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## California State Legislature



September 25, 2026

Greetings to all Tribal Leaders, State Leaders, Tribal Community, and Guests:

It is an honor to join you in celebrating the 59th annual California Native American Day. This year's theme, "Inherent Sovereignty: Tribal Nations Fighting to Protect Our Land and Defend Our People," reminds us that sovereignty is a responsibility carried forward by Tribal Nations and the people who dedicate their lives to protecting their communities, cultures, lands, and traditions.

The strength of this year's theme is reflected in the lives and contributions of the 2026 Class of Native American honorees, recognized by the California Legislative Native American Caucus, which I have the honor of chairing. Each honoree demonstrates what it means to carry forward the legacy of our ancestors while standing firmly in defense of Tribal sovereignty and the well-being of future generations.

The 2026 honorees include **Rowena Ramos**, a Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation community elder who taught Serrano culture and worked tirelessly to sustain the sovereignty of her people. Her commitment to service has also been reflected through her efforts to give back to local organizations and help them thrive. **Troy Fletcher**, of the Yurok Tribe, whose efforts have contributed to environmental stewardship and the preservation of Tribal lands which led to the removal of the Klamath Dam. **Betty June DuBois**, of the Pechanga Indian Tribe, whose cultural upbringing and dedication have contributed to the cultural preservation that continues within her Tribe today. **Celeste Townsend**, of the Fort Bidwell Indian Community, whose leadership has helped advance the California Indian Nations College as the state's only accredited Tribal college. **Dennis Magee**, of the Pala Tribe, who has fought tirelessly for the right to equitable health care for his Tribal community, including the design of the Indian Health Council which supports nine local tribes. And **Beverly J. Hunter**, of Table Mountain Rancheria, whose dedication and determination have helped lead efforts to return cultural items and ancestors to her community and surrounding Tribal communities.

We thank all of this year's honorees for the examples of resilience, strength, and pride they provide, and for their enduring contributions to their communities.

As we celebrate California Native American Day, I encourage you to take time to reflect on the gifts of those who have gone before us and the strength, knowledge, and traditions they have passed on to future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James C. Ramos".

James C. Ramos  
Assemblymember, 45<sup>th</sup> District