

ARTICLE III - CITIZENSHIP OF THE PAWNEE NATION (PROPOSED)

Section 1. All persons shall be eligible for citizenship in the Pawnee Nation provided they are:

- (A) Enrolled and whose name appears on the official annuity (base) roll of the Pawnee Nation as of February 19, 1937; and
- (B) Lineally descended from any enrolled citizen listed on the official annuity (base) roll of the Pawnee Nation as of February 19, 1937.

NOTES: This Section defines the criteria for Citizenship, moving away from the term “Membership” to reinforce the political identity of the Pawnee people. Section (B) establishes a Lineal Descent standard for citizenship.

Key Components:

- **The Base Roll:** The foundational document for citizenship remains the Official Annuity Roll of February 19, 1937.
- **Lineal Descent:** To be eligible, a person must prove they are a direct descendant (child, grandchild, etc.) of someone listed on that 1937 roll.
- **Removal of Blood Quantum:** Notably, this amendment focuses on lineal descent.

The removal of Blood Quantum in favor of Lineal Descent is one of the most significant shifts in the Amendments of the Pawnee Nation Constitution. This change reflects a broader movement across Indian Country to move away from federal “math” and toward Indigenous belonging.

Here are the primary reasons why the Pawnee Nation (and many others) are proposing making this change:

1. Combating “Statistical Extermination”

Blood quantum is often described by Tribal leaders as a “countdown clock.” Because it requires a specific fraction (1/8) of “Pawnee blood,” the number of eligible citizens naturally declines every generation as people marry and/or have children outside the Nation.

- **The Risk:** Eventually, the blood quantum requirement would lead to a population so small that the Nation could legally or functionally cease to exist.
- **The Goal:** Lineal descent ensures that if you can trace your family tree directly back to a Pawnee ancestor on the 1937 Base Roll, you are Pawnee. It focuses on kinship rather than fractions.

2. Asserting Sovereignty over Federal Templates (“Boilerplates”)

The concept of blood quantum was largely introduced by the U.S. Federal Government (specifically through the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934) to limit the government’s financial obligations to Tribes/Tribal citizens and members.

- By removing the blood quantum requirement, the Pawnee Nation is rejecting a colonial definition of “Indianness” and asserting its sovereign right to define its own people based on traditional standards of family and lineage.

3. Preserving The Future of the Pawnee Nation

The Pawnee Nation is a confederation of four distinct bands (Čawî’, Kitkehaki, Pîtahawirâta, and Ckiri). Blood quantum can sometimes create internal confusion if a person has ancestors from multiple Tribes or bands but does not meet a specific “total” fraction. Lineal descent simplifies this: If your ancestors were Pawnee citizens, you are a Pawnee citizen, regardless of the mathematical calculation.

4. Inclusion of the Pawnee “Diaspora” or spread

Most Pawnee citizens live outside the immediate jurisdiction of the Oklahoma reserve. Lineal descent makes it easier for these citizens to ensure their children and grandchildren remain connected to the Nation. It prioritizes ancestral connections over numbers.

What does this mean for the future?

If this Amendment is adopted, the Nation's population will likely stabilize or grow, ensuring that the Pawnee culture, language, and government have a permanent base of citizens to carry them forward.

Understanding the Shift:

By using the February 19, 1937, roll as the “Base Roll,” the Nation maintains a clear historical connection to its ancestors while simplifying the process for future generations to claim their right to citizenship through their lineage.

Section 2. The Pawnee Business Council shall have the power to prescribe rules and regulations covering future citizenship of the Pawnee Nation, including the approval and loss of citizenship, provided:

(A) Such rules and regulations shall be subject to the review of the Rêšârû Council.

NOTES: This Section establishes the legislative authority over citizenship while maintaining the traditional check and balance provided by the Rêšârû Council (Nasharo/Chiefs Council).

Key Implications of Section 2(A):

Administrative Oversight: The Pawnee Business Council (PBC) is tasked with the “hands-on” work of creating the rules, regulations, and procedures for enrollment.

The Rêšârû Check: The PBC does not have unilateral power over the rolls. By requiring review by the Rêšârû Council, the Constitution ensures that citizenship - the most vital element of the Nation - is overseen by the body traditionally responsible for the preservation of Pawnee heritage and customs.

Section 3. No person shall be eligible for Pawnee Nation citizenship, if enrolled as a citizen or member of another Indian Tribe.

NOTES: This Section establishes a prohibition against dual enrollment. It is a common provision in many Tribal Constitutions designed to ensure that the resources, voting rights, and political allegiance of a citizen remain focused on a single sovereign Tribal entity.

Key Implications of Section 3:

- **The “One Tribe” Rule:** To become or remain a citizen of the Pawnee Nation, an individual must not be enrolled in any other Federally recognized Indian Tribe.
- **Voluntary Choice:** If a person is eligible for citizenship in both the Pawnee Nation and another Tribe, they must choose one. To enroll as Pawnee, they would typically need to provide documentation of relinquishment from the other Tribe.
- **Resource Allocation:** Legally and administratively, this prevents “double-dipping” into Federal or Tribal programs that are funded based on population counts (such as IHS or housing grants).
- **Political Integrity:** This ensures that those voting in Pawnee elections or serving in Pawnee government are exclusively committed to the Pawnee Nation’s sovereign interests.

Definition:

Lineal descendants, also referred to as “issue,” are the direct descendants of a person, such as children, grandchildren, and so on. (https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/lineal_descendant).

This is different from a collateral descendant, which is a relative descended from a brother or sister of an ancestor, such as a cousin, niece, nephew, aunt, or uncle.