth certificate, which we didn't have, the Indians knew who their kids were, they didn't need a piece of paper

Another one that bothers me is political influence. The government wants us to have political influence on tribal members. Indians were always free to roam as they please. The government is politically oriented, not the Indians. We as leaders don't dictate to our tribal members to what they can or can't do. We work for the betterment of the tribe as a whole.

Albert P. Naquin

Albert P. Naquin, Chief
Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw

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