

72nd Annual Convention & Marketplace

SAN DIEGO

OCTOBER 18 – 23, 2015



Daily Newsletter: Thursday, October 22, 2015

Youth played a big role in the Fifth General Assembly. Taking the podium to give the Youth Commission Report were Co-Presidents Tyler Owens and Jared Massey. Tyler and Jared spoke about their experience with the Youth Commission and the importance of the continued work between tribal leaders, including involving the youth as much as possible during their decision making process.



Taylor Owens and Jared Massey, Co-Presidents of NCAI Youth Commission

MaryAnn McGovern, Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Task Force Co-Chair, provided an update on the Task Force's work and stressed the need for tribal leaders to work on the TANF re-authorization.

Jefferson Keel, Lt. Governor of the Chickasaw Nation, addressed the assembly in a special presentation during the Technology Task Force Update and presented Geoffrey Blackwell with a blanket to thank him for his work in Indian Country. During the Gaming Update, Ernie Stevens, Jr.,

Chairman, National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA), stressed the importance of Native youth and praised the continued work on VAWA, TLOA, Tribal Tax Fairness Act, and General Welfare Exclusion Act in Indian Country.

Chairman Stevens also announced that Noah Hotchkiss and Dakota Brown will serve as the first ambassadors to the new NIGA Native Youth Initiative.

National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) Executive Director Sarah Kastelic gave the ICWA Update alongside NICWA President Gil Vigil.



NICWA President Gil Vigil and Executive Director Sarah Kastelic

"[ICWA] is under attack, more importantly are the children that this act protects. Those are the kids we want to protect," said Vigil. "We are placing our kids in danger. Please take more responsibility on the seriousness of this issue. We can't let that happen."

Vigil further discussed the need for resources to fight additional litigation like the Baby Veronica case and move the needle for the youth in Indian Country. He called on tribal leaders to help with the cause to protect our children.

Kastelic noted the influence of media and importance of public relations strategy when it comes to high profile cases like the Baby Veronica case. She stressed the importance of training spokespeople to be on the media front lines telling the facts.

Mid-morning, the NCAI Election Committee announced the winner of the NCAI 1st Vice President election, Mr. Randy Noka. Chairman W. Ron Allen (Jamestown S'Klallam) moved for unanimous consent that Randy Noka be recognized as NCAI's 1st Vice President.



Randy Noka, NCAI 1st Vice President

Executive Director Bill Mendoza of the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education gave the Education Update. Mendoza spoke on a somber subject of suicide in Native youth across the nation and announced the new School Environment Listening Sessions Final Report focusing on Native youth.

To develop the report, the White House conducted a national listening tour which made stops in nine states and throughout Indian Country. The study found that the



William (Bill) Mendoza, Executive Director of the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education

use of negative stereotypes in educational systems and the lack of positive imagery in schools has a harmful impact on the daily lives of Native students.

“We will be championing this report over and over until it is heard,” said Mendoza. “Our time for decision making on these issues is now.”

The report can be found on the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education U.S. Department of Education website at <http://sites.ed.gov/whianiane/files/2015/10/school-environment-listening-sessions-final-report.pdf>.

Mike Andrews, Staff Director and Chief Counsel of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs provided an update on the work of the Committee. Giving a “shout out” to Tony Walters for the bi-partisan effort in the Committee. Andrews also said that,



Mike Andrews, Staff Director & Chief Council, Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

“Senator Barrasso and Senator Tester are determined and intact to advocate for Indian Country.”

Andrews went on to speak about a number of pieces of legislation the Committee is currently focusing on including: The Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Amendments Act, the reauthorization of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA), the IRRIGATION Act, The Survive Act, and the Interior Improvement Act.

“We can’t do it alone, your continued advocacy is vitally important and unified approach is the best strategy,” said Andrews. “Please support those bills, and let us know of the bills you cannot get behind. We are here to do the work.”

The afternoon NCAI Youth Commission gave way to an engaged discussion with two young tribal leaders: Lummi Nation Business Council Council Member Celina Phair and Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Council Member Reid D. Milanovich. The youth asked hard questions about getting engaged with tribal council as a youth and the challenges that Phair and Milanovich have faced in their current positions.



Lummi Nation Business Council Council Member Celina Phair and Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Council Member Reid D. Milanovich

Both Milonovich and Phair spoke about the importance education played in their lives and how it continues to give them the knowledge and strength to serve their communities.



Lester Secatero, Chairman, National Indian Health Board (NIHB)

The Sixth General Assembly began with a presentation by National Indian Health Board (NIHB) Chairman Lester Secatero. Based in Washington, DC, NIHB priorities and activities include the Employer Mandate, Appropriations, Tribal Behavior Health Agenda, and the Native Youth Summit. Secatero noted a number of challenges in Indian health care including the lack of access to the proper technology for doctors and the Employer Mandate putting a financial strain on Native communities.

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye addressed the body regarding the Gold King Mine Disaster and lack of response by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the White House. President Begaye explained that the spill greatly impacted Navajo farmers and their citizens’ drinking water, forcing the Nation to haul water to those affected for two months. The Nation continues to see a lack of response from the federal government on these issues.

“Let’s continue standing together and fight for our land, water rights, culture and keep fighting,” said President Begaye. “We have yet to be given authority [over our] minerals and [are] asking NCAI to get behind the bills to the surface and minerals

beneath the land and ability to control those resources.”



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and NCAI President Brian Caloodsby

Mary Bucci, Chief of 2020 Partnerships and Outreach at the U.S. Census Bureau, discussed the Census’ upcoming tribal consultation on Friday and Saturday to review an operations plan, listen to the thoughts of tribal leaders about issues affecting their communities, and to increase collaboration between the Census Office and Indian Country.



Mary Bucci, Chief of the 2020 Partnerships and Outreach, U.S. Census Bureau

Marcia Hurd, Senior Counsel to the Director, Office of Tribal Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, spoke about Tribal Access to Criminal Databases. Hurd reported that tribes often face a number of barriers within state networks and that DOJ is working



Marcia Hurd, Senior Counsel to the Director, Office of Tribal Justice, U.S. Department of Justice

to fix the issue. Currently, DOJ has enacted a companion program, the Tribal Access Program (TAP), which any tribal social service agency can access by applying online at no cost. Visit <http://www.justice.gov/tribal/tribal-access-program-tap> for more information.

Jeff Grubbe, Chairman of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, spoke about the Band’s Water Rights and current 9th Circuit litigation regarding their rights to ground water. Chairman Grubbe stressed the importance of water rights advocacy for tribes and the need for support in the appeal of the Band’s 9th Circuit case to reclaim their ground water. He called for the body to join the Southern California Tribal Chairman’s Association Amicus Brief.



Jeff Grubbe, Chairman, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians

Assemblymember Luis Alejo from the California State Assembly joined Dhakota Brown, NCAI National Native Youth Cabinet for the Mascot Update. They spoke about California's historic decision to end the use of a racial slur in public schools as mascots.



UNITY Co-Presidents Brian Weeden and Sassamin Weeden

UNITY Male and Female Co-Presidents Brian Weeden and Sassamin Weeden lightened the room with the UNITY Update saying, "Go to UNITY it's like Disneyland!"

The Sixth General Assembly ended with "Free the Four". Presenters called for the exoneration of four men arrested in Alaska 18 years ago on murder charges. The NCAI body stood in solidarity for a photo at the end of the session.



Free the Four

Thursday wrapped up with continued committee meetings and the annual Gala Banquet featuring a musical performance by Keith Secola, Award Winning Native American Musician.

The Gala Banquet attendees enjoyed dinner and an ad hoc round dance which ended in a sing along on the Gala stage.

NCAI would like to thank Bank of America for their generous sponsorship of the Gala Banquet, it would not have been possible with their support.



Gala Banquet



Elders' Honoring Lunch Highlights Sponsored by Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians

