



Native American Inter-Tribal Caucus of the United Methodist Church

September 6, 2026

NAIC Chairperson:

Ragghi Rain

33164 LightHouse Road
Selbyville, Delaware 19975

NAIC Vice-Chair:

Rev. Charles Bower

1316 Gilmore Trail
Fairbanks, Alaska 99712

NAIC Secretary:

Helen Cheromiah

P.O. Box 1616
Shiprock, New Mexico 87420

NAIC Treasurer:

Luke Lakota Eastin

1121 Oakland Ave.
Mt. Vernon, Illinois 62864

NAIC Members at Large:

Antoinette Alfaro

Rev. B. J. Ash

Leslie Bivens

Rev. Neal Christie

Shandiin Church

Rev. Alvin Deer

Rev. Judy Deere

Rev. Renee Ford

Rev. Carol Lakota Eastin

Wava Hoffman

Bishop Peggy Johnson

Rev. Jennifer Kerby

Janet Cummings Locklear

Lopaka Mansfield

Heather Mistretta

Rev. Thomas Rawlinson

Bryan Tener

Rev. Nathan Sam-Whistler

Kayleigh Vickers

Cynthia Wilks Mosley

Suanne Ware-Diaz

HUMAN SUFFERING IS NOT A GAME

A Statement of the Native American Inter-Tribal Caucus of The United Methodist Church

In September 2026, the White House placed arcade-style games on its official government website that turn parts of immigration enforcement into play. *Rio Run* has players patrol the Rio Grande and block and deport figures depicting immigrants. *Build the Wall* tells players to “protect the border from the coming horde” while presenting the game as a “Zombie Border Siege.”

These are not harmless words placed inside harmless games. They reduce human beings living through the consequences of government policy to figures to be captured, blocked, deported or defeated.

Immigration laws and policies can be debated, challenged, defended and changed. Human dignity cannot. There is a profound difference between governing a nation and turning the fear, detention and removal of human beings into amusement. The government of the United States has crossed that line.

Behind every figure moving across a screen is a human story the game makes easy to forget. There are mothers and fathers, children and grandparents, workers and neighbors. There are families wondering whether someone they love will come home. Whatever someone's immigration status may be, their humanity does not disappear.

THERE IS NO HOLIDAY FROM FEAR

As families across this country gather for holidays, travel, share meals, laugh and enjoy the safety of being together, other families live with fear that does not take a holiday.

That fear travels into homes, workplaces, schools and communities. When someone is detained or removed, the consequences do not stop with that individual. Babies and children, parents, grandparents and Elders can all live with what happens when someone they love or depend upon is suddenly gone.

And now the government has turned immigration enforcement and deportation into arcade-style gameplay.

This is larger than a disagreement over immigration policy. Government should be protecting human dignity and resisting hatred, not creating entertainment that encourages people to see vulnerable human beings as characters to capture, remove or defeat.

There is nothing courageous about making vulnerable people afraid, nothing patriotic about celebrating another family's suffering, and nothing harmless about teaching children that another human being's capture or removal can be fun.

Dehumanization begins when we stop seeing a mother and see only a label. It grows when we stop seeing a frightened child and see only an immigration problem, or when an Elder becomes merely someone we have decided does not belong. Words change how people are seen. Repetition changes what people are willing to laugh about. Eventually suffering becomes easier to watch and another family's fear begins to feel ordinary.

We refuse to accept that as normal.

WHY NAIC SPEAKS

The Native American Inter-Tribal Caucus is not speaking because this story is about Indigenous peoples. **It is not about us.**

We speak because recognizing dehumanization carries a responsibility not to remain silent when it is directed at someone else.

We will not take another people's suffering and make it our own. We will not compare histories or measure wounds. We need only recognize another human being.

These are our Relatives—not because they necessarily share our ancestry, citizenship, language or history, but because they share our humanity.

And when the enormous power and voice of government are used in ways that make another people's suffering easier to laugh at, we have a responsibility to say clearly: **Stop.**

THE SCREEN GOES DARK. THE LESSON CAN REMAIN.

We have seen how something dismissed as entertainment can survive long after the laughter ends.

In 1960, children could sit before a television and watch the Bugs Bunny cartoon *Horse Hare*. Bugs, portrayed as a United States cavalry soldier, fired upon stereotyped Native people while keeping tally marks of those he shot. When one person was described with the degrading term “half-breed,” part of a tally mark was erased.

It was presented as comedy. Children were expected to laugh at the suggestion that one human being counted as only part of another.

Sixty-six years later, some of us still remember.

The cartoon ended, but its language and its lesson did not simply disappear. Native people can still be called “half-breed” today. We are human beings, not animals divided into breeds.

That is why we will not accept the argument that today's government games are merely jokes, political messaging or harmless amusement.

A game can be removed tomorrow while its lesson remains for years. Children remember what adults teach them to laugh at. Families remember humiliation. Communities remember being reduced to stereotypes. Words and attitudes can travel from one generation into another.

We should not have to wait another sixty-six years for today's children to become Elders and grandparents before this country admits that making entertainment from another human being's fear and removal was wrong.

WHAT WE ARE ASKING THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO DO

The Native American Inter-Tribal Caucus calls upon the White House to **immediately remove *Rio Run* and *Build the Wall* from its official government platforms.**

We call upon the White House to **publicly acknowledge why turning immigration enforcement and deportation into entertainment is dehumanizing and harmful.**

We call upon the Administration to **stop using language, games, images and government communications that portray immigrants and migrants as a “horde,” an enemy force, targets or objects of amusement.**

We call upon those responsible for federal communications to **establish safeguards so that government platforms are not again used to turn the fear, detention, deportation or suffering of human beings into entertainment.**

And we ask parents, educators, faith communities and all people of conscience not simply to look away. Talk with children about what these games portray. Teach them that the person represented on the other side of a screen has a family, a story and a human life every bit as real as their own.

Removing a game will not repair every wound already created. But refusing to remove it after understanding the harm would send another message entirely.

Take the games down. Acknowledge the harm. Stop the dehumanizing language. Do not repeat it.

We are not asking anyone to surrender their position on immigration policy. We are demanding something more fundamental: **See the human being.**

No administration owns human dignity. No political party determines who deserves it. No immigration status erases it, and no government should make a game of it.

The people represented on those screens are not targets, points, political props or objects.

**They are human beings. They are our Relatives.
Human suffering is not a game.**

Native American Inter-Tribal Caucus (NAIC) of The United Methodist Church