



We remain present

June 18, 2020

Dear Fellow Californians:

A year ago today, the State of California issued a formal apology to California's Native American people. In his Executive Order, Governor Gavin Newsom recognized that the "State historically sanctioned over a century of depredations and prejudicial policies against California Native Americans." California's first governor ordered a war of extermination against the "Indian race" in 1851 which the Legislature funded.

We await another important step: the return of thousands of the state's Native American remains and artifacts from the University of California system. Many remains have been lost. Last week, the state auditor detailed the delays, bordering on indifference, of the legal duty to return the remains and artifacts to California's Native Americans. Long-passed ancestors deserve to rest with the devotional traditions of our people.

Now we must continue the journey toward reconciliation in earnest – with full strides toward acknowledgment of our presence, eliminating the disparities in education and economic opportunity, health care access and civic participation.

We have not been exterminated; we are not extinct. **We remain present.**

Assemblymember James C. Ramos

Assemblymember Ramos represents the 40th Assembly District and is the first California Native American elected to the state's Legislature. He is a lifelong resident of the San Manuel Indian Reservation, member of the Serrano/Cahuilla tribes.