Testimony of Arlinda Locklear, Patton Boggs LLP, Of Counsel
for the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina in Support of S.420
United States Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
September 17, 2003

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is my privilege to appear before you today as counsel for the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina to testify in support of S.420, a bill introduced by Senator Dole to extend full federal recognition to the Tribe. The excitement and hope generated among the Lumbee people by the support of Senator Dole, Senator Edwards, and Congressman McIntyre, as well as this committee's interest, cannot be overstated. There is a growing sense that the time has come for recognition of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina. The Tribe expresses its appreciation to Senator Dole, Senator Edwards, and Congressman McIntyre for their hard work in getting to this day and to the committee for the opportunity to tell its story.

The hundred year legislative record on Lumbee recognition

In one form or another, Congress has deliberated on the status of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina for more than one hundred years. On numerous occasions during that time, Congress has itself or directed the Department of the Interior to investigate the Tribe's history and conditions. On all such occasions, the Tribe's Indian identity and strong community have been underscored.

Congress' first experience with the Tribe followed shortly upon the heels of formal recognition of the Tribe by the State of North Carolina in 1885. The 1885 state statute formally recognized the Tribe under the name Croatan Indians of Robeson County, authorized the Tribe to establish separate schools for its children, provided a pro rata share of county school funds for the Tribe's schools, and authorized the Tribe to control hiring for the schools and eligibility to attend the schools. See North Carolina

General Assembly 1885, chap. 51. Two years later, tribal leaders sought and obtained state legislation establishing an Indian normal school, one dedicated to training Indian teachers for the Indian schools. See North Carolina General Assembly 1887, chap. 254. The Indian Normal School was badly underfunded, though, leading to the Tribe's first petition to Congress for recognition and assistance in 1888.

The 1888 petition to Congress was signed by fifty-four (54) tribal leaders, including all members of the Indian Normal School Board of Trustees. All the traditional Lumbee surnames are represented in the list of signatories -- Sampson, Chavis, Dial, Locklear, Oxendine, and others -- and descendants of these signatories are active today in the tribal government. The petition sought federal assistance for the then named Croatan Indians in general and funding for the Tribe's schools in particular. Congress referred the petition to the Department of the Interior, which investigated the Tribe's history and relations with the state. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs ultimately denied the request for funding, citing insufficient resources:

> While I regret exceedingly that the provisions made by the State of North Carolina seem to be entirely inadequate, I find it quite impractical to render any assistance at this time. The Government is responsible for the education of something like 36,000 Indian children and has provision for less than half this number. So long as the immediate wards of the Government are so insufficiently provided for, I do not see how I can consistently render any assistance to the Croatans or any other civilized tribes.

Thus began the Department's long-standing opposition to federal recognition of the Lumbee Tribe, typically because of the cost of providing services.

After the failure of the 1888 petition to Congress, the Tribe sought recognition more directly through proposed federal bills. In 1899, the first bill was introduced in Congress to appropriate funds

to educate the Croatan Indian children. See H.R. 4009, 56th Cong., 1st Sess. Similar bills were introduced in 1910 (See H.R. 19036, 61st Cong., 2d Sess.) and 1911 (See S. 3258, 62nd Cong., 1st Sess.) In 1913, the House of Representatives Committee on Indian Affairs held a hearing on S. 3258 where the Senate sponsor of the bill reviewed the history of the Lumbees and concluded that the Lumbees, then called Croatans, had ?maintained their race integrity and their tribal characteristics;@ See Hearings before the Committee on Indian Affairs, House of Representatives on S. 3258, Feb. 14, 1913. In response to the same bill, the Department of the Interior dispatched C.F. Pierce, Supervisor of Indian Schools, to conduct an investigation of the Croatan Indians. Pierce reviewed the Tribe's history, acknowledged their Indian ancestry and the strength of their community, but recommended against federal assistance for the Tribe:

> It is the avowed policy of the Government to require the states having an Indian population to assume the burden & responsibility for their education as soon as possible. North Carolina, like the State of New York, has a well organized plan for the education of Indians within her borders, and I can see no justification for any interference or aid, on the part of the Government in either case. Should an appropriation be made for the Croatans, it would establish a precedent for the Catawbas of S.C., the Alabamas of Texas, the Tuscaroras of N.Y., as well as for other scattering tribes that are now cared for by the various states.

Those other tribes mentioned by Pierce have since been recognized by the United States.

In 1914, the Senate directed the Secretary of the Interior to investigate the condition and tribal rights of the Lumbee Indians and report to Congress thereon. See S.Res. 410, 63rd Cong., 2d Sess. The Secretary assigned Special Indian Agent O.M. McPherson to conduct the investigation. According to the Secretary's letter to the President of the Senate transmitting the McPherson report, McPherson conducted ?a careful investigation on the ground as well as extensive historical research." The report

covered all aspects of the Tribe's history and condition, running 252 pages in length. See Indians of North Carolina, 63rd Cong., 3d Session, Doc. No. 677. McPherson's report again confirmed the tribal characteristics of the Lumbee Indians, but Congress took no action on the McPherson report.

In 1924, yet another bill was introduced in Congress to recognize the Lumbee Indians as Cherokee Indians of Robeson County. See H.R. 8083, 68th Cong., 1st Sess. This bill failed and in 1932 a very nearly identical bill was introduced in the Senate. See S. 4595, 72d Cong., 1st Sess. This bill failed as well.

The next federal bill was introduced in 1933 and was nearly identical to the prior two bills, except that it directed that the Croatan Indians ?shall hereafter be designated Cheraw Indians and shall be recognized and enrolled as such...@ H.R. 5365, 73d Cong., 1st Sess. In his statement at the hearing on the bill, the Secretary of the Interior attached an opinion of John Swanton, a well-respected specialist on southeastern Indians with the Smithsonian Institution, which concluded that the previously named Croatan Indians actually descended from Cheraw and other related tribes.[1] The Secretary recommended that the United States recognize the Tribe as the Siouan Indians of Lumber River, but also that the Congress include termination language because of the expense of providing federal Indian

[1] The Secretary adopted the view at the time that the Lumbee Tribe is descended from the Cheraw and other Siouan speaking related tribes based upon Dr. Swanton's study. In recent times, Department staff that administers the administrative acknowledgment process have expressed some concern about the absence of a genealogical connection between the modern day Lumbee Tribe and the historic Cheraw Tribe; unfortunately, births and deaths of tribal members simply were not recorded by the dominant society in the early 1700's so that a genealogical connection cannot be made. Nonetheless, the historical connection is clear -- the Cheraw Tribe was located precisely where the Lumbee Tribe is today and the Cheraw Tribe had the same surnames typical of the Lumbee Tribe today, such as Locklear, Chavis, Groom and others. Thus, there can be no doubt that the Department had it right in 1934 when it concluded that the Lumbee Tribe is descended from the historic Cheraw Tribe.

services to the Indians. Rep.No. 1752, House of Representatives, 73d Cong., 2d Sess. The committee adopted the change proposed by the Secretary and reported the bill out favorably, but the bill was not enacted. The following year, the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs took the same action on the identical bill in the Senate, S. 1632, but the Senate floor also did not act on the bill. See Rep.No. 204, Senate, 73d Cong., 2d Sess.

These numerous federal bills to recognize the Tribe under various names have a common and clear legislative history -- that is, state statutes that modified the name by which the State of North Carolina recognized the Tribe. The 1899 federal bill would have recognized the Tribe as Croatan, just as the State had done in 1885. The 1911 federal bill would have recognized the Tribe as the Indians of Robeson County, just as the State had done in a 1911 amendment to state law. See North Carolina General Assembly 1911, chap. 215. The 1913 federal bill would have recognized the Tribe as Cherokee, just as the State had done in a 1913 amendment to state law. See North Carolina General Assembly 1913, chap. 123. Indeed, a committee report on the 1913 federal bill explicitly acknowledged that the federal bill was intended to extend federal recognition on the same terms as the amended state law. Rep.No. 826, House of Representatives, 68th Cong., 1st Sess.; see also S.4595, 72d Cong., 1st Sess. [1932 bill which referred to the 1913 state statute as its antecedent.] Thus, Congress consistently followed the lead of North Carolina in its deliberations on the Tribe's status and did so in finally enacting a federal bill in 1956.[2]

[2] In between the 1933 bill and the 1956 Lumbee Act, the Tribe attempted to obtain federal recognition through an earlier administrative process. Congress enacted the Indian Reorganization Act in 1934, which authorized half-blood Indians not then recognized to organize and adopt a tribal constitution, thereby becoming federally recognized. The Lumbee leadership wrote to the

In light of the mounting historical evidence compiled in Congress' deliberations on its recognition bills, including the McPherson Report and the Swanton opinion, the Indians of Robeson County grew dissatisfied with their designation under state law as Cherokee. Under pressure from the Tribe and after a referendum among tribal members, the State of North Carolina once again modified its recognition of the Tribe in 1953, renaming it Lumbee. North Carolina General Assembly 1953, chap. 874. Two years later, a bill identical to that one enacted by the state was introduced in Congress. See H.R. 4656, 84th Cong., 2d Sess.

The federal bill passed without amendment in the House of Representatives and was sent to the Senate. The Department of the Interior objected to the bill in the Senate, just as it had done in the

---

Commissioner of Indian Affairs, inquiring whether the act applied to the Lumbees. The inquiry was referred to Associate Solicitor Felix Cohen, the famous author of the foremost treatise on Indian law, the Handbook of Federal Indian Law. Cohen concluded that the Lumbees could organize under the act, if some members certified as one-half Indian blood or more and the Department approved a tribal constitution. The Tribe immediately asked the Department to make that inquiry and the Department dispatched Dr. Carl Seltzer, a physical anthropologist, for that purpose. Approximately 200 Lumbees agreed to submit to Dr. Seltzer's examination; interviews of these individuals were conducted as well as physical examinations. Dr. Seltzer certified 22 out of the 200 tribal members as one-half or more Indian blood, eligible to organize under the act. However, the Department refused to approve a tribal constitution submitted by those individuals, once again thwarting the Tribe's effort to become federally recognized.

House, but with more success. The Secretary noted that the United States had no treaty or other obligation to provide services to these Indians and said:

> We are therefore unable to recommend that the Congress take any action which might ultimately result in the imposition of additional obligations on the Federal Government or in placing additional persons of Indian blood under the jurisdiction of this Department. The persons who constitute this group of Indians have been recognized and designated as Indians by the State legislature. If they are not completely satisfied with such recognition, they, as citizens of the State, may petition the legislature to amend or otherwise to change that
> recognition....If your committee should recommend the enactment of the bill, it should be amended to indicate clearly that is does not make these persons eligible for services provided through the Bureau of Indian Affairs to other Indians.

The Senate committee adopted the Secretary's recommendation and, when the bill was enacted into law, it contained classic termination language: **?**Nothing in this Act shall make such Indians eligible for any services performed by the United States for Indians because of their status as Indians, and none of the statutes of the United States which affect Indians because of their status as Indian shall be applicable to the Lumbee Indians." Pub.L. 570, Act of June 7, 1956, 70 Stat. 254.

Clearly, the 1956 Lumbee Act was intended to achieve federal recognition for the Tribe. The House sponsor for the bill wrote to Senator Scott, seeking his support for the bill, and noted that the bill was copied from the recent state law by which the State of North Carolina recognized the Lumbee Tribe. Senator Scott, who agreed to sponsor the bill in the Senate, issued a press release describing the bill as one to give federal recognition to the Lumbee Indians of North Carolina on the same terms that the State of North Carolina had recognized the Tribe in 1953. Of course, the termination language added before enactment precluded the extension of the federal trust responsibility and federal services to the Tribe. Thus, Congress simultaneously recognized and terminated the Tribe.

Since 1956, federal agencies and courts have reached varying conclusions regarding the effect of the 1956 Lumbee Act. In 1970, the Joint Economic Committee of Congress described the Lumbee as having been officially recognized by the act, although not granted federal services. See ?American Indians: Facts and Future,@ Toward Economic Development for Native American Communities, p. 34 (GPO 1970). Also in 1970, the Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress described the 1956 Lumbee Act as legislative recognition of an Indian people. See Memorandum, April 10, 1970, on Extending Federal Jurisdiction and Services to Hill 57 Indians, LRS, Library of Congress. And in 1979, the Comptroller General ruled that the 1956 act left the Lumbees' status unchanged, i.e., it neither recognized the Tribe nor terminated the Tribe's eligibility for services it might otherwise receive. The one court to construe the statute concluded it was intended ?to designate this group of Indians as ‹Lumbee Indians= and recognize them as a specific group..,@ but not to take away any rights conferred on individuals by previous legislation. Maynor v. Morton, 510 F.2d 1254, 1257-1258 (D.C. Cir. 1975) [holding that the so-called half-bloods certified under the Indian Reorganization act were eligible to receive Bureau of Indian Affairs' services].

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) thoroughly reviewed the history and various interpretations of the 1956 Lumbee Act in 1988. It did so in response to a request from the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs, which had under consideration at the time H.R. 1426, a bill to provide federal recognition to the Lumbee Tribe. The CRS concluded as follows:

> The 1956 Lumbee legislation clearly did not establish entitlement of the Lumbee Indians for federal services. It also clearly named the group and denominated them as Indians. Without a court decision squarely confronting the issue of whether the 1956 statute confers federal recognition on the Lumbee, there is insufficient documentation to determine if the statute effects federal recognition of the Lumbees. It is, however, a step

> toward recognition and would be a factor that either the Department of the Interior or a court would have to weigh along with others to determine whether the Lumbees are entitled to federal recognition.

Memorandum dated September 28, 1988, reprinted in S.Rep.No.100-579, 100th Cong., 2d Sess.

Whatever its ambiguity otherwise, the 1956 Lumbee Act indisputably makes the Lumbee Tribe ineligible for the administrative acknowledgment process. See 25 C.F.R. Part 83. Under the acknowledgment regulations, the Secretary of the Interior cannot acknowledge tribes that are subject to legislation terminating or forbidding the federal relationship. Id., '83.3(e). In a formal opinion issued on October 23, 1989, the Solicitor for the Department of the Interior concluded that the 1956 Lumbee Act is such federal legislation and, as a result, the Department is precluded from considering any application of the Lumbee Tribe for federal acknowledgment. A copy of the Solicitor's opinion is attached.

Thus, the Tribe continued its efforts to obtain full federal recognition from Congress. Companion bills were introduced in the 100th Congress for this purpose, H.R.5042 and S.2672. Hearings were held on the bills, once again establishing the Lumbee's tribal existence, and the Senate bill was reported favorably out of committee. Neither bill was enacted, however. Companion bills were introduced in the 101th Congress to recognize the Tribe [H.R.2335 and S.901], but neither was enacted. Once again in the 102d Congress, companion bills were introduced [H.R.1426 and S.1036]. This time, the House of Representatives passed the bill [with 240 yeas, 167 nays, and 25 not voting], but the Senate failed to invoke cloture on debate [with 58 voting for and 39 voting against] and the bill failed. In the 103d Congress, H.R. 334, a bill virtually identical to that passed in 1991, was introduced; the bill passed the House again but was never acted on in the Senate.

Legislative precedent for the bill

Only one other tribe in the history of federal Indian affairs has been placed by Congress in precisely the same position as the Lumbee Tribe, that is, half in and half out of the federal relationship, by special legislation.[3] In 1968, Congress enacted a special act regarding the Tiwas of Texas, 82 Stat. 93, one that was modeled on the 1956 Lumbee Act and left the Tiwas in the same legal limbo.

Like the Lumbee Tribe, the Tiwas of Texas had been long recognized by the state. In the 1968

---

[3] There is a third tribe that was subject to similar legislation -- the Pascua Yaquis of Arizona. In 1964, Congress passed a statute conveying federal land to the Pascua Yaqui Association, Inc., an Arizona corporation. See 78 Stat. 1195, Pub. L. 89-14. The final section of this statute, like the Lumbee and Tiwa acts, provided that the Yaqui Indians would not be eligible for federal Indian services and none of the federal Indian statutes would apply to them. Congress has since extended full federal recognition to the Pascua Yaqui. See 25 U.S.C. '1300f. The position of the Pascua Yaqui was somewhat different from that of the Lumbees and Tiwas, since the earlier federal statute involved a state corporation and arguably would not have recognized a tribe, even without the termination language. Also, the Pascua Yaqui recognition legislation was enacted in 1978, before the administrative acknowledgment process was in place. Even so, the Department of the Interior opposed the Pascua Yaqui recognition bill; the Department proposed that Congress repeal the 1964 Pascua Yaqui bill and require that the Yaquis go through the soon to be established administrative acknowledgment process. See S.Rep.No. 95-719, 95th Cong., 2d Sess. 7, reprinted in 1978 U.S. Code Cong & Admin. News 1761, 1766. Congress refused to do so and enacted the recognition legislation.

Tiwa Act, Congress designated and recognized the Indians as Tiwas, expressly terminated any federal trust relationship, and precluded the delivery of federal Indian services -- just as it had done in the 1956 Lumbee Act. In fact, the Senate committee specifically noted in its report on the 1968 Tiwa Act that the bill was ?modeled after the act of June 7, 1956 (70 Stat. 254), which relates to the Lumbee Indians of North Carolina.@ S.Rep.No 1070, 99th Cong., 2d Sess. According to the Department of the Interior, this 1968 Tiwa Act made the tribe ineligible for administrative acknowledgment, a decision that clearly presaged its construction of the 1956 Lumbee Act in 1989. Because of this unique circumstance, the Department expressed no opposition to special legislation extending full recognition to the Tiwas of Texas.

In 1987, Congress removed the Tiwas of Texas from the restrictions imposed upon them in the 1968 Tiwa Act. Congress enacted the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Restoration Act, Pub.L. 100-89, Act of August 18, 1987, 101 Stat. 667, to restore the federal trust relationship with the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo of Texas, previously known as the Texas Tiwas. Just as the 1968 Tiwa Act created a special circumstance justifying special legislation for that tribe, so does the 1956 Lumbee Act for the Lumbee Tribe.

Further, just as it did for the Tiwas of Texas, the Congress should enact comprehensive legislation as proposed by the Lumbee Tribe, legislation that resolves all related issues -- status, service delivery area, base roll, jurisdiction, etc. In its deliberations on H.R.1426 in 1991, the House Resources Committee considered a proposed substitute to a full fledged recognition bill for the Lumbee Tribe, one that would merely repeal the termination language of the 1956 Lumbee Act and require further action on the Tribe's status under the Department of the Interior's acknowledgment regulations.

The committee rightly rejected the proposed substitute, the Congress never before having repealed termination legislation and required administrative action on a tribe's status. In every such case, Congress has enacted comprehensive legislation extending the full trust relationship to the affected tribe, even for the one other tribe, the Tiwas of Texas, that like Lumbee had not previously enjoyed full federal recognition. See CRS Memorandum, ?Federal Recognition of Indian Tribes by Congress,@ R. Walke (January 29, 2001). Congress should not break with that tradition now, with the only other tribe left in legal limbo at the hands of Congress.

Major provisions of S.420

Senator Dole's bill is appropriately structured as an amendment to the 1956 Lumbee Act, thus allowing Congress to complete the task it began in 1956. Specifically, the bill provides for:

-- explicit federal acknowledgment of the Tribe, including the application to the Tribe of all laws of the United States of general applicability to Indians and Indian tribes;

-- the eligibility of the Tribe and its members for all programs, services, and benefits provided by the United States to Indian tribes and their members, such services to be provided in the Lumbees' traditional territory of Robeson, Cumberland, Hoke, and Scotland Counties, North Carolina;

-- the determination of a service population, to be done by the Secretary of the Interior's verification that all enrolled members of the Tribe meet the Tribe's membership criteria; and

-- the granting of civil and criminal jurisdiction to the State of North Carolina regarding the Lumbee Tribe, to insure consistent and continuous administration of justice, until and unless the State of North Carolina, the Tribe, and the United States, agree to transfer any or all of that authority to the

United States.

These are provisions typically found in recognition legislation and reflect the federal policy of self-determination for Indian tribes. Most importantly, it finally accomplishes the goal long sought by the Lumbee people -- treatment like every other recognized tribe in the United States.

Conclusion

Congress and the Department of the Interior have over the last century repeatedly examined the Tribe's identity and history and have consistently found the Tribe to be an Indian community dating back to the time of first white contact. There is no need for further study of the Tribe's history. There is no need for another half measure by Congress. There is need for an act of Congress that comprehensively and once and for all addresses the status of the Lumbee Tribe and all related issues. On the Tribe's behalf, I urge the committee's favorable action on S.420.