

Constitutional Amendment FAQ

Removal of the BIA from Constitutional Amendment Elections

May 22, 2025

1. What is the timeline for this amendment?
 - The deadline for returning voter registration packets is Monday, June 2, 2025
 - Registration voter's list will be posted Monday, June 2, 2025
 - Deadline for list challenges is Thursday, June 5, 2025
 - Ballots are due on Wednesday, July 9th and the results will be posted that night.
 - The election challenge deadline is Monday, July 14, 2025
2. Why are we considering a Constitutional Amendment to Remove the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) from our Constitutional Amendment Elections?
 - BIA timelines are rushed and are set by Federal Regulations. The Tribe is unable to provide sufficient time for all Tribal members to participate in a meaningful way.
 - The process varies from election to election because we have a new BIA election board chair for every election. This has resulted in a limitation on what the Tribe can provide to members.
 - Having a Tribal led process will result in more efficient and timely communication with Tribal Members regarding these important elections, and the dates associated with the election.
 - Lack of BIA resources and staffing cuts as well as working with BIA employees that are unfamiliar with these elections have added additional challenges in recent years.
3. Does this Amendment remove BIA from everything?
 - No. It only removes them from conducting our Elections. BIA still has a trust responsibility to the Tribe and the Tribe will continue to work with BIA as they do on any other matter.
4. What if someone suspects corruption of an election if we remove the BIA?
 - This could happen now. The BIA only provides an Election Board Chair. The BIA has regulations with short timeframes regarding issues with the election. If this is passed there will be a process under Tribal Law that would allow for election disputes in Tribal Court.
5. I am registered to vote in the Tribal Council elections. Do I need to register for this election?
 - Yes. The Constitutional Amendment Election is an election that is conducted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. As a result, you will have to register to vote in the election. Registration packets have been mailed to all eligible voters.
6. I didn't get my registration packet what do I do?
 - Contact Gene Hughes at 971-277-4087 or gene.hughes@BIA.gov.
7. Has this been done before?
 - The Tribe has attempted two prior elections to remove the BIA from our elections.

- The first one was called in 2014. This election had numerous procedural errors by the BIA agency conducting the election. Therefore, Tribal Council discontinued the election
 - The second was voted on and rejected in 2015 by Tribal Membership (391 for; and 220 against).
8. How did we get here?
- There have been several on-going discussions among Council and the membership on this topic for a number of years.
 - One of the things we've heard from the membership, staff and the election board during last year's Constitutional Amendment was a desire for a more streamlined process and to re-visit the removal of BIA from Constitutional Amendment elections.
9. Why has the process been different then before?
- Because the language changes are simpler and the Tribe has discussed this with Members for several years, educational meetings were not needed prior to submitting the language to BIA for approval.
 - It took BIA a considerable amount of time to start the process after the Tribe called the election, which delayed the first Constitutional Election Board meeting for this election.
 - The Tribe could not share the timeline with members until after BIA approval and was shared as soon as the Tribe had it.
10. Are people doing this so it would be easier to change the Tribe's Constitution?
- No. If successful, it would require more Tribal Member participation to successfully amend the Constitution in the future. It would require 30% of all Tribal members over the age of 18 to vote in the election and 2/3rds to vote in support.
11. Will this impact enrollments under the new constitutional requirements?
- No. The Tribe is already enrolling infants and emergencies under these requirements and are working towards opening the enrollment process to all applicants soon.
12. Why doesn't the Tribe wait until the newly eligible individuals are enrolled to hold this election?
- Unfortunately, the process to enroll will take several years, and there will always be individuals that are waiting to be enrolled or not yet 18 years of age and waiting would prevent this very import change from taking place. Those newly eligible individuals will have the ability to vote in future elections.
13. Will the Tribe still utilize a 3rd Party for all elections?
- Yes, the Tribe will continue to use a 3rd party to help administer our elections.
14. What if the Constitutional Amendment Fails?
- If the constitutional amendment fails, the Tribal will continue to be subjected to BIA regulation for Constitutional Amendments and will need to comply with BIA timelines.