

**The INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL
of the FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES**
organized February 3, 1950

January 9, 2024



Chuck Hoskin Jr.
Principal Chief



Bill Anoatubby
Governor



Gary Batton
Chief



David W. Hill
Principal Chief



Lewis J. Johnson
Chief

Dear Governor Stitt,

As the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes (ITC), an organization that unites the tribal governments of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole Nations, we are dedicated to advancing public safety for our citizens and all of our neighbors in Oklahoma. We welcome opportunities to collaborate with state, federal, local, and tribal governments towards this goal. We have a long track record of this collaboration, both before and after the *McGirt v Oklahoma* decision.

While we hope the State of Oklahoma will join our collaborative approach, we must stand in opposition to Governor Kevin Stitt's task force on McGirt as presented in Executive Order 2023-32. After reviewing the language of the Executive Order and structure of the proposed task force, we conclude that it is designed to divide rather than unify and to make political points rather than seek genuine solutions. This task force cannot adequately serve the public good unless these flaws are corrected.

At its core, the *McGirt v Oklahoma* decision is a pro-public safety ruling. By restoring tribal jurisdiction that the State had illegally usurped for well over a century, the decision has increased police and prosecutors and empowered tribal courts to enforce the law and deliver justice for victims. Rather than cause uncertainty and wreak havoc, as the Executive Order claims, the McGirt decision has finally restored legitimate legal jurisdiction under clear federal laws and the U.S. Constitution.

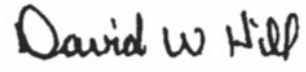
Unfortunately, rather than focusing on how to incorporate tribal authority to benefit the public, the State has wasted time and energy trying to evade, reject, or delay compliance with the law.

We call on you and the State of Oklahoma to make a good faith effort at practical solutions for working with tribes to improve public safety. That means setting aside politicized rhetoric and denials of tribal sovereignty. The structure of any task force must also reflect respectful government-to-government dialogue with each of the 38 unique tribes in Oklahoma. The State has no authority to mandate any Tribe to defer to another Tribe to speak on its behalf.

When we have a willing partner at the State of Oklahoma, we are fully prepared to move forward. We are eager to work with our friends and neighbors to improve coordination in public safety efforts. What we cannot do is participate in an effort that spreads falsehoods about the law, attempts to minimize tribal voices, and engages in political attacks instead of constructive government-to-government dialogue.



Bill Anoatubby, Governor
The Chickasaw Nation



David W. Hill, Principal Chief
Muscogee (Creek) Nation



Gary Batton, Chief
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Chuck Hoskin Jr., Principal Chief
Cherokee Nation



Lewis J. Johnson, Chief
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma