



KIOWA TRIBE

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OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATURE

KIOWA TRIBE LEGISLATURE

Session of the Kiowa Tribe Legislature

BILL NUMBER KL-CY-2026-0XX

AS INTRODUCED

SPONSOR: Warren Queton

CO-SPONSOR(S): _____

An Act

To establish a free and independent press for the Kiowa Tribe.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Kiowa Tribe:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE

This act shall be known as the "Kiowa Tribe Free and Independent Press Act."

SECTION 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Act is to establish and protect an independent Kiowa press capable of gathering and reporting news concerning the Kiowa Tribe and its citizens without political interference or undue influence from any branch, officer, employee, or agent of the Kiowa Tribe. The Legislature recognizes that a free and independent press serves an essential role in informing Kiowa citizens, promoting governmental transparency and accountability, and protecting the right of citizens to receive information concerning their government and community. This act affirms the policy regarding the Kiowa Tribe's press. It is imperative to have measures in place to ensure the freedom of the press and the independence of tribal publications to report objectively.

SECTION 3. CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

It is the policy of the Kiowa Tribe to respect the civil rights of Kiowa people set forth in the Kiowa Tribe Constitution. The Kiowa Tribe Constitution incorporates and adopts the protections of the Federal Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968, 25 USC 1302, to apply to all Kiowas. Therefore, the Legislature recognizes that Article I, Section 1(b) of the Constitution of the Kiowa Tribe protects freedom of speech and freedom of the press. This Act establishes statutory protections and an institutional structure intended to safeguard those rights within the Kiowa Tribe's publicly funded media operations. The Constitution of the Kiowa Tribe

~~provides that the principles of free speech and free press, the rights of the people to assemble and petition for redress of grievances, shall not be abridged.~~

SECTION 4. AN INDEPENDENT KIOWA PRESS

~~The Kiowa Tribe shall maintain an independent press (the "Kiowa Press") that is free from political interest, censorship, retaliation, control, or undue influence by any branch, officer, employee, or agent of the Kiowa Tribe. No person acting on behalf of the Kiowa Tribe shall direct, control, or attempt to influence the selection, investigation, preparation, editing, publication, or suppression of news or editorial content. The Kiowa Tribe's Press shall be independent from any undue influence and free of any political interest. It is the duty of the press to report, without bias, the activities of the government and news of interest to informed citizens.~~

SECTION 5. PROVIDING FOR INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

~~The Kiowa Tribe shall maintain the Kiowa Press as an independent media organization which shall publish a newspaper known as the "Kiowa Tribe News" and such electronic, digital, audio, video, social media, or other media platforms as the Editorial Board determines appropriate. The Kiowa Tribe News shall be published at least monthly. The independent media organization shall publish or distribute news and information concerning the Kiowa Tribe, its government, its citizens, and matters of interest to the Kiowa community. The newspaper published by the Kiowa Tribe, known as the "Kiowa Tribe News," shall become an independent newspaper and shall be published at least monthly to report news and provide a forum for all views of the Kiowas.~~

SECTION 6. EDITORIAL BOARD ~~AND EDITOR~~

A. ____ An Editorial Board is hereby created and shall consist of three members. To be eligible to serve as a Board member, a person must:

- (i) ____ be at least 25 years of age;
- (ii) ____ have quality experience in the management and operations of publications;
- (iii) ____ be of good character and have a reputation of integrity;
- (iv) ____ be physically able to carry out the duties of office;
- (v) ____ have at least 5 years of professional journalism experience and/or an advanced degree in journalism;
- (vi) ____ certify he or she will adhere to the standards of accepted ethics of journalism as defined by the Society of Professional Journalists and endorsed by the Native American Journalists Association.

B. ____ ~~The members of the Editorial Board shall be appointed as follows: (i) The Chairman shall appoint one (1) member of the Board; (ii) the Legislature shall appoint one (1) member of the Board; and (iii) the third member shall be appointed by the initial two (2) members., subject to confirmation by the Legislature. The members appointed by the Chairman and the two other board members shall be subject to confirmation by the Legislature. The member appointed by the Legislature may be subject to veto by the Chairman, which may be overridden by a vote of the Legislature pursuant to the procedures found in the Kiowa Constitution.~~

C. ~~The Editorial Board shall elect from among its members a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary at its first meeting each calendar year. One member shall serve as Chairperson, one member to serve as Vice-Chairperson, and one member to serve as Secretary. Said officers shall be designated by the Legislature at the time of confirmation by the Legislature.~~

D. ____ The terms of office of the Board members shall be two years with terms ending on ____.

E. ____ The Board shall meet at least quarterly, and meetings by conference call shall be valid except that the Board shall meet at least twice annually in person.

F. ____ Editorial Board members shall not concurrently be ~~be current~~ Kiowa Tribe employees.

G. ____ Board Members shall serve their terms of office free from political influence from any Executive, Judicial, or Legislative Officials of any Branch, Division, or Department of the government of the Kiowa Tribe.

H. ____ A Board member may be removed only for cause, following notice and an opportunity to be heard, upon a final order of the Kiowa Tribe Trial Court. A removal proceeding may be initiated by a petition signed by at least seven (7) Legislators or by the Chairman.

~~and may be removed only for cause subject to a hearing by the Kiowa Tribe district court. A petition for removal for cause may be brought by a vote of seven Legislature members, or the Chairman.~~

I. ____ Except as authorized under the Constitution of the Kiowa Tribe, no member of the Board shall, directly or indirectly, solicit, receive, or in any manner be concerned in soliciting or receiving any assessment, subscription, or contribution for any political organization, candidacy, or other political purpose. The Board Members shall not participate in any political campaign or be involved in any tribal political activity, except to exercise his or her right as a citizen to express his or her individual opinion by casting his or her vote.

IH. ____ The Editorial Board members shall be compensated for their time in the same manner as other board members or commissioners of the Kiowa Tribe, including reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred in the pursuit of their duties in accordance with the policies of the Kiowa Tribe.

K. ____ The Editorial Board shall be subject to the terms and conditions of the Kiowa Tribe's Minimum Commissions Standards Act, provided they are not contrary to the terms of this Act.

SECTION 7. POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD

The Board shall have the following powers and duties:

A. ____ To establish and enforce an editorial policy that will be fair and responsible in the reporting of general news, current events, and issues of Kiowa concern including activities of the community, language, culture, history, and other subjects which will inform the Kiowa citizenry about their government, tribe, and culture.

B. ____ To ensure the operational structure is sound and that the duties and obligations required of the Board are fulfilled.

C. ____ To review advertising rates and policies.

D. The independent media organization may accept paid political advertising on terms established by the Editorial Board. Any policy governing political advertising shall be applied uniformly to all candidates and political committees and shall not favor or disfavor a candidate based on political affiliation, position, or viewpoint. To develop consistent, fair, and reasonable policies on campaign advertising to be published sixty days prior to the beginning of the filing period.

E. To ensure the Kiowa Press maintains a publicly available policy governing corrections, clarifications, conflicts of interest, anonymous sources, and other matters of journalistic ethics.

SECTION 8. EDITOR

A. An Editor shall be appointed by the Editorial Board to oversee the operations of the newspaper.

B. The Editor must:

- (i) be at least 25 years of age;
- (ii) have quality experience in the management and operations of publications;
- (iii) be of good character and have a reputation of integrity;
- (iv) be physically able to carry out the duties of office;
- (v) certify he or she will adhere to the standards of accepted ethics of journalism as defined by the Society of Professional Journalists and endorsed by the Native American Journalists Association;
- (vi) have at least three (3) years of professional journalism experience in the fields of reporting, copy editing, multimedia, photography, or editing at a non-tribal or tribal newspaper.

C. Whenever a vacancy occurs, the Editorial Board shall appoint a new Editor.

D. The Editor shall serve until removed **for cause** by the Editorial Board, **until the term of his appointment (if any) expires**, or until the Editor resigns the position in writing to the Editorial Board. **"Cause" includes substantial violation of applicable law or editorial ethics, gross misconduct, material failure to perform the duties of the position, or other substantial conduct that materially impairs the Editor's ability to perform the duties of office.**

E. The Editor shall serve his or her term of office free from political influence from any department of the government of the Kiowa Tribe and may be removed only for cause. The Editor shall not, directly or indirectly, solicit, receive, or in any manner be concerned in soliciting or receiving any assessment, subscription, or contribution for any political organization, candidacy, or other political purpose. The Editor shall not participate in any political campaign or be involved in any tribal political activity, except to exercise his or her right as a citizen to express his or her individual opinion and cast his or her vote.

F. The Editorial Board shall establish the Editor's compensation, subject to the budget appropriated for the Kiowa Press.

G. The Editor shall have final authority over day-to-day editorial decisions, including the selection, investigation, preparation, editing, and publication of news and editorial content.

SECTION 9. POLITICAL INTERFERENCE PROHIBITED

A. No officer, employee, Legislator, or other representative of the Kiowa Tribe shall, directly or indirectly, direct, require, prohibit, condition, or attempt to influence the publication or nonpublication of any news report, editorial, photograph, investigation, opinion, or other editorial content.

B. No employee or agent of the Kiowa Press shall be disciplined, terminated, demoted, denied access, denied funding, or otherwise retaliated against because of the lawful exercise of editorial judgment or the publication of lawful news or commentary.

C. The Kiowa Press shall have the same right of access to public records and public meetings as any other member of the public and, to the extent permitted by law, shall have reasonable access to government officials and facilities for purposes of newsgathering.

D. The Kiowa Tribe shall not deny an employee of the Kiowa Press access to a public meeting, hearing, legislative session, or other proceeding that is open to the public, except as authorized by law and applicable rules governing the proceeding.

E. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to exempt the Kiowa Press or its employees from generally applicable tribal laws, including laws concerning defamation, threats, unlawful disclosure of protected information, copyright, or other unlawful conduct.

SECTION 10. KIOWA PRESS TO RECEIVE INDEPENDENT BUDGET ALLOCATION

A. The Legislature shall provide an annual appropriation sufficient to support the ordinary operations of the Kiowa Press, including personnel, publication, digital operations, equipment, distribution, and other necessary expenses. The reduction, withholding, conditioning, or denial of appropriated funds shall not be used to control, punish, or influence editorial decisions or content.

B. Immediately following the adoption of this Act, and until a new Budget or Budget Modification is approved pursuant to the process found in the Kiowa Constitution, ~~T~~the Kiowa Press shall share in the budget and appropriations currently ~~under~~made to the ~~C~~ommunications ~~D~~epartment of the Executive Branch ~~for~~will now and from this point forward be allocated to the purposes of this ~~fulfilling the responsibilities of this Act, whether~~ under the title Communications or any other title designated by the Executive Branch for the department charged with the written press, the newspaper, and communication.

SECTION 10. COMMUNICATIONS BUDGET TO BECOME BUDGET OF INDEPENDENT PRESS JOURNALIST PRIVILEGE

A. For the purposes of this Section, "Journalist" means a person who, for the purpose of obtaining, preparing, editing, photographing, recording, or communicating information to the public, regularly gathers, investigates, prepares, edits, photographs, records, or publishes news or other information for an independent media organization, whether compensated or uncompensated.

B. No journalist shall be required to disclose in a Court proceeding either:

- (i) The source of any published or unpublished information obtained in the gathering, receiving or processing of information for any medium of communication to the public; or
- (ii) Any unpublished information obtained or prepared in gathering, receiving or processing of information for any medium of communication to the public;
- (iii) Unless the Court finds that the party seeking the information or identity has established by clear and convincing evidence that such information or identity is relevant to a significant issue in the action and could not with due diligence be obtained by alternate means.

C. The journalist privilege stated in this section does not apply with respect to the content or source of allegedly defamatory information, in a civil action for defamation wherein the defendant asserts a defense based on the content or source of such information.

D. The privilege established by this section shall not apply if the Court finds, by clear and convincing evidence, that disclosure is essential to the resolution of a significant issue in the proceeding and that the information cannot, with due diligence, be obtained from an alternative source.

SECTION 11. SEVERABILITY

The provisions of this act are severable, and if any part or provision hereof shall be held void, the decision of any court so holding shall not affect or impair any of the remaining parts or provisions of this act.

SECTION 10. COMMUNICATIONS BUDGET TO BECOME BUDGET OF INDEPENDENT PRESS

The budget and appropriations currently under the communications department of the Executive Branch will now and from this point forward be allocated to the purposes of this Act, whether under the title Communications or any other title designated by the Executive Branch for the department charged with the written press, the newspaper, and communication. [DS1]

~~SECTION 11. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATION~~

~~To carry out the purposes of this Act, there is authorized to be appropriated to the Communications Department in the Executive Branch out of the General Fund in the Treasury the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for the current fiscal year.~~

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

The foregoing Amended Resolution KL-CY-2026-00X was duly voted upon by the Legislature on _____, 2026, at Legislative Special Session I-(1), with a vote of (4) in favor and (0) opposed, (0) abstaining, and (3) absent, according to the authority vested in the Legislature by the Constitution of the Kiowa Tribe.

Michael Q. Primus II
Speaker of the Legislature

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION KL-CY-2026-00X

Sponsors: Warren Queton, District 7.

Co-Sponsors:

LEGISLATORS	YES Hàu	NO Hàu:né	ABSTAIN Háun á	ABSENT Héñgyádàu
Ronnie Satepauhoodle District 1				
Michael Q. Primus II District 2				
Jolene Beartrack District 3				
Cole DeLaune District 4				
Tiya Rosario District 5				
Ben Wolf District 6				
Warren Queton District 7				

DELIVERY OF THE RESOLUTION AND LAW TO THE CHAIRMAN

Amended Resolution No. KL-CY-2026-00X was presented to the Chairman of the Kiowa Tribe on _____, 2026, pursuant to the Article VI, Section 8(a)(iv) of the Constitution of the Kiowa Tribe, and will become effective after signature by the Chairman or veto override by the Legislature, and as otherwise required by the Constitution.

Michael Q. Primus II
Speaker of the Legislature

CHAIRMAN’S ACTION:

☐ APPROVED

☐ VETO - RETURNED TO LEGISLATURE WITH EXPLANATION:

On this ____ day of _____, 2026.

David B. Sullivan
Chairman of the Kiowa Tribe

Presented by the Chairman to the Legislature on the ____ day of _____, 2026.

LEGISLATURE’S ACTION:

Override of Chairman’s veto:

☐ YES

☐ NO

LEGISLATIVE OVERRIDE ORDER: KLO-CY-2026-0XX

LEGISLATORS	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Ronnie Satepauhoodle District 1				
Michael Q. Primus II District 2				
Jolene Beartrack District 3				
Cole DeLaune District 4				
Tiya Rosario District 5				
Ben Wolf District 6				
Warren Queton District 7				

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

The foregoing Legislative Order, KLO-CY-2026-00X was duly voted upon by the Legislature on _____, 2026, at a Legislative Override Order Session with a vote of _____ in favor and _____ opposed, and _____ abstaining, _____ Absent. Pursuant to the authority vested in the Legislature by the Constitution of the Kiowa Tribe.

Michael Q. Primus II
Speaker of the Legislature