



The 1999 Constitution of the Cherokee Nation

**A review and comparison between
the 1976 and 1999 Constitutions of the
Cherokee Nation in preparation for the
Ratification Vote**

**on
July 26, 2003**

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION
FOR
CITIZENS OF THE CHEROKEE NATION**

CONSTITUTION CONVENTION COMMISSION REPORT TO THE CHEROKEE PEOPLE REGARDING UPCOMING VOTES ON THE CONSTITUTION

This publication is to inform the voters of the Cherokee Nation that there will be two ballot questions concerning the constitution in the upcoming elections. It is important to distinguish between the two and clarify the purpose of each.

BRIEF HISTORY

Article XV, Section 9 of the 1976 Constitution of the Cherokee Nation, *requires* that the question of a constitution convention be submitted to the Cherokee People at least once every twenty (20) years. In the general election of 1995 the voters overwhelmingly approved the call for a constitutional convention.

Legislative Act 98-23 created the Constitution Convention Commission whose mission was to design a process through which a constitution convention could be held. Each branch of government appointed two Commissioners and they selected the seventh. Once organized, the Commission sought the opinions and suggestions of Citizens throughout the Cherokee Nation and across the United States. Based on input from the public hearings, the Commission moved forward to create a Constitution Convention that brought 79 delegates together in Tahlequah to take up the task of examining the Constitution.

The Commission established a process for selection of Delegates to the Convention. One set was composed of Cherokee Citizens appointed by the three branches of Government; another group represented Citizens who gave testimony at the public hearings; the Commission then drew by “lot” from Cherokee Citizens who expressed, in writing, an interest in serving as a Delegate to the Convention; and, the seven Commissioners created the balance of the total Delegate count of 79.

The Convention was convened on February 26, 1999 and was in session for 9 days. On March 6, 1999 the delegation adopted a new Constitution. Since then, the Constitution Convention Commission has been working to define a strategy to get the new Constitution to a vote of the Cherokee people. The greatest obstacle to that process is contained in Article XV, Section 10 of the 1976 Constitution that requires that “*no amendment or new Constitution shall become effective without the approval of the President of the United States or his authorized representative*”.

The new Constitution was submitted to the Bureau of Indian Affairs for review. After months of waiting, the BIA responded with numerous comments, some of which were “suggestions”, and others were “mandatory” changes. In May 2000 the Council passed a resolution requesting that the Commission seek approval from the Assistant Secretary of the Interior to authorize a referendum vote on a single amendment to the 1976 Constitution.

After almost two years of communication and negotiation, in April of 2002, an agreement was reached with the BIA to allow the Cherokee Nation to amend the 1976 Constitution, by referendum vote, to *remove Presidential approval authority*, thus eliminating the need for further negotiation on the new Constitution.

In January of 2003, the Tribal Council set the dates for these important constitutional votes.

Therefore, there will be two separate votes in the upcoming elections. The first is a referendum vote to amend the 1976 Constitution to eliminate Presidential approval authorities for amendments or a new constitution. The second is an approval vote on the new Constitution written by the 1999 Constitution Convention.

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You will be asked to vote on two important Constitutional questions.

1. **General Election Ballot May 24, 2003: Removal of Federal Control:** You will be asked whether or not to amend the 1976 Constitution to *remove* Article XV, Sections 10, federal control over the Cherokee Constitution.

If the Cherokee Citizens vote “yes” to remove federal control over the Cherokee Constitution on May 24, 2003, then the 1999 Constitution will be placed on the Run-Off Election Ballot of July 26, 2003 for ratification. The May 24th question must be passed before the New Constitution can be considered on the July ballot.

2. **Run-Off Ballot - Ratification of the 1999 Constitution:** On July 26, 2003 you will be asked to consider ratification of the 1999 Constitution. If ratified, the 1999 Constitution will become the law of Cherokee Nation.

The ballot will be similar to the ones printed below:

VOTE NUMBER ONE:

General Election - May 24, 2003:

REFERENDUM ON CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT OF THE 1976 CONSTITUTION

Article XV, Section 10 of the Cherokee Nation Constitution, adopted by the Cherokee People on June 26, 1976 states: “No amendment or new Constitution shall become effective without the approval of the President of the United States or his authorized representative.”

SHALL ARTICLE XV, SECTION 10 OF THE CHEROKEE NATION CONSTITUTION BE STRICKEN TO ABOLISH THE REQUIREMENT OF FEDERAL APPROVAL OF THE AMENDMENTS OR NEW CONSTITUTIONS OF THE CHEROKEE NATION?

YES TO REMOVE THE FEDERAL APPROVAL REQUIREMENT.

NO TO RETAIN THE FEDERAL APPROVAL REQUIREMENT.

VOTE NUMBER TWO:

Run-Off Election July 26, 2003:

RATIFICATION OF THE 1999 CONSTITUTION

SHALL THE NEW CONSTITUTION ADOPTED BY THE 1999 CHEROKEE NATION CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OVERRULE, SUPERCEDE, AND REPEAL THE 1976 CHEROKEE CONSTITUTION WHICH IS THE CURRENT LAW OF THE LAND?

YES TO RATIFY THE 1999 CONSTITUTION

NO TO RETAIN THE 1976 CONSTITUTION

1976 Constitution

PREAMBLE

We, the people of the Cherokee Nation, in order to preserve and enrich our tribal culture, achieve and maintain a desirable measure of prosperity the blessings of freedom, acknowledging, with humility and gratitude, the goodness of the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe in permitting us so to do, and imploring his aid and guidance in its accomplishment do ordain and establish this Constitution for the government of the Cherokee Nation. The term "Nation" as used in this Constitution is the same as "Tribe."

Article I. Federal Regulations

The Cherokee Nation is an inseparable part of the Federal Union. The Constitution of the United States is the Supreme law of the land; therefore, the Cherokee Nation shall never enact any law which is in conflict with any Federal law.

Article II. Bill of Rights

Section 1. The judicial process of the Cherokee Nation shall be open to every member of the Cherokee Nation. Speedy and certain remedy shall be afforded under the terms of this Constitution for every wrong and injury to person, property or reputation wherein said remedy does not conflict with the laws of the United States. The Council shall prescribe the procedures pertinent thereto. The appropriate protections guaranteed by the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 shall apply to all members of the Cherokee Nation.

Article III. Membership

Section 1. All members of the Cherokee Nation must be citizens as proven by reference to the Dawes Commission Rolls, including the Delaware Cherokees of Article II of the Delaware Agreement dated the 8th day of May, 1867, and the Shawnee Cherokees as of Article III of the Shawnee Agreement dated the 9th day of June, 1869, and/or their descendants.

Section 2. There shall be established a Cherokee Register, to be kept by the Registrar, for the inclusion of any Cherokee for membership purposes in the Cherokee Nation who presents the necessary evidence of eligibility for registration.

(a) A Registration Committee shall be established. It shall be the duty of the Registration Committee to consider the qualifications and to determine the eligibility of those applying to have their names entered in the Cherokee Register. The Registration Committee shall consist of a Registrar and two (2) assistants. All members shall be appointed by the Principal Chief, and confirmed by the Council.

(b) There shall be a number assigned to every name which is approved and entered into the Cherokee Register. This number shall be preceded by the three words, "Cherokee Registry Number."

(c) The decisions of the Registration Committee shall be subject to review by the Tribunal created by Article VII.

Section 3. Registration as used in this article refers to the process of enrolling as a member of the Cherokee Nation and is not the same as the registration for voting purposes.

Article IV. Distribution of Powers

The powers of the government of the Cherokee Nation shall be divided into three (3) separate departments: Legislative, Executive and Judicial; and except as provided in this Constitution,

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Adopted by the Delegates of the 1999 Cherokee Nation Constitution Convention on March 6, 1999.
Edited and finalized by the Convention Style Committee on July 30, 1999.

PREAMBLE

We, the People of the Cherokee Nation, in order to preserve our sovereignty, enrich our culture, achieve and maintain a desirable measure of prosperity and the blessings of freedom, acknowledging with humility and gratitude the goodness, aid and guidance of the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe in permitting us to do so, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the government of the Cherokee Nation.

Article I. Federal Relationship

The Cherokee Nation reaffirms its sovereignty and mutually beneficial relationship with the United States of America.

Article II. Territorial Jurisdiction

The boundaries of the Cherokee Nation territory shall be those described by the patents of 1838 and 1846 diminished only by the Treaty of July 19, 1866, and the Act of March 3, 1893.

Article III. Bill of Rights

The People of the Cherokee Nation shall have and do affirm the following rights:

Section 1. The judicial process of the Cherokee Nation shall be open to every person and entity within the jurisdiction of the Cherokee Nation. Speedy and certain remedy, and equal protection, shall be afforded under the laws of the Cherokee Nation.

Section 2. In all criminal proceedings, the accused shall have the right to: counsel; confront all adverse witnesses; have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in favor of the accused; and, to a speedy public trial by an impartial jury. The accused shall have the privilege against self-incrimination; and the Cherokee Nation shall not twice try or punish an accused for the same offense. Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishment inflicted.

Section 3. The right of trial by jury shall remain inviolate, and the Cherokee Nation shall not deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law, nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

Section 4. The Council shall make no law prohibiting the free exercise of religion or abridging the freedom of speech, or the press, or the right of the People to peaceably assemble, or to petition the Nation for a redress of grievances.

Article IV. Citizenship

Section 1. All citizens of the Cherokee Nation must be original enrollees or descendants of original enrollees listed on the Dawes Commission Rolls, including the Delaware Cherokees of Article II of the Delaware Agreement dated the 8th day of May, 1867, and the Shawnee Cherokees of Article III of the Shawnee Agreement dated the 9th day of June, 1869, and/or their descendants.

The Cherokee Nation recognizes the basic rights retained by all distinct People and groups affiliated with the Cherokee Nation, retained from time immemorial, to remain a separate and distinct People. Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to prohibit

PREAMBLE

No substantive changes, just stylistic changes.

ARTICLE I - RELATIONSHIP

Replaces subjection clause with a statement of sovereignty and affirmation of relationship with the United States.

ARTICLE II - TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION

New Article that establishes jurisdictional boundaries.

ARTICLE III - BILL OF RIGHTS

This is Article II in the 1976 Constitution.

This Article established an enumerated Bill of Rights based upon the Indian Civil Rights Act and the 5th and 14th Amendments of the United States Constitution.

ARTICLE IV - CITIZENSHIP

(This is Article III of the 1976 Const. which was titled Membership)

This Article changes terminology from membership to citizens and clarified that citizens must be original enrollees or descendants of original enrollees.

Further acknowledges inherent rights of Shawnee Cherokee and Delaware Cherokee.

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the Legislative, Executive and Judicial departments of government shall be separate and distinct and neither shall exercise the powers properly belonging to either of the others.

Article V. Legislative

Section 1. The legislature shall consist of one legislative body to be called the Council of the Cherokee Nation. The initial election of members to the Council pursuant to this Constitution shall occur within 120 days from the date of its ratification on a day to be announced by the Principal Chief.

Section 2. The Council shall establish its rules for its credentials, decorum, and procedure.

Section 3. The Council shall consist of 15 members, who are members by blood of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, and shall be elected at large. The term of office of each Council member serving on the first Council shall run until the first Saturday in August of 1979 and until his successor is duly elected and installed. Thereafter, the term of office of each Council member shall be for four (4) years and until his successor is duly elected and installed.

Section 4. There shall be at least one regular session of the Council in the calendar year which shall convene on the second Monday in each January or at such other date as the Council shall determine. No business shall be conducted by the Council unless at least two-thirds (2/3) of members thereof regularly elected and qualified shall be in attendance, which number shall constitute a quorum. The session may not exceed a maximum of thirty (30) calendar days for pay purposes.

Section 5. Special meetings of the Council may be called: (A) by the Principal Chief, (B) by the Deputy Principal Chief when he has the full powers of the Principal Chief as elsewhere defined, (C) upon written request of fifty-one percent (51%) of the members of the Council, or (D) upon the written request of ten percent (10%) of the registered voters of the Cherokee Nation. The purposes of said meeting shall be stated in a notice published not less than ten (10) days prior to the meeting, and the Council may not consider any other subject not within such purposes. No special meetings may convene until thirty (30) days have elapsed after the adjournment of a prior session or meeting, unless called pursuant to (A) and (B) above.

Section 6. All meetings of the Council and of its committees shall be open to the public except: (A) When the discussion shall concern employment, retention or discharge of personnel; (B) When the question or the moral turpitude of any member of the Tribe is discussed; or (C) When the decorum of the audience shall prejudice orderly administration of business. In the event that consideration of a subject shall take place in Executive Session, the vote shall take place in an open meeting.

Section 7. The Council shall have the power to establish laws which it shall deem necessary and proper for the good of the Nation, which shall not be contrary to the provisions of this Constitution. Laws or enactments which are required by Federal statutes to be approved shall be transmitted immediately upon enactment as provided by Section 11 of this Article to the President of the United States or his authorized representative. The style of all bills shall be: "Be It Enacted By The Cherokee Nation". The style of all resolutions shall be "Be It Resolved By The Cherokee Nation".

ARTICLE V - DISTRIBUTION OF POWERS

(This is Article IV of the 1976 Const.)

There are no major changes to this Article.

ARTICLE VI - LEGISLATIVE

(This is Article V of the 1976 Const.)

This Article creates the Office of Speaker that will chair Council meetings and be 3rd in line of succession to the head of government.

Further this Article creates two (2) additional Council members which shall be elected at-large by those voters residing outside of the territorial boundaries;

Also this Article provides term limits and sets staggered terms of Council;

Also, this Article establishes a process for voters residing outside the boundaries of the Cherokee Nation to register;

Also, provides for a Delegate to Congress as established in previous treaties;

Also, provides a process to replace vacated seats to the Council;

Expands power of removal to include appointed officials.

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the Cherokee-Shawnee or Delaware-Cherokee from pursuing their inherent right to govern themselves, provided that it does not diminish the boundaries or jurisdiction of the Cherokee Nation or conflict with Cherokee law.

Section 2. There shall be established a Cherokee Register, to be kept by the Registrar, for the inclusion of any Cherokee for citizenship purposes in the Cherokee Nation who presents the necessary evidence of eligibility for registration. The Council may empower the Registrar to keep and maintain other vital records.

(a) A Registration Committee shall be established. It shall be the duty of the Registration Committee to consider the qualifications and to determine the eligibility of those applying to have their names entered in the Cherokee Register. The Registration Committee shall consist of a Registrar and two (2) assistants. All members shall be appointed by the Principal Chief and confirmed by the Council.

(b) There shall be a number assigned to every name, which is approved and entered into the Cherokee Register. This number shall be preceded by the three words, "Cherokee Registry Number."

(c) The decisions of the Registration Committee shall be subject to de novo review by the lower courts created by Article VIII.

Section 3. Registration as used in this Article refers to the process of enrolling as a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and is not the same as registration for voting purposes.

Article V. Distribution of Powers

The powers of the government of the Cherokee Nation shall be divided into three (3) separate branches: Legislative, Executive and Judicial; and except as provided in this Constitution, the Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches of government shall be separate and distinct and no branch shall exercise the powers properly belonging to either of the others.

Article VI. Legislative

Section 1. The legislature shall consist of one legislative body to be called the Council of the Cherokee Nation.

Section 2. The Council shall establish rules for its credentials, decorum, and procedure, and shall elect a Speaker and a Deputy Speaker from its own membership to officiate over Council meetings. The Speaker may vote in all matters before the Council. The Speaker shall be third in line of succession to serve as Acting Principal Chief in case of removal, death, resignation or disability of both the Principal Chief and Deputy Principal Chief until the disability be removed or a successor shall be elected.

Section 3. The Council shall consist of seventeen (17) members, who are citizens by blood of the Cherokee Nation. Any citizen by blood of the Cherokee Nation at least twenty-five (25) years of age on that date of the election may be a candidate for the Council. Each Council member shall be elected in the general election for a term of four (4) years and until his or her successor is duly elected and installed. All Council members shall be limited to two (2) consecutive elected terms on the Council. All Council members having served two consecutive terms must sit out one (1) term before seeking any seat on the Council.

The Council shall establish representative districts which shall be within the boundaries of the Cherokee Nation. Fifteen of these seats shall be apportioned to afford a reasonably equal division of citizenship among the districts, and the remaining two shall be elected at-large by those registered voters residing outside the boundaries of the Cherokee Nation voting at-large in accordance with this section.

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Section 8. No laws passed by the Council shall have retroactive effect or operation.

Section 9. The Council shall have the power of removal and said removal must be conducted in accordance with Article XI of this Constitution. Nothing herein is intended to abrogate or limit the authority of the President of the United States or any person or agency to which the President or Congress of the United States shall delegate authority therefore, to remove the Principal Chief or his subordinates.

Section 10. Members of the Council and all Executive Officers shall be bound by oath, provided in Article XIII, to support the Constitution of the Cherokee Nation, the Constitution of the United States of America, do everything within the individual's power to promote the culture, heritage and traditions of the Cherokee Nation and to perform the duties of their respective offices with fidelity.

Section 11. Every enactment which shall have been approved by a majority of the members in attendance at the Council shall, before it becomes effective be presented to the Principal Chief, if he approves, he shall sign it; if not, he shall return it with his objections to the Council, which shall enter the objections in the Journal and proceed to reconsider it. If, after such reconsideration, two-thirds (2/3) of the entire council shall agree to pass the enactment, it shall become fully effective and operational notwithstanding the objections of veto of the principal chief. In all such cases, the vote of the Council shall be determined by yeas and nays, and the names of the members voting shall be entered on the Council's Journal. If any enactment shall not be returned by the Principal Chief within five (5) days (Sundays and holidays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the same shall be law in like manner as if he had signed it, unless the Council shall, by its adjournment, prevent its return, in which case, it shall become a law without the approval of the Principal Chief. No enactment shall become law after the final adjournment of the Council, unless approved by the Principal Chief within fifteen (15) days after such adjournment.

Article VI. Executive

Section 1. The executive power shall be vested in a Principal Chief, who shall be styled "The Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation". The Principal Chief shall hold his office for the term of four (4) years; and shall be elected by the qualified voters on the same day and in the same manner, except as otherwise provided by this Constitution, as they shall respectively vote for members of the Council for that particular year, provided, the Principal Chief in office when this Constitution is ratified shall continue in office until his successor is duly elected in the 1979 election and installed.

The returns of the election for the Principal Chief shall be sealed and directed by the lawfully appointed election officials to the Secretary-Treasurer, who shall, immediately after the organization of the Council, and before proceeding to other business, open and publish the same in the presence of a majority of the Council. The person having the highest number of votes shall be the Principal Chief; but if two (2) or more shall be equal and highest in votes, one of them shall be chosen by a vote of the Council. The manner of determining contested elections shall be as directed by Cherokee law.

Section 2. The Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation shall be a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma in accordance with Article III. He shall have been born within boundaries of the United States of America, its territories or

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The Council members representing districts within the boundaries must be domiciled within their district. The Council shall, within sixty (60) days of this Constitution taking effect, select the two at-large Council members to serve until the next regularly scheduled election.

All registered voters residing outside the boundaries of the Cherokee Nation, may, at the time of the first election to fill at-large Council seats, choose to continue to be registered to vote in the district in which they were previously registered. In the absence of making that choice, they shall be registered to vote at-large. Notwithstanding the above, citizens under the age of twenty-five (25) who reside outside the boundaries and who have not previously registered to vote, may make a single choice to register to vote in the district of their choice at the time of their first registration, failing which their registration shall be to vote at-large. All citizens age twenty-five (25) or older residing outside the boundaries not registered to vote at the time of the first election to fill at-large Council seats may only register to vote at-large. Citizens residing outside the boundaries who relocate within a district shall be subject to the requirements to vote in that district. Those residing within the boundaries must vote within the district of their residence.

The Council shall, within one year of this Constitution taking effect, establish a system of staggered terms for all seats on the Council to be organized into elections every two years.

Section 4. There shall be at least one regular session of the Council in the calendar year which shall convene on the second Monday in each January or at such other date as the Council shall determine. No business shall be conducted by the Council unless at least two-thirds (2/3) of members thereof regularly qualified shall be in attendance, which number shall constitute a quorum. The session may not exceed a maximum of thirty (30) calendar days for pay purposes.

Section 5. Special meetings of the Council may be called: (A) by the Principal Chief, (B) by the Deputy Principal Chief when he or she has the full powers of the Principal Chief as elsewhere defined, (C) upon written request of fifty-one percent (51%) of the members of the Council, or (D) upon the written request of ten percent (10%) of the number of registered voters who voted in the last general election of the Cherokee Nation. The purposes of said meeting shall be stated in a notice published not less than ten (10) days prior to the meeting, and the Council may not consider any other subject not within such purposes. No meetings may convene until thirty (30) days have elapsed after the adjournment of a prior session or meeting, unless called pursuant to Section 7 of Article VII.

Section 6. All meetings of the Council and of its committees shall be open to the public except: (A) when the discussion shall concern employment, retention or discharge of personnel; (B) when the question of the moral turpitude of any citizen is discussed; and (C) when the decorum of the audience shall prejudice orderly administration of business. In the event that consideration of a subject shall take place in executive session, the vote shall take place in an open meeting.

Section 7. The Council shall have the power to establish laws which it shall deem necessary and proper for the good of the Nation, which shall not be contrary to the provisions of this Constitution. The style of all bills shall be: "Be It Enacted By The Cherokee Nation". The style of all resolutions shall be "Be It Resolved By The Cherokee Nation".

Section 8. No laws passed by the Council shall have retroactive effect or operation.

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possessions; and he shall have obtained the age of thirty (30) years at the time of his election and be a member by blood of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.

Section 3. The qualified electors shall elect a Deputy Principal Chief, who shall possess the same qualifications as the Principal Chief, for a term of four (4) years at the same time and in the same manner as herein provided for the election of the Principal Chief, provided, that the initial election of the Deputy Principal Chief shall take place in conjunction with the first Council election pursuant to this Constitution and in accordance with Section 1 of this Article.

Section 4. In case of the absence of the Principal Chief from office due to his death, resignation, removal or inability to discharge the powers and duties of the said office, the same shall devolve upon the Deputy Principal Chief for the remaining portion of the four (4) year term to which the Principal Chief has been elected. In case of disability, such powers shall continue during the term of such disability. Vacancies in the office of the Deputy Principal Chief shall be filled by the Council.

Section 5. The Council may, in the case of removal, death, resignation or disability of both the Principal Chief and the Deputy Principal Chief, provide by law what officer shall then act as Principal Chief until the disability be removed or a successor shall be elected.

Section 6. The Principal Chief and Deputy Principal Chief shall, at stated times, receive for their service a compensation not inconsistent with Article X.

Section 7. Before the Principal Chief assumes his office, he shall take the oath or affirmation as provided for in Article XIII.

Section 8. The Principal Chief may on extraordinary occasions convene the Council at the seat of government pursuant to Article V, Section 5, and such notice and other laws as may be prescribed by the Council. The purpose of said meetings must be stated and the Council may consider only such matters as are specified in the call of the extraordinary meetings. Before the extraordinary meetings may be legally sufficient to conduct business, a quorum of the Council must be present.

Section 9. At every session of the Council, and immediately upon its organization, the Principal Chief shall communicate by message, delivered to the Council upon the condition of the Cherokee Nation; and shall recommend such matters to the Council as he shall judge expedient.

Section 10. The Principal Chief shall cause the laws of the Cherokee Nation to be faithfully executed, and shall conduct in person and in such manner as shall be prescribed by law, all communications and business of the Cherokee Nation. The Principal Chief may cause to be formed and operated, trusts, the beneficiary of which shall be the Cherokee Nation and these trusts shall be granted such powers as provided by law for public trusts. Authorization for these trusts, however, must be approved by a majority vote of the Council.

Section 11. The Deputy Principal Chief shall, by virtue of his office, aid and advise the Principal Chief in the administration of the government and shall be President of the Council but shall vote only for the purpose of breaking a tie vote.

Section 12. Nothing in this Constitution shall be con-

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Section 9. The Council shall have the power to remove elected and appointed officials in the Cherokee Nation and said removal must be conducted in accordance with Article XI of this Constitution.

Section 10. Every enactment which shall have been approved by a majority of the members in attendance at the Council shall, before it becomes effective be presented to the Principal Chief, who may approve the enactment by signing it; if not, the Principal Chief shall return it with objections to the Council, which shall enter the objections in the Journal and proceed to reconsider it. If, after such reconsideration, two-thirds (2/3) of the entire council shall agree to pass the enactment, it shall become fully effective and operational notwithstanding the objections of veto of the Principal Chief. In all such cases, the vote of the Council shall be determined by yeas and nays, and the names of the members voting shall be entered on the Council's Journal. If any enactment shall not be returned by the Principal Chief within five (5) days (Sundays and holidays excepted) after it shall have been presented, the same shall be law in like manner as if approved by the Principal Chief.

Section 11. The Council shall establish a continuing system of permanent publication for all laws of the Cherokee Nation and judicial opinions of the highest appellate court. The system shall provide for regular updating, indexing and digesting and shall be of public record at all times. The text of all laws, resolutions, judicial opinions and orders, except otherwise protected by law, and all other governmental publications, except those by Nation-owned entities, shall be in the public domain and free from encumbrances against use by the Citizens. This shall not constrain the Nation from copyrighting other aspects of governmental publications, except that citizens shall always have license for personal use of the copyrighted work without notice or fee.

Section 12. In accordance with Article 12 of the Treaty with the Cherokees, dated November 28, 1785 (Treaty of Hopewell), and Article 7 of the Treaty with the Cherokees dated December 29, 1835 (Treaty of New Echota), there shall be created the office of Delegate to the United States House of Representatives, appointed by the Principal Chief and confirmed by the Council. The Delegate shall be a citizen of the Nation and upon recognition by the United States shall be seated in accordance with federal law. The Delegate shall endeavor to participate in congressional activities and shall at all times advocate the best interests of the Cherokee People. The Delegate shall make regular reports to the Council and Principal Chief on congressional activities and administrative matters relating to federal law and policy and shall produce an annual report to the Cherokee People.

Section 13. In the case of removal, death, resignation or disability of any of Council member, such seat shall be filled by the candidate having the next highest number of votes in that district, who is available and willing to serve and whose eligibility is confirmed by the Election Commission. In the event no such candidate exists, the Council shall fill the vacated seat in the following manner: If a majority of the four-year term remains to be served, the Council shall authorize a special election in the district of the vacated seat to be conducted within ninety days; if a minority of the four-year term remains to be served, the Council shall elect a replacement who would otherwise be qualified to serve from the district of the vacated seat.

Section 14. Members of the Council and all Executive Officers shall be bound by oath, provided in Article XIII, to support the Constitutions of the Cherokee Nation and the United States of America, do everything within the individual's power to promote the culture, heritage and traditions of the Cherokee Nation and to perform the duties of their respective offices.

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strued as preventing the Principal Chief from appointing such administrative assistants as he deems proper.

Article VII. Judicial

There is hereby created a Judicial Appeals Tribunal composed of three (3) members all of whom must be admitted to practice law before the highest Court of the State of which they are residents, and all of whom shall be members of the Cherokee Nation, appointed by the Principal Chief and approved by the Council for such terms as the Council may provide. The purpose of this Tribunal shall be to hear and resolve any disagreements arising under any provisions of this Constitution or any enactment of the Council. The Council shall provide for a procedure which shall insure that any litigant receives due process of law together with prompt ad speedy relief, and shall generally follow that portion of the Oklahoma Statutes known as the Administrative Procedures Act, Title 75, Oklahoma Statutes, 301 et seq. The decision of the Judicial Appeal Tribunal shall be final insofar as the judicial process of the Cherokee Nation is concerned.

Article VIII. Cabinet

There shall be a cabinet composed of the following persons who shall be members of the Cherokee Nation:

- Secretary-Treasurer
- Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare
- Secretary of Commerce and Industrial Development
- General Counsel
- Secretary of Communications

These persons shall be appointed by the Principal Chief and approved by the Council. The Council, on recommendation of the Chief only, may create additional cabinet positions and departments. The Chief shall prescribe the duties and responsibilities of cabinet members. Cabinet members shall be authorized to appoint such staff and other assistants as they deem necessary. The Council may, with recommendation of the Principal Chief, abolish any established cabinet position or function or revise the title or responsibilities of any foregoing department or function.

Article IX. Election

Section 1. The Council shall enact an appropriate law not inconsistent with the provisions of this Constitution that will govern the conduct of all elections, provided that the initial election of the Council and Deputy Principal Chief shall be conducted pursuant to rules and regulation promulgated by the Principal Chief and the provision set forth in Articles V and VI of this Constitution, notwithstanding, the Principal Chief or Council may adopt rules requiring a majority vote for any elective office.

Section 2. Any member by blood of the Cherokee Nation at least twenty-five (25) years of age on that date of the election may be a candidate for the Council. No person who shall have been convicted of or has pled guilty or has pled no defense to a felony charge under the laws of United States of America, or of any State, Territory, or Possession thereof, shall be eligible to hold any office or appointment of honor, profit or trust within this Nation unless such person has received a pardon. Any person who holds any office of honor, profit or trust in any other tribe of Indians, either elective or appointive shall be ineligible to hold simultaneously any office of honor, profit or trust of the Cherokee Nation unless approved by the Council.

Section 3. All elections shall be determined by secret balloting.

ARTICLE VII - EXECUTIVE

(This is Article VI of the 1976 Const.)

This Article established a residuary requirement in order to qualify to run for the office of Principal Chief & Deputy Chief.

Further the Article set term limits for the office of Principal and Deputy Chief.

Also this Article removes the Deputy Chief from being president of the Council.

Also this Article reduced the number of cabinet posts.

This Article creates the office of Attorney General.

This Article creates the office of Marshall.

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Article VII. Executive

Section 1. The executive power shall be vested in a Principal Chief, who shall be styled "The Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation". The Principal Chief shall hold office for a term of four (4) years. No person having been elected to the office of Principal Chief in two (2) consecutive elections shall be eligible to file for the office of Principal Chief in the election next following his or her second term of office. The Principal Chief shall be elected by the registered voters on the same day and in the same manner, except as otherwise provided by this Constitution, as they shall respectively vote for members of the Council in the year 2003 and every four years thereafter. The Principal Chief shall be elected by a majority of votes. The manner of determining contested elections shall be as directed by Cherokee law.

Section 2. The Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation shall be a citizen of the Cherokee Nation in accordance with Article IV; shall be domiciled within the boundaries of the Cherokee Nation for no less than 270 days immediately preceding the day of general election in which he or she seeks election; and, shall have obtained the age of thirty (30) years at the time of his or her election and be a citizen by blood of the Cherokee Nation.

Section 3. The registered voters shall elect a Deputy Principal Chief, who shall possess the same qualifications as the Principal Chief, for a term of four (4) years at the same time and in the same manner as herein provided for the election of the Principal Chief. The Deputy Chief shall be subject to the same term limitations as provided for the Principal Chief in this Constitution.

Section 4. In case of the absence of the Principal Chief from office due to death, resignation, removal or inability to discharge the powers and duties of the office, the same shall devolve upon the Deputy Principal Chief for the remaining portion of the four (4) year term to which the Principal Chief had been elected. In case of disability, such powers shall continue during the term of such disability.

In the event of the death, resignation, or removal of the Deputy Principal Chief, or his or her inability to discharge the powers and duties of the office, the person who is then the Speaker of the Council shall succeed to the office of the Deputy Principal Chief for the balance of the term. In the case of temporary disability, said person shall serve as Acting Deputy Principal Chief for the duration of the disability and thereafter shall reassume the office of Speaker.

Section 5. The Council may, in the case of removal, death, resignation or disability of the Principal Chief, Deputy Principal Chief and the Speaker of the Council, provide by law what officer shall then act as Principal Chief until the disability be removed or a successor shall be elected.

Section 6. The Principal Chief and Deputy Principal Chief shall, at stated times, receive for their service a compensation not inconsistent with Article X.

Section 7. The Principal Chief may, on extraordinary occasions, convene the Council at the seat of government pursuant to Article VI, Section 5, and such notice and other laws as may be prescribed by the Council. The purposes of said meetings must be stated and the Council may consider only such matters as are specified in the call of the extraordinary meetings. Before the extraordinary meetings may be legally sufficient to conduct business, a quorum of the Council must be present.

Section 8. At one session of the Council annually, the Principal Chief shall deliver and communicate to the Council a

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Article X. Fiscal

Section 1. The fiscal year shall commence on the first day of July in each year, unless otherwise provided by law.

Section 2. The Council shall provide by law for annual expenditure of funds, and the source from which funds are to be derived to defray the estimated expenses of the Executive, Council, Cabinet and Departments of Government of the Cherokee Nation for each fiscal year. The budget shall not exceed estimated revenues.

Section 3. At least thirty (30) days prior to the convening of each regular session of the Council, the Secretary-Treasurer shall make and present to the Council an itemized estimate of revenue to be received by the Cherokee Nation, together with a statement of the sources from which revenues are to be received, under the laws, grants, judgments, interests, and any other sources in effect at the time such estimate is made for the next ensuing fiscal year. The Secretary-Treasurer shall prepare annual financial statements reflecting the results of operations of all tribal activities and shall prepare a consolidated balance sheet in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles within sixty (60) days after the end of the fiscal year.

Section 4. The Council shall require that the records be maintained of all funds, monies, accounts and indebtedness and all other accounts bearing upon the fiscal interests of the Cherokee Nation by the use of a uniform system of accounting which records and financial statements shall be audited by a Certified Public Accountant or as otherwise may be prescribed by the Council prior to the submission of said accounts to the Council.

Section 5. The Secretary-Treasurer shall be authorized to accept all grants, donations of money, interest of funds of the Cherokee Nation, judgments and any and all other sources of monies available to the Cherokee Nation, for uses and purposes and upon the conditions and limitations for which the same are granted or donated; and the faith of the Cherokee Nation is hereby pledged to preserve such grants and donations as a sacred trust, and to keep the same for the use and purposes for which they were granted or donated.

Section 6. The Council shall have the authority to invest funds or money of the Cherokee Nation and the preference to be given to the security for such investments, the manner of selecting the securities, prescribing the rules, regulations, restrictions and conditions upon which the funds shall be loaned or invested, provided that no investment shall be in mortgages other than first mortgages only, and do all things necessary for the safety of the funds and permanence of the investments. If required by law, such investments would be subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior.

Section 7. The credit of the Cherokee Nation shall not be given, pledged, or loaned to any individual, firm, company, corporation, or association without the approval of the Council. The Cherokee Nation shall not make any donations by gift, or otherwise, to any individual, firm, company, corporation, or association without the approval of the Council.

Section 8. All laws authorizing the expenditures of money by and on behalf of the Cherokee Nation shall specify the purpose for which the money is to be used, and the money so designated shall be used for no other purpose. Annual expenditures shall not exceed the available funds.

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message upon the condition of the Cherokee Nation; and shall recommend such matters to the Council as he or she shall judge expedient.

Section 9. The Principal Chief shall cause the laws of the Cherokee Nation to be faithfully executed, and shall conduct in person and in such manner as shall be prescribed by law, all communications and business of the Cherokee Nation. The Principal Chief may cause to be formed and operated, trusts, the beneficiary of which shall be the Cherokee Nation and these trusts shall be granted such powers as provided by law for public trusts. Authorization for these trusts, however, must be approved by a majority vote of the Council.

Section 10. The Deputy Principal Chief shall, by virtue of the office, aid and advise the Principal Chief in the administration of the government.

Section 11. Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed as preventing the Principal Chief from employing such administrative assistants as deems proper.

Section 12. There shall be a cabinet composed of the following persons who shall be citizens of the Cherokee Nation: (1) Secretary of State, (2) Treasurer, (3) Secretary of Natural Resources. These persons shall be appointed by the Principal Chief and confirmed by the Council. The Council, on recommendation of the Principal Chief only, may create additional cabinet positions and departments. The Principal Chief shall prescribe the duties and responsibilities of cabinet members. Cabinet members shall be authorized to appoint such staff and other assistants as they deem necessary. The Council may, with recommendation of the Principal Chief, abolish any established cabinet position or function or revise the title or responsibilities of any foregoing department or function.

Section 13. There shall be created an office of Attorney General. The Attorney General shall be a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, admitted to practice law before the highest court of any state of the United States. The Attorney General shall represent the Nation in all criminal cases in the courts of the Nation, and in all civil actions wherein the Cherokee Nation is named as a party, and shall have such other duties as the Council may prescribe by law. The Attorney General shall be appointed by the Principal Chief and confirmed by the Council for a term of five (5) years. The Attorney General shall be authorized to designate such prosecutors and other assistants as deemed necessary to carry out the duties of office, and may only be removed from office in conformance with Article XI.

Section 14. There shall be created an office of Marshal. The Marshal shall be a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and possess such training and experience in law enforcement as prescribed by law. The duties and authority of the Marshal shall be prescribed by law. The Marshal shall be authorized to deputize such officers as necessary to carry out the law enforcement needs of the Cherokee Nation. The Marshal shall be appointed by the Principal Chief and be confirmed by the Council for a term of five (5) years. The Marshal may only be removed from office in conformance with Article XI.

The terms of the Marshal and the Attorney General shall not be concurrent.

Section 15. A vacancy of an elected office by reason of removal, death, resignation or disability of the elected official, for which this Constitution does not provide a process for seating a replacement to serve out the term, shall be filled by appointment by the Principal Chief with confirmation by the Council.

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Section 9. General laws shall be enacted by the Council providing for the deposit of funds of the Cherokee Nation, and the depository thereof, and such funds shall be under the control of the Secretary-Treasurer, under such terms and conditions as shall be designated by said Council and under such laws which shall provide for the protection of said funds.

Section 10. No official, member or officer of the Council, Cabinet Member, employee of any official, Council, Cabinet, or subdivisions thereof, or any person employed in any capacity by the Cherokee Nation shall receive from any individual, partnership, corporation, or entity doing business with the Cherokee Nation directly or indirectly, any interest, profit, benefits or gratuity, other than wages, salary, per diem, or expenses, specifically provided by law.

Section 11. All officers, elected or appointed, who are authorized by this Constitution or any subsequent legislation to a position of trust over any land, property, accounts or monies, shall execute an official surety bond in the amount as may be required by the Council, and such surety bonds shall inure to the benefit of and be paid for by the Cherokee Nation for whose protection or surety the same shall be required and in no event shall said surety bond be other than by a Licensed Insurance Company, authorized to do business in the State of Oklahoma.

Article XI. Removal From Office

Section 1. The Principal Chief and the Deputy Principal Chief shall be subject to removal from office for willful neglect of duty, corruption in office, habitual drunkenness, incompetency or any conviction involving moral turpitude committed while in office.

Section 2. All other elective officers shall be subject to removal from office in such manner and for such causes as may be provided by laws passed by the Council.

Section 3. The Council shall pass such laws as are necessary for carrying into effect the provisions of this Article, insuring therein that due process is afforded the accused.

Article XII. Employee Rights

No employee, who having served in a position at least one (1) year, shall be removed from the employment of the Cherokee Nation except for cause. The employee shall be afforded a hearing by the Judicial Appeals Tribunal under such rules and procedures as may be prescribed by the Council. These rules and procedures, however, must follow, as nearly as practicable, the provisions of the Oklahoma Administrative Procedures Act, Title 75, Oklahoma Statutes 301 et seq.

Article XIII. Oath

Section 1. All officers elected or appointed shall, before entering upon the duties of their respective offices, take and subscribe to the following oath or affirmation: "I do solemnly swear, or affirm, that I will faithfully execute the duties of _____ of the Cherokee Nation, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitutions of the Cherokee Nation, and the United States of America. I swear or affirm further, that I will do everything within my power to promote the culture, heritage and traditions of the Cherokee Nation."

ARTICLE VIII - JUDICIAL

(This is Article VII of the 1976 Const.)

This Article changes the name of the Judicial Appeal Tribunal to the Supreme Court.

This Article also establishes "District Courts".

This Article also increases the size of the Supreme Court from three (3) members to five (5) members.

Also, it creates Court on the Judiciary that will have jurisdiction over all judicial officers.

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Article VIII. Judicial

Section 1. The Judicial powers of the Cherokee Nation shall be vested in a Supreme Court and such lower courts as the Council shall from time-to-time ordain and establish. The Judicial Appeals Tribunal shall become known as the Supreme Court of the Cherokee Nation. The Supreme Court shall be composed of five (5) members all of whom must be citizens of the Cherokee Nation and be admitted to practice law before the highest Court of any state of the United States.

Section 2. Justices of the Supreme Court shall be appointed by the Principal Chief and confirmed by the Council to serve terms of ten (10) years each after expiration of the initial terms as follows: Seat 1: ending 12/31/2000, Seat 2: ending 12/31/2002, Seat 3: ending 12/31/2004, Seat 4: ending 12/31/2006, Seat 5: ending 12/31/2008. An appointment to the Supreme Court shall take place once every two (2) years, except in the case of filling a vacated seat on the Court for the remainder of that term. The Council shall, within six (6) months of this Constitution taking effect, pass such laws as are necessary for carrying into effect the provisions of this section.

Section 3. Judges of the District Court shall be citizens of the Cherokee Nation, and shall be admitted to practice law before the highest Court of any state of the United States, and shall be appointed by the Principal Chief and confirmed by the Council to serve terms of four (4) years each. In the event of a judicial vacancy due to death, resignation, or removal from said office, any successor duly appointed and confirmed shall only serve the balance of the term of the vacancy being filled.

Section 4. The original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court shall extend to a general supervisory control over all lower courts. General supervisory control does not include suspension, removal, or disciplinary action of any member of the judiciary. These powers are specifically reserved for the Court on the Judiciary as prescribed in Section 5 and/or Article XI.

The Supreme Court shall employ an Administrator, who shall have general administrative duties in the judicial branch. The Justices of the Supreme Court shall have supervisory authority over the Administrator.

In support of its original and appellate jurisdiction, the Supreme Court shall have power to issue, hear and determine writs of habeas corpus, mandamus, quo warranto, certiorari, prohibition and such other remedial writs as may be provided by law and may exercise such other jurisdiction as may be conferred by statute. The appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court shall extend to all cases at law and in equity arising under the laws or Constitution of the Cherokee Nation.

The Supreme Court shall promulgate rules of procedure relating to its original and appellate jurisdiction to insure any litigant appearing before it receives due process of law and impartial justice, together with prompt and speedy relief. Decisions of the Supreme Court shall be published and indexed and shall be final insofar as the judicial process of the Cherokee Nation is concerned.

Section 5. There is hereby created a Court on the Judiciary. Each branch of the government shall select two members of the Court; one of whom shall be a member of the Cherokee Nation Bar Association and the other shall be a non-lawyer. The six members shall appoint a seventh member. The members of the Court on the Judiciary shall promulgate its own rules of procedure, assuring due process, to be submitted to the Council for review and approval. The authority of the Court shall include suspension, sanction, discipline or recommendation of removal. The members shall not be employees of the Cherokee Nation or any entities thereof. The Council shall pass such laws as are necessary for carrying into effect the provisions of

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Section 2. The foregoing oath shall be administered by any person authorized by the Council to administer oaths. The oath shall be filed in the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer.

Article XIV. Clans

Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to prohibit the right of any Cherokee to belong to a recognized clan or organization in the Cherokee Nation.

Article XV. Initiative, Referendum and Amendment

Section 1. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article V, the people of the Cherokee Nation reserve to themselves the power to propose laws and amendments to this Constitution and to enact or reject the same at the polls independent of the Council, and also reserve power at their own option to approve or reject at the polls any act of the Council.

Section 2. Any amendment or amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by the Council, and if the same shall be agreed to by a majority of all the members of the Council, such proposed amendment or amendments shall, with the yeas and nays thereon, be entered into the Journal and referred by the Secretary-Treasurer to the people for their approval or rejection, at the next regular general election, except when the Council, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, shall order a special election for that purpose. If a majority of all the registered voters voting at such election shall vote in favor of any amendment thereto, it shall thereby become a part of this Constitution.

Section 3. The first power reserved by the people of the Cherokee Nation is the initiative and ten percent of the registered voters shall have the right to propose any legislative measures by petition and fifteen percent (15%) of the registered voters shall have the right to propose amendments to the Constitution by petition, and every such petition shall include the full text of the measure so proposed. The second power is the referendum, and it may be ordered (except as to laws necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health or safety), either by petition signed by five percent of the registered voters or by the Council as other enactments are effectuated. The ratio and percent of registered voters hereinbefore stated shall be based upon the total number of votes cast at the last general election for the officer receiving the highest number of votes at such election.

Section 4. Referendum petitions shall be filed with the Secretary-Treasurer not more than ninety (90) days after the final adjournment of the session or meeting of the Council which passed the bill on which the referendum is demanded. The veto power of the Principal Chief shall not extend to measures voted on by the people. All elections on measures referred to the people of the Cherokee Nation shall be had at the next regular general election except when the Council or the Principal Chief shall order a special election for the express purpose of making such reference. Any measure referred to the people by the initiative shall take effect and be in force when it shall have been approved by a majority of the votes cast thereon and provided that no measure which is required to be approved by the President of the United States or his authorized representative shall be effective until approved.

Section 5. Petitions and orders for the initiative and for the referendum shall be filed with the Secretary-Treasurer and addressed to the Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, who shall submit the same to the people. The Council shall make suitable provisions for carrying into effect the provisions of this Article.

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this section. All members of the Court shall be citizens of the Cherokee Nation.

Section 6. The District Courts of the Cherokee Nation shall be courts of general jurisdiction and shall be vested with original jurisdiction, not otherwise reserved to the Supreme Court, to hear and resolve disputes arising under the laws or Constitution of the Cherokee Nation in both law and equity, whether criminal or civil in nature. The Council shall enact, with advice from the judiciary, rules of procedure which shall insure that all litigants receive due process of law and impartial justice, together with prompt and speedy relief.

Section 7. The Justices of the Supreme Court and Judges of the District Court shall receive a compensation which shall not be diminished during their continuance in office, but shall receive no other fee, gratuity or perquisite of office, nor hold any other position of title, trust or profit within the Cherokee Nation or any entity thereof, either directly or indirectly.

Section 8. Members of the judiciary shall be subject to removal from office only for willful neglect of duty, corruption in office, habitual drunkenness, incompetency or any conviction of a felony, a crime under the laws of the Cherokee Nation that if committed in some other jurisdiction would be a felony, or a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude or offenses against the Cherokee Nation committed while in office.

Article IX. Election

Section 1. There is hereby created a Cherokee Nation Election Commission. The Commission shall be an autonomous and permanent entity charged with the administration of all Cherokee Nation elections, in accordance with election laws. The Council shall enact an appropriate law not inconsistent with the provisions of this Constitution that will govern the conduct of all elections.

Section 2. No person who shall have been convicted of a felony charge under the laws of United States, or of any State, Territory, or Possession thereof, or a crime under the laws of the Cherokee Nation that if committed in some other jurisdiction would be a felony, shall be eligible to hold any office or appointment of honor, profit or trust within this Nation unless such person has received a pardon from the appropriate jurisdiction. Any person who holds any office of honor, profit or trust in any other tribe or Nation of American Indians, either elective or appointive shall be ineligible to hold simultaneously any office of honor, profit or trust of the Cherokee Nation unless approved by the Council.

Section 3. All elections shall be determined by secret balloting.

Article X. Fiscal

Section 1. The fiscal year shall commence on the first day of October in each year, unless otherwise provided by law.

Section 2. The Council shall provide by law for annual expenditure of funds, and the source from which funds are to be derived, to defray the estimated expenses of the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches and the departments of government of the Cherokee Nation for each fiscal year. The budget shall not exceed estimated revenues.

Section 3. At least forty-five (45) days prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, the Treasurer shall cause to be made and presented to the Council an itemized estimate of revenues and expenditures for

ARTICLE VIII - CABINET

This Article of the 1976 Const. was deleted, its provisions were consolidated in Article VII Executive Branch.

ARTICLE IX - ELECTIONS

(This is Article IX of the 1976 Const.)

This Article creates a Cherokee Nation Election Commission.

ARTICLE X - FISCAL

(This is Article X of the 1976 Const.)

1976 Constitution

Section 6. The referendum may be demanded by the people against one or more items, sections or parts of any enactment of the Council in the same manner in which such power may be exercised against a complete enactment. The filing of a referendum petition against one or more items, sections or parts of an enactment shall not delay the remainder of such act from becoming operative.

Section 7. If two or more amendments are proposed they shall be submitted in such manner that electors may vote for or against them separately.

Section 8. No proposal for the amendment of this Constitution which is submitted to the voters shall embrace more than one general subject and the voters shall vote separately for or against each proposal submitted; provided, however, that in the submission of proposals for the amendment of this Constitution by articles, which embrace a general subject, each proposed article shall be deemed a single proposal or proposition.

Section 9. No convention shall be called by the Council to propose a new Constitution, unless the law providing for such convention shall first be approved by the people on a referendum vote at a regular or special election. Any amendments, alterations, revisions or new Constitution, proposed by such convention, shall be submitted to the electors of the Cherokee Nation at a general or special election and be approved by a majority of the electors voting thereon before the same shall become effective. The question of such proposed convention shall be submitted to the members of the Cherokee Nation at least once in every twenty (20) years.

Section 10. No amendment or new Constitution shall become effective without the approval of the President of the United States or his authorized representative.

Article XVI. Supersedes Old Constitution 1839

The provisions of this Constitution overrule and supersede the provisions of the Cherokee Nation Constitution enacted the 6th day of September 1839.

Article XVII. Seat of Government

The Seat of Government of the Cherokee Nation shall be at Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

Article XVIII. Adoption

This Constitution shall become effective when approved by the President of the United States or his authorized representative and when ratified by the qualified voters of the Cherokee Nation at a election conducted pursuant to rules and regulations promulgated by the Principal Chief. It shall be engrossed on parchment and signed by the Principal Chief and the Secretary of the Interior. It shall be filed in the office of the Cherokee Nation and sacredly preserved as fundamental law of the Cherokee Nation.

APPROVED FOR REFERENDUM
BY THE COMMISSIONER
MORRIS THOMPSON ON SEPTEMBER 5, 1975
SECOND BY THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF OF THE CHEROKEE
NATION,
ROSS O. SWIMMER
ON OCTOBER 2, 1975

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the ensuing fiscal year adhering to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

Section 4. The Council shall require that records be maintained and provided to the Council of all funds, monies, accounts and indebtedness and all other accounts bearing upon the fiscal interests, including but not limited to, any and all outside business interests, both for-profit and not-for-profit, of the Cherokee Nation by the use of an accounting system adhering to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). The annual financial statement shall be audited by a Certified Public Accountant and presented to the Council within six months following the end of each fiscal year. Unaudited reports will be submitted as required by the Council.

Section 5. The Treasurer shall be authorized to accept all grants, donations of money, interest of funds of the Cherokee Nation, judgments and any and all other sources of monies available to the Cherokee Nation, for uses and purposes and upon the conditions and limitations for which the same are granted or donated. The faith of the Cherokee Nation is hereby pledged to preserve such grants and donations as a sacred trust, and, if or when designated, to keep the same for the use and purposes for which they were granted or donated.

Section 6. The Council shall authorize the Treasurer to invest funds or money of the Cherokee Nation and determine the preference to be given to the security for such investments, the manner of selecting the securities, prescribing the rules, regulations, restrictions and conditions upon which the funds shall be loaned or invested, provided that no investment shall be in mortgages other than first mortgages only, and do all things necessary for the safety of the funds and permanence of the investments. If required by law, such investments would be subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior.

Section 7. The credit of the Cherokee Nation shall not be given, pledged, or loaned to any individual, firm, company, corporation, or association without the approval of the Council. The Cherokee Nation shall not make any donations by gift, bonus, or otherwise, to any individual, firm, company, corporation, or association without the approval of the Council.

Section 8. All laws authorizing the expenditures of money by and on behalf of the Cherokee Nation shall specify the purpose for which the money is to be used, and the money so designated shall be used for no other purpose. No monies or resources of the Cherokee Nation or any of its entities shall be used to pay for representation of a defendant in a criminal matter, except where a public defender is authorized under Cherokee law. Annual expenditures shall not exceed the available funds.

Section 9. General laws shall be enacted by the Council providing for the deposit of funds of the Cherokee Nation, and the depository thereof, and such funds shall be under the control of the Treasurer, under such terms and conditions as shall be designated by the Council and under such laws which shall provide for the protection of said funds.

Section 10. No official, member or officer of the Council, Cabinet Member, employee of any official, Council, Cabinet, or subdivisions thereof, or any person employed in any capacity by the Cherokee Nation shall receive from any individual, partnership, corporation, or entity doing business with the Cherokee Nation directly or indirectly, any interest, profit, benefits or gratuity, other than wages, salary, per diem, or expenses specifically provided by law.

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CONSTITUTION of the CHEROKEE NATION

AMENDMENTS:

Article V. Legislative

Section 3. The Council shall consist of fifteen (15) members, who are members by blood of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. Each Council member shall be elected in the general election for a term of four (4) years and until his successor is duly elected and installed.

The Council shall establish representative districts which shall be within the historical boundaries of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. These districts shall be apportioned to afford a reasonably equal division of tribal membership among the districts.

Article VI. Executive

Section 2. The Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation shall be a citizen of the Cherokee Nation in accordance with Article III; shall have been born within boundaries of the United States of America, its territories or possessions; shall have established a bona fide, permanent residence within the historic boundaries of Cherokee Nation for no less than 270 days immediately preceding the day of the general election in which he or she was elected; and shall have obtained the age of thirty (30) years of age at the time of his or her election and be a member by blood of the Cherokee Nation.

ARTICLE XI - REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

(This is Article XI of the
1976 Const.)

This Article provides for
due process of
individuals being
removed from office.
Said individuals can only
be removed by a 2/3
vote of the Council.

Enumerates the offenses
by which an individual
can be removed from
office.

Reserves to the people
the power to recall
elected officials by
referendum petition.

ARTICLE XII - EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

(This is Article XII of the
1976 Const.)

This Article provides for
pre-termination due
process to all vested
employees of the
Cherokee Nation and
guaranteed access to
Cherokee Court system
of terminated employees.

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Section 11. All officers, elected or appointed, who are authorized by this Constitution or any subsequent legislation to a position of trust over any land, property, accounts or monies, shall execute an official surety bond in the amount as may be required by the Council. Such surety bonds shall inure to the benefit of, and be paid for by, the Cherokee Nation for whose protection or surety the same shall be required. In no event shall said surety bond be other than by a Licensed Insurance Company, authorized to do business in the State of Oklahoma.

Article XI. Removal From Office

Section 1. The Principal Chief, Deputy Principal Chief, members of the Council, Attorney General and Marshal shall be subject to removal from office for willful neglect of duty, corruption in office, habitual drunkenness, incompetency or any conviction of a felony, or a crime under the laws of the Cherokee Nation that if committed in some other jurisdiction would be a felony, or a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude or offenses against the Cherokee Nation committed while in office.

Section 2. Except as otherwise provided in this Constitution, all other appointed officials shall be subject to removal for cause, as prescribed by law.

Section 3. No official may be removed under Sections 1 or 2 of this Article or Section 8 of Article VIII except after trial before the Council, with the accused having been afforded due process and opportunity to be heard. Provided, removal under Sections 1 or 2 of this Article or Section 8 of Article VIII shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of the Council.

Section 4. Separate from the Council's removal powers, the People of the Cherokee Nation reserve unto themselves the exclusive power to recall any elected official through petition and recall referendum. A petition must be signed by Cherokee citizens registered to vote. In the case of Principal Chief or Deputy Principal Chief, signatures must total a number equaling or exceeding fifteen percent (15%) of the total number of registered voters in the previous general election. In the case of district offices, signatures must total the greater of five hundred (500) or twenty-five percent (25%) of the total number of registered voters in that district in the previous general election. The signed petition shall be filed with the Election Commission to determine whether the signatures are valid. Said determination shall be made within thirty (30) days after the filing of same. Upon verification of the requisite number of signatures the Election Commission shall certify the petition as valid and notify the Council and the Secretary of State. Upon notification of a valid certified petition the Council shall immediately call for and approve a special recall election for the office in question within sixty (60) days. The special recall election shall be limited in scope to the voting populous for the elected office in question. Votes cast shall be tabulated and the results certified in the same manner as in general elections. A majority vote to affirm the official shall retain the official in office. A majority vote to recall shall immediately remove the official from office. In the event of a tie-vote the Council shall call a special meeting to conduct a tie-breaking vote. Elected offices vacated under this section shall be filled as otherwise provided in this Constitution.

Article XII. Employee Rights

No employee, who having served in a position at least one (1) year, shall be removed from the employment of the Cherokee Nation except for cause, and only after being afforded pre-termination due process. Provided, the right of such employee to seek redress in the

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Cherokee Nation courts shall not be abridged.

Article XIII. Oath

Section 1. All officers elected or appointed shall, before entering upon the duties of their respective offices, take and subscribe to the following oath or affirmation: "I do solemnly swear, or affirm, that I will faithfully execute the duties of _____ of the Cherokee Nation, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitutions of the Cherokee Nation, and the United States of America. I swear or affirm further, that I will do everything within my power to promote the culture, heritage and traditions of the Cherokee Nation."

Section 2. The foregoing oath shall be administered by any person authorized by the Council to administer oaths. The oath shall be filed in the Office of the Secretary of State.

Article XIV. Clans

Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to prohibit the right of any Cherokee to belong to a recognized clan or organization in the Cherokee Nation.

Article XV. Initiative, Referendum and Amendment

Section 1. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article VI, the People of the Cherokee Nation reserve to themselves the power to propose laws and amendments to this Constitution and to enact or reject the same at the polls independent of the Council, and also reserve power at their own option to approve or reject at the polls any act of the Council.

Section 2. Any amendment or amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by the Council, and if the same shall be agreed to by a majority of all the members of the Council, such proposed amendment or amendments shall, with the yeas and nays thereon, be entered into the Journal and referred by the Secretary of State to the People for their approval or rejection, at the next regular general election, except when the Council, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, shall order a special election for that purpose. If a majority of all the registered voters voting at such election shall vote in favor of any amendment thereto, it shall thereby become a part of this Constitution.

Section 3. The first power reserved by the People of the Cherokee Nation is the initiative, and ten percent (10%) of the registered voters shall have the right to propose any legislative measures by petition and fifteen percent (15%) of the registered voters shall have the right to propose amendments to the Constitution by petition, and every such petition shall include the full text of the measure so proposed.

The second power is the referendum, and it may be ordered (except as to laws necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health or safety), either by petition signed by five percent (5%) of the registered voters or by the Council as other enactments are effectuated. The ratio and percent of registered voters hereinbefore stated shall be based upon the total number of votes cast in the last general election involving the office of Principal Chief.

Section 4. Referendum petitions shall be filed with the Secretary of State not more than ninety (90) days after the final adjournment of the session or meeting of the Council which passed the bill on which the referendum is demanded. The veto power of the Principal Chief shall not extend to measures voted on by the People. All elections on measures referred to the People of the Cherokee Nation shall be had at the next regular general election except when

ARTICLE XIII - OATH

(This is Article VIII of the
1976 Const.)

No substantive changes.

ARTICLE XIV - CLAIMS

(This is Article XIV of the
1976 Const.)

No changes.

ARTICLE XV - INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM

(this is Article XV of the
1976 Const.)

Deletes the approval of
the United States for
Amendment to this
Constitution.

1999 Constitution

the Council or the Principal Chief shall order a special election for the express purpose of making such reference. Any measure referred to the People by the initiative shall take effect and be in force when it shall have been approved by a majority of the votes cast thereon.

Section 5. Petitions and orders for the initiative and for the referendum shall be filed with the Secretary of State and addressed to the Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, who shall submit the same to the People. The Council shall make suitable provisions for carrying into effect the provisions of this Article.

Section 6. The referendum may be demanded by the People against one or more items, sections or parts of any enactment of the Council in the same manner in which such power may be exercised against a complete enactment. The filing of a referendum petition against one or more items, sections or parts of an enactment shall not delay the remainder of such act from becoming operative.

Section 7. If two or more amendments are proposed they shall be submitted in such manner that registered voters may vote for or against them separately.

Section 8. No proposal for the amendment of this Constitution which is submitted to the voters shall embrace more than one general subject and the voters shall vote separately for or against each proposal submitted; provided, however, that in the submission of proposals for the amendment of this Constitution by articles, which embrace a general subject, each proposed article shall be deemed a single proposal or proposition.

Section 9. No convention shall be called by the Council to propose a new Constitution, unless the law providing for such convention shall first be approved by the People on a referendum vote at a regular or special election. Any amendments, alterations, revisions or new Constitution, proposed by such convention, shall be submitted to the registered voters of the Cherokee Nation at a general or special election and be approved by a majority of the registered voters voting thereon before the same shall become effective. The question of such proposed convention shall be submitted to the citizens of the Cherokee Nation at least once every twenty (20) years.

Article XVI. Supersedes Constitutions of 1839 and 1976

The provisions of this Constitution overrule, supersede, and repeal the provisions of the Cherokee Nation Constitution enacted the 6th day of September, 1839, and the provisions of the Constitution of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma enacted the 26th day of June, 1976.

Article XVII. Seat of Government

The Seat of Government of the Cherokee Nation shall be at Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

Article XVIII. Adoption

This Constitution shall become effective when ratified by the registered voters of the Cherokee Nation. It shall be engrossed on parchment and signed by the Principal Chief and the President of the United States, or his authorized representative. It shall be filed in the office of the Cherokee Nation and sacredly preserved as the fundamental law of the Cherokee Nation. The Constitution shall be printed in both Cherokee and English, provided however, that the English version shall be controlling for all governmental and legal purposes. The Council shall enact laws in conformance with this Constitution within eighteen (18) months of its ratification, provided that the provisions for Article XI shall be enacted within six (6) months of its ratification.

ARTICLE XVI- SUPERSEDES OLD CONST.

(This is Article XVI of the 1976
Const.)

This Article supersedes and
repeals the 1839 Const., and the
1976 Const., of the Cherokee
Nation.

ARTICLE XVII - SEAT OF GOVERNMENT

(This is Article XVII of the 1976
Const.)

No changes made.

ARTICLE XVIII - ADOPTION

(This is Article XVIII of the 1976 Const.)

This Article deleted the approval process of the
President of the United States to this Const.

Also this Article requires that the Constitution be
printed in both the Cherokee and English languages.

This Article instructs the Council to enact laws in
conformance of this Const. within eighteen (18)
months of proclamation of this Constitution.