

# An Act

## Legislative Act 15-25

### AN ACT AMENDING TITLE 44 CHAPTER 1 SECTION 6(F) OF THE CHEROKEE NATION CODE ANNOTATED RELATING TO FREE AND INDEPENDENT PRESS FOR THE CHEROKEE NATION - 2025 AMENDMENTS

#### BE IT ENACTED BY THE CHEROKEE NATION:

#### Legislative History

LA-22-19 November 19, 2019

LA-16-09 June 22, 2009

LA-05-05 January 17, 2005

LA-08-01 March 16, 2001

LA-19-00 July 18, 2000

#### Section 1. Title and Codification

This act ~~is shall be~~ known as the Free and Independent Press Act 2025 Amendments, or alternatively "Free and Independent Press Act." and ~~is shall be~~ codified as Title 44, Chapter 1 Section 6(F) of the Cherokee Nation Code Annotated.

#### Section 2. Purpose

This act affirms the policy regarding the Cherokee Nation's press. It is imperative to have measures in place to ensure the freedom of the press and to ensure the tribal publications have the independence to report objectively.

#### Section 3. Constitutional Rights

The Constitution of the Cherokee Nation 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. Policy, An Independent Cherokee Media

The Cherokee Nation's Publications Department shall be independent from any undue influence and free of any particular political interest. It is the duty of the Publications Department to use any necessary forms of electronic and print media to report without bias, the activities of the government and the news of interest to have informed citizens.

#### Section 5. Providing for Independent Print and Electronic Publications

A newspaper and other forms of electronic media shall be published periodically to report news and provide a forum for all views of the Cherokees.

## Section 6. Editorial Board

A. An Editorial Board is hereby created and shall consist of five members. At least three Board members must (i) be at least 25 years of age, (ii) have quality experience in 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; and (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. The other Board members must (i) be at least 25 years of age; (ii) have quality experience in business management; (iii) be of good character and have a reputation of integrity; and (iv) be physically able to carry out the duties of office.

B. The Principal Chief shall appoint two members of the Board who must be citizens of the Cherokee Nation; the Council shall appoint two members of the Board who must be citizens of the Cherokee Nation; and the fifth member shall be appointed by the initial four members and must be a member of a Federally-Recognized Tribe. All members shall be subject to confirmation by the Council and the Principal Chief.

C. One member shall serve as Chairperson, one member shall serve as Vice Chairperson, and one member shall serve as Secretary. Officers shall be designated by the Editorial Board at the first meeting of each fiscal year.

D. The terms of the office of the Board Members shall be six years. ~~The term for the Seat 4 Board Member shall commence October 1, 2019, and expire on October 1, 2024; the term for the Seat 5 Board Member shall commence January 1, 2020, and expire on January 1, 2025.~~

E. Board Members shall serve their terms of office free from political influence from any Executive or Legislative Officials of any Branch, Division, or Department of the government of the Nation and may be removed only for cause subject to a hearing by the Judicial Appeals Tribunal Cherokee Nation Supreme Court. A petition for removal for cause may be brought by a vote of the majority of Council members, or the Principal Chief. Except as authorized under the Constitution of the Cherokee Nation, 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 and cast his or her right to vote.

F. The Board Members shall be provided a monthly stipend to be paid after the first meeting of each month. The stipend for Board ~~officers chair~~ will be ~~\$700 \$1,250~~ monthly and the stipend for other Board Members will be ~~\$700 \$1,000~~ monthly, said increased rates effective no later than October 1, 2025. The Board Members ~~shall may~~ be provided for reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred in pursuit of their duties ~~in accordance consistent~~ with the policies of the Cherokee Nation as recommended by the Executive Editor and upon appropriate resolution of the Board.

## Section 7. Powers and Duties

The Editorial 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 Cherokee concern including activities of the community, language, culture, history, and other subjects which will inform the Cherokee 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 departmental policies to ensure fairness and professionalism in all department practices.

D. To hold periodic public meetings in order to conduct official department business and policy review.

E. To publish electronically, at least on a quarterly basis, copies of council meeting minutes and travel expenses of elected officials on the Cherokee Phoenix website to fulfill the intent of previous legislative acts requiring such publications.

### **Section 8. Executive Editor**

A. The Executive Editor must (i) be at least 25 years of age, (ii) have a bachelor's degree in journalism or a related field from a college or university, or an appropriate combination of education and experience; (iii) be of good character and have a reputation of integrity; (iv) be physically able to carry out the duties of the office; (v) certify that 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 the experience necessary for the successful operation of the publication; and (vii) be a citizen of the Cherokee Nation.

B. Whenever a vacancy occurs the Editorial Board shall recommend to the Principal Chief an Executive Editor for appointment.

C. The Executive Editor shall serve his or her term of office free from political influence from any department of the government of the Nation and may be removed only for cause. The Executive 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 Executive 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 right to vote.

### **Section 9. Severability**

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

### **Section 10. Emergency Declared**

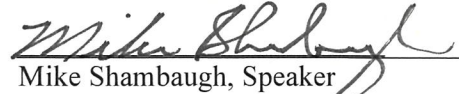
It being immediately necessary for the welfare of the Cherokee Nation, Cherokee citizens hereby declare that an emergency exists, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force after its passage and approval.

### **Section 11. Self-Help Contributions**


To the extent that this act involves programs or services to citizens of the Nation or others, self- help contributions shall be required, unless specifically prohibited by the funding agency, or a waiver is granted due to physical or mental incapacity of the participant to contribute.

## CERTIFICATION


Enacted by the Council of the Cherokee Nation on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2025

  
Mike Shambaugh, Speaker  
Council of the Cherokee Nation


ATTEST:

  
Johnny Jack Kidwell, Secretary  
Council of the Cherokee Nation

Approved and signed by the Principal Chief this 20<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2025.

  
Chuck Hoskin, Jr., Principal Chief  
Cherokee Nation

ATTEST:

  
Shella Bowlin, Secretary of State  
Cherokee Nation

YEAS AND NAYS AS RECORDED:

Sasha Blackfox-Qualls	<u>Yea</u>	Melvina Shotpouch	<u>Yea</u>
Candessa Tehee	<u>Yea</u>	Kendra McGeady	<u>Yea</u>
Lisa Hall	<u>Yea</u>	Dora Patzkowski	<u>Yea</u>
Dr. Mike Dobbins	<u>Absent</u>	Joe Deere	<u>Yea</u>
E.O. "Jr." Smith	<u>Yea</u>	Kevin Easley, Jr.	<u>Yea</u>
Daryl Legg	<u>Yea</u>	Danny Callison	<u>Yea</u>
Josh Sam	<u>Yea</u>	Johnny Jack Kidwell	<u>Yea</u>
Codey Poindexter	<u>Yea</u>	Julia Coates	<u>Yea</u>
Mike Shambaugh	<u>Yea</u>		

**ADMINISTRATIVE  
CLEARANCE**

Dept/Program:

Signature/Initial Date

**Executive Director:**

Signature/Initial Date

**Treasurer (Required:  
Grants/Contracts/Budgets):**

Signature/Initial Date

**Government Relations:**

Signature/Initial Date

**Administration Approval:**

Signature/Initial Date

**LEGISLATIVE CLEARANCE:**

**Legal & Legislative Coordinator:**

Signature/Initial Date

**Standing Committee & Date:**

**Chairperson:**

Signature/Initial Date

**Cherokee Nation  
Act/Resolution Proposal Form**

☐ Act

☒ Resolution

**TITLE:**

**AN ACT AMENDING TITLE 44  
CHAPTER 1 SECTION 6(F) OF  
THE CHEROKEE NATION CODE  
ANNOTATED RELATING TO  
FREE AND INDEPENDENT PRESS  
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2025 AMENDMENTS**

**DEPARTMENT CONTACT:** Chuck Hoskin Jr.

**RESOLUTION PRESENTER:** Canaan Duncan

**COUNCIL SPONSOR:** Mike Shambaugh,

**NARRATIVE:**

Kevin Easley, Candessa  
Tehee, Cody Rindexter,  
Kendra McGeady, Joe Deere

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