

Oct. 30, 2000
1470 Reservation Rd.
Rock Hill, S.C.

Gilbert Blue
Catawba Indian Nation
Tribal Office

Dear Chief,

I am writing you this letter to inform you of my disappointment in the draft constitution that has been distributed to the tribal membership. You and the others dissolved the original draft constitution committee in March, 1994 under the pretense that the settlement act ordered you to draft a new constitution, when in fact it only made you responsible to see that a draft constitution was adopted in a timely manner according to the language in the act. This could have been accomplished through the work of the draft committee with your guidance.

You and the others that wrote the draft have spent over six years working on a draft constitution that you yourself probably would not want in the event new officers were voted in. In other words, in my opinion this draft is not the work of professionals looking to protect the rights of the tribal membership, but in fact guarantees a less than democratic form of government. All the rights that were guaranteed to the General Council under the existing constitution that was adopted by the tribe in August, 1975 will be taken away under the proposed draft constitution and given to the elected Executive Committee.

Plus the draft constitution has no provisions that call for accountability of tribal funds to the General Council. It is absolutely necessary that the tribal membership have at least annual financial reports of all tribal funds made available to them. This important item cannot be an oversight, since you have had over six years to write the draft language.

You have added language that would give the Executive Committee full judicial powers. We have seen how this power can be abused, based on experiences from the past seven years where the present Executive committee has assumed all judicial powers and made rulings that have been unauthorized and grossly out of order. Our next constitution certainly cannot give this power to their next leaders.

I have talked to many of tribal members and I have had numerous telephone calls concerning the draft constitution and I have not heard one person say that they think this document is sound and protects their rights. All have stated that they could not vote for this draft as written. I don't know what kind of feedback that you are getting from our fellow tribal members, but I don't believe it is favored by the majority.

This letter is a plea from me as one tribal member that you will do what is necessary to either re-write this draft before a vote is taken, so that is more protective of our basic Bill Of Rights or to add a third option on the ballot. This third voting option would be to **RETAIN OUR EXISTING CONSTITUTION THAT WAS ADOPTED IN AUGUST, 1975**. We could then move forward without further delays and the tribe could make official amendments in future meetings to make it a stronger document.

As it stands now the proposed draft constitution is **TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE**.

It is my hope and prayer that you as Chief of our tribe will do what is necessary immediately to address this issue and to present to our fellow tribal brothers and sisters a document that is more acceptable to them.

This is my plea to you.

/s/

Heyward J. Canty, Jr.