September 20, 2013

Ms Elizabeth K. Appel, Acting Director,
Office of Regulatory Affairs and
Collabratire Action - Indian Affairs
1849 C. Street, NW, MS 4141 - MIB
Washington DC 20240

RE: Indian Discrimination and Revision
to Criteria for federal Recognition

Dear Acting Director Appel:

Hello my name is Rebecca BlueBird Clark from Ohatchee Al, where I have lived most of my entire life. I have graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Education in 2001 with a K-6 teaching certificate. I am presently working at a Day Care.

My family has fought to defend this great nation of ours in all of the branches of military. My presently ailing father is in Bill Nicolas Vetrans Home in Alexander City, Alabama. He served in the United States Air Force in the Vietnum Era and I presently have a son deployed to Afghanistan, serving the United States Army.

I have never hidden my Native Heritage. My parents taught me at an early age that we are "Indians" and no one or anything could take that from me.

So, you can imagine my confusion as a child, when my elementary teacher told me that all of the Indians were dead. I thought, "How can that be? I am not dead!"

In my senior year in high school, I refused a History scholarship when in class, my history teacher told a sick joke. "Do you know where baked sweet potatoes came from?" he asked. "No," replied the class. His answer was, "Indian women and children were in a fire and the grease from thier bodies baked the sweet potatoes in the cellar."

Because my father did not have facial hair when he joined the Air Force, the drill sergant hacked a razor with a stone and commanded my father to shave with it. My father marched the entire day with dried blood down his face.

The United States of America is the land of the free and home of the brave for everyone except Native Americans. We are subject to Reservations and Boundaries. We must prove who we are or who we are not.

My Dad's Grandmother, Louise Debtor, would only refer to her race as Black Dutch. Her mother had instilled it in her that if she called herself anything else, she would be forced to live in Oklahoma.

She and her husband, Calvin Evans were full blood Cherokee and they hid in the wilderness of DeKalb Co and Pikeville Tn with thier four small children.

Sam, my grandfather was one of them. He was a full blood, blue eyed Cherokee. He had a family Heritage record book of this documentation. He told me before his death, that we are Cherokee. After his death, in hate, our documentation was burned.

My Dad's maternal Grandmother was a full blood Cherokee. However, She is buried in an unmarked grave because Pa Keener was afraid that she would be

"dug up."

I have worn my braids in my youth and I wear them now that I am a Grandmother of four living children and one that has made his journey to the Spirit World.

Because I have never been ashamed of my heritage and I wear my braids, I have had several discriminating incidents. One of which when I was filling air in my tire at a local gas station, a man snatched the airhose from me. He drew back to spit in my face when the store owner came out and stopped him.

Another incident occuried recently in Aug of 2013 at my place of employment. A photography Co. photographer came to photograph the children. When he saw my braids and moccasins he patted his lips and sang, "Uh, uh, 'uh'," laughing and dancing around me. How would you like to be the butt of the joke?

Quiet recently as referring to my race, I have been call Pocahontas. Would you call an African American Martin Luther King Jr.? No. You would call him by his name.

Prejudice still reigns today. Save the Person, Kill the Indian. I have been accused of worshiping our Native American Drum because we sing around it and show honor and respect. Do you worship the piano or pipe organ?

I have been accused of being a heathen because I worship my Creator in Spirit and I believe that all things that are created by Him have a spirit. My response was that, "Europeans will never understand the relationship between Native Americans and our Creator."

Because of John Wayne T.V. Sterotyping, my own daughter at the age of 7 has been accused of NOT being Cherokee because her eyes are blue like her great Grandfather.

Recently I was appauld that pre-school literature still refers to (Ii) is for Indian. When I insisted that it was racist, my coworker debated the issue. When I stated, "Would you call Bb for Black referring to African Americans?" She replied that, "Pp is for Piligrams." I reminded her that piligrams were a sect

not a race." But then Indians dont count as a race, now do we?"

In my Dad's V.A. Hospital Room is a picture of Red Cloud and his words of wisdom, "The white man has promised us many things. He has not kept any of them except one, to take our land."

Save the person and kill the Indian, Well, I am one and the same. My Dad's gift of a car tag that he wrote himself sums it up. "Cherokee by birth, Proud by choice."

Sincerely,
Rebecca Blue Bird Clark

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Onatchee Al 36271

cc President Obama
Senator Richard Shelby
Senator Jeff Sessions
Committee on Natural Resources
Committee on Indian Affairs
Kevin Washburn, Ass. Sec. Indian Affairs

cc continued
Lee Fleming, Director of Office
of Federa Acknowledgement
Representive Mike Rogers