

2002 ANNUAL REPORT



NATIONAL
CONGRESS OF
AMERICAN
INDIANS



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AMERICAN
INDIANS

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Dear Tribal Leaders and Friends of the National Congress of American Indians,

For almost 60 years, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) has been advocating for the rights of our American Indian and Alaska Native nations. At no time since our founding in 1944 have we had the luxury to be complacent in our jobs – there is always a reason why NCAI must continue its struggle on behalf of Indian Country.

I am pleased to present NCAI's 2001-2002 Annual Report. In its pages you will note the extraordinary amount of work that has been accomplished both by the staff in Washington, D.C., and by others in the many regions of the country where our membership has gathered over the past year. NCAI has had many challenges – and just as many successes.

None of NCAI's work would be possible without the ongoing support of our member tribes, corporations, foundations and individuals. All of them are unwavering in their belief in the NCAI mission and have contributed generously to one or more issue areas in which we been involved over the past year. On behalf of the NCAI Executive Board and Committee and the NCAI staff, I would like to thank all of you for being there for us when we have needed you most.

It is now one year into my NCAI presidency, and I can tell you that my vision for unity among all of our nations is becoming a reality. The past year's important work – trust reform, the Sovereignty Protection Initiative, the protection of sacred lands, economic development, to name but a few – have shown us that we can do great things if we all work together. Unity is the key.

As your President, I want to thank all of you for your hard work on behalf of this organization. We must make it our collective goal to continue working together, for it is only when we are united that we will be successful in our efforts.

Masehgedataz (thank you).

Tex G. Hall
President



LETTER FROM
N C A I
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

Dear Tribal Leaders, Advocates, and Friends,

It has been an extraordinary year here at the NCAI. In my first year as Executive Director, I have been pleased to see tremendous progress in our organization's ability to meet the challenges before us. We have fortified the organization with top quality staff with the skills and commitment to take on the growing challenges we face. We have sought to make our organization more efficient and effective in all areas, revamping our accounting, technology, and communications systems to ensure that our foundations are strong. At the same time, we have maintained a fever-pace of work to address the constant stream of issues of concern to tribes in the legislative, judicial, and administrative arenas.

NCAI is a membership organization, and our members and their needs are our first priority. We understand that NCAI is in essence a business—a business whose job is to protect tribal sovereignty, tribal cultures, and the rights and well being of Indian people. Our motto for the past year has been, "build it and they will come"—our field of dreams is a strong, vibrant, and dynamic organization in service to Indian Country. We have been in a growing pattern, seeking input from tribal leaders as we retool and reshape our work to better meet the new challenges facing Indian Country. This effort has been warmly received in Indian Country—many tribes have demonstrated their renewed confidence in the organization by reinstating their memberships, and a number of tribes have joined as new members of NCAI.

We are strengthening our foundations here at NCAI—but it takes resources and commitment from our membership to build upon those foundations. Every day, I see signs that there may be dark skies ahead for Indian Country. In the Courts, Congress, and the Administration, a troubling undercurrent is building that stands to threaten the very existence of Indian Country, of the unique trust relationship, of tribal sovereignty and self-determination. We absolutely cannot afford to be ill-prepared to meet what is to come—we need to be ahead of the curve, educating and reaching out to this nation's leaders and the public at large, so that misunderstanding of contemporary Native nations does not grow into a movement to destroy what so many generations of our people have fought to preserve.

NCAI is ready to take on the tremendous challenges of this age—but we cannot do it without your help. Those who would seek to destroy tribal governments as we know them have vast resources at their disposal. To turn back this tide, tribes must engage all the resources—financial, intellectual, and spiritual—that Indian Country can muster as we move to defend our very way of life over the years to come.

On behalf of the staff and leadership of NCAI, as well as the generations of Indian people whose lifeways we exist to defend, I thank you for all that you do to support this organization. I look forward to working with you to ensure that in the years to come, our communities will be more strong, vibrant, and healthy than ever.

Gunal Cheesh,

Jacqueline Johnson
Executive Director



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tex G. Hall.....President
Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara Nation
Chairman

Joe A. Garcia.....First Vice-President
Ohkay Owingeh (Pueblo of San Juan)
Tribal council member

Colleen F. Cawston.....Recording Secretary
Colville Confederated Tribes

Alma Ransom.....Treasurer
St. Regis Mohawk Tribe
Chief



*Tex G. Hall is sworn in
as NCAI President*

AREA VICE PRESIDENTS

Harold Frazier.....Aberdeen
Cheyenne River Sioux
Vice Chairman

John F. Gonzales.....Albuquerque
San Ildefonso Pueblo
Governor

James M. Potter.....Anadarko
Prairie Band Potawatomi
Tribal Treasurer

Geri Small.....Billings
Northern Cheyenne Tribe
Chairwoman

Mike Williams.....Juneau
Yupiaq
President of Alaska Intertribal Council

Bob Chicks.....Minneapolis
Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians
Chairman

Jefferson Keel.....Muskogee
Chickasaw Nation
Lt. Governor

Kevin Seneca.....Northeast
Seneca Nation
Councilor

Evelyn B. Juan-Manuel.....Phoenix
Tohono O'Odham Nation
Council Member

Ernie Stensgar.....Portland
Coeur d'Alene Tribe
Chairman

Juana Majel.....Sacramento
Legislative Council



*Scenes from the 58th Annual Session, Spokane, Washington, 2001.
A new Executive Committee and Area Vice Presidents are Sworn Into Office.*

N C A I
EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE
& B O A R D

*Considered and Passed by Tribal Representatives Gathered at the
NCAI 2002 Midyear Session*

The NCAI was founded in 1944 in response to termination and assimilation policies that the United States forced upon the tribal governments in contradiction of their treaty rights and status as sovereign entities. NCAI stressed the need for unity and cooperation among tribal governments for the protection of their treaty and sovereign rights. Since 1944, the National Congress of American Indians has been working to inform the public and Congress on the governmental rights of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Over a half a century later, NCAI has grown to include 250 member tribes and thousands of individual members from throughout the United States, but our fundamental goals remain unchanged. Now as in the past, NCAI serves to secure for ourselves and our descendants the rights and benefits to which we are entitled; to enlighten the public toward the better understanding of Indian people; to preserve rights under Indian treaties or agreements with the United States; and to promote the common welfare of the American Indians and Alaska Natives. Specifically, we call for the following:

Respect for Tribal Governance and the Federal Trust Relationship

- Healthy government-to-government relations between the US and Tribal governments
- Creation and nurture of institutions and processes to support meaningful and respectful government-to-government dialogue and consultation processes
- Respect and support for Alaska Native tribal governments
- Recognition of Native Hawaiian rights
- Positive working relationships with our neighbor State governments
- Full exercise of Tribal self-determination and self-governance
- Fulfillment of the federal Trust Responsibility via adequate annual appropriations for federal Indian programs and renewed honor in the trusteeship of tribal lands and resources
- Freedom from dual taxation created by imposition of state taxes on Indian reservations
- Fair and prompt processes for placing land into trust to begin to restore a small fraction of the countless acres of land that the federal government itself has acknowledged were wrongly taken from tribes
- Full acknowledgement of tribal sovereignty, including tribal jurisdiction over law enforcement and judicial processes on tribal lands, and the inherent right to prudent exercise of governmental immunity
- Honorable fulfillment of US treaty obligations and recognition of treaty rights



Scenes from the 58th Annual Session, Spokane, Washington, 2001.

Support for Healthy Native Communities and People

- Development of sustainable, diversified and vibrant economies in Indian Country
- Opportunities for employment training opportunities and meaningful employment at living wages for Indian people who wish to remain in their reservation communities
- Respect for tribal rights to make choices—just as states do—regarding revenue generation through taxation and pursuit of tribal business development in a range of areas, including gaming enterprises
- Provision of safe, affordable, and accessible quality housing for Indian people
- Improvement of transportation infrastructure and accessibility in Indian Country
- Concerted efforts to improve telecommunications and technology access in Indian communities
- Improved access to capital and financing options
- Fulfillment of the federal trust responsibility for Indian health, including full funding of need for health care services, preventive care, facilities maintenance and construction, and other components of a functional, tribally-driven Indian health care system, and full implementation of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act
- Renewed commitment to Indian education within the BIA school system and public schools, including full funding for tribally operated schools and resources for tribal language and culture programs in all schools with concentrations of Indian students
- Sustained support for tribal law enforcement and tribal courts
- Support for the unique needs of Indian youth, elders, veterans, and people with disabilities
- Enhanced tribal involvement and direct access to federal funds for TANF programs, adoption and foster care, and other social services
- Preservation of the important protections for Indian children and communities under the Indian Child Welfare Act
- Coordinated efforts to eliminate the devastating effects of alcohol and substance abuse in Indian and Alaska Native communities
- Protection of our environment, the quality of air, lands, and waters, preservation of healthy habitat for fish and wildlife, and restoration of endangered species
- Support for sustainable development of tribal resources
- Respect for exercise of tribal water rights
- Protection of tribal communities from the impacts of nuclear waste

Preservation of Human Dignity and Cultural Integrity

- Preservation of Native languages and free exercise of traditional practices
- Protection of sacred lands and practices, as well as access to and protected use of sacred sites no longer within tribal lands
- Free exercise of subsistence lifeways and protection of traditional crops and animal life integral to traditional tribal practices
- Full implementation of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
- Recognition of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples internationally within the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and related arenas
- Cessation of discriminatory and derogatory practices against all people, including the use of Indian people as symbols and mascots for sports teams

*Scenes from the
58th Annual Session,
Spokane, Washington, 2001.*



NCAI is widely recognized as the oldest, largest, and most representative organization of Indian tribes and individuals—but what does that mean on a day to day basis? With only a dozen full time staff members and a mandate from our member tribes to engage on an extraordinarily broad slate of issues of concern to Indian Country, NCAI finds ways to fulfill its critical role through the hard work and dedication of its staff and leadership.

What does a typical day at NCAI look like? The best answer to that question may be that there simply is no such thing as a typical day at NCAI. Every day brings new challenges, and our staff must be flexible and multitalented to address the wide range of demands placed on the organization. Resolutions at the NCAI Annual and Midyear sessions bring new initiatives and concerns onto our plate. The cycles of the congressional calendar and Administrative decisions create a sometimes unpredictable workload. Conferences and events take staff time and energy to plan and execute. And our staff must be ready at a moment's notice to mobilize and engage our friends on Capitol Hill and in the Administration when proposals surface that would be harmful to tribes, or when the time comes to advance proactive, tribally driven legislation to address our concerns.

Consider Monday, October 7, 2002—a day like so many at NCAI where the unexpected is the expected. The day begins with the arrival of the Sovereignty Run into D.C. – the culmination of a 2,800 mile cross-country relay to raise money and public awareness for the tribal sovereignty protection efforts spearheaded by NCAI.

At 7:30 AM on the morning of the 7th, several staff members gather at the National Cathedral to prepare Senator Thomas Daschle and other high profile figures for the final five mile stretch of the relay. Meanwhile over at the Supreme Court, additional staff prepare tribal leaders to speak at a rally to take place when the runners arrive later that morning. Other staff members are on call back at the NCAI office answering phones to assist tribal leaders, members of the press, and others with questions to ensure that everyone has the information they need to ensure the success of this important event.



*NCAI Sovereignty Rally,
Senator Daschle and Quinalt
Indian Nation Tribal Chair
Pearl Capoeman-Butler*

The runners are met by a color guard of veterans and additional marchers carrying their tribes' flags and NCAI-crafted signs in support of tribal sovereignty, and arrive at the Court at 10 AM to a wave of cheers and the drumbeats of a victory song. The rally is a tremendous success. Senator Daschle, NCAI President Tex Hall, NCAI Executive Director Jacqueline Johnson, and numerous tribal leaders address several hundred who have gathered at the steps of the Supreme Court sporting signs and banners calling for respect for tribal sovereignty and restored trust. The first day of the Supreme Court's fall docket—in which two cases will be heard that stand to have a tremendous impact on the core trust responsibility—has been met with a strong, prayerful and united voice from Indian Country: Save Our Sovereignty.

It is 11:00 AM as the rally draws to a close with a flag song. Several staff speak with members of the press. Others return to the office to prepare for a Sovereignty Protection Initiative meeting that afternoon. Staff members returning to the office field a flood of urgent phone messages and e-mails, a constant flow that staff strive to respond to as quickly and thoroughly as possible. For most NCAI staff, it is not unusual for





NCAI Sovereignty Rally, Senator Daschle and Quinalt Indian Nation Tribal Chair Pearl Capoeman-Butler

40-50 e-mails and 10-20 phone messages to accumulate over the course of an hour meeting away from one's desk—all important to address. These communications come from congressional offices, tribal representatives, NCAI members, members of the public, reporters, coalition partners, foundations, vendors, individuals we work with in the Administration and others with time sensitive concerns that must be addressed. **The most pressing of these are taken care of immediately. The clock reads 12:30 PM.**

There are last minute reports to be written and broadcast to tribes. Staff designated to coordinate the afternoon meeting of the Sovereignty Protection Initiative Steering Committee race to the meeting site to prepare for the arrival of tribal leaders. Other staff members remain in the office – some to aid in gathering information for the organization's financial audit now underway, some to finalize agenda details for the Annual Meeting. Others head to Capitol Hill for meetings with congressional staff on diabetes funding issues, engage in conference calls on protection of sacred lands, follow up on a recent summit organized by NCAI on transportation issues in Indian Country, or turn back to other key areas of NCAI's work on behalf of its member tribes.

The Sovereignty Protection Initiative meeting begins at 1:00 PM. Many new faces are at the meeting, leaders who have not previously been engaged in the work of the Initiative, and strategy for the work is discussed with this ever-expanding group of tribal leadership. NCAI staff provide the gathered leaders with information on trends they have witnessed in the legislative, judicial, and executive arenas, as well as the political climate they are experiencing in their regular contacts with congressional staff.

A resolve emerges to seek meetings with key congressional figures in an effort to advance preemptive remedies for trust issues that will come before the Supreme Court later this year. A call is put in to the NCAI office, and within an hour NCAI staff have secured meetings for the tribal leaders with several key members of Congress the following morning.

Back at the office, members of NCAI's legislative staff begin to prepare for the congressional visits to take place the following day, drafting talking points, analyzing voting records, deciding who the top priority champions for Indian Country might be on this issue and what members are strategically most important to ensure a victory on this issue. The clock approaches 5:00 PM. Staff who have been at the Initiative meeting return to the office and join in the effort to prepare for the following day's meetings.

At 6:30 PM, several staff members head to a reception to be held that evening in honor of the Sovereignty Run participants. Other staff remain in the office to prepare for additional meetings to take place the following day with partner coalition organizations, who have the potential to be powerful allies in the long struggle ahead to secure affirmative support in Congress for tribal jurisdiction and the legal cornerstones of tribal sovereignty.

By 9:30 PM, the office is dark save for one light in the library, where a member of the NCAI staff who normally works on the west coast will sleep for the night. A few hours of quiet for an office that will again be bustling bright and early the next morning. **A single day – as typically atypical as every day seems to be – has passed in the life of NCAI.**

NCAI takes very seriously its mandate to stand strong as a voice for Indian tribes and Indian people in our nation's capital. This is no small task, with critical issues on a myriad of levels demanding our attention and engagement. From sovereignty protection to sacred sites preservation, from trust reform to transportation infrastructure funding, NCAI plays a critical role on the front lines for Indian Country, bringing together tribal leaders and key government officials, driving the passage of legislation through Congress, or spearheading national grassroots education efforts. The following briefly summarizes some of our key accomplishments over the past year. For more information on these and other aspects of our work, see NCAI's newly retooled web site at www.ncai.org.

PROTECTING TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY AND SELF DETERMINATION

In recent decisions such as *Nevada v. Hicks* and *Atkinson Trading Co. v. Shirley*, the Supreme Court has demonstrated an accelerating trend toward removing tribal jurisdiction and further abridging tribal sovereignty. NCAI is leading a nationwide effort to reverse the troubling trends in Indian case law and federal Indian policy. Formerly the Tribal Sovereignty Protection Initiative, the Tribal Governance and Economic Enhancement Initiative (TGEEI) represents a national tribal effort spearheaded by NCAI to improve tribes' collective advocacy before the federal courts, to engage in public education about tribal governance, and to consider legislation to reaffirm tribal jurisdiction.

Legislative Drafting Committee

Over the past eleven months, a committee of tribal leaders and technical staff have worked to compile draft legislation to address the concerns at the heart of the Tribal Governance and Economic Enhancement Initiative. A concept paper to be used to facilitate discussions with Members of Congress was developed and approved at a meeting in Bismarck in July 2001. The legislative proposal continues to be developed and refined with significant input from many tribal leaders.

Tribal Survey of Impacts of Supreme Court Decisions

Co-Chairs of the Initiative have created and distributed a survey to all tribes asking for factual information about the practical jurisdictional problems caused by Supreme Court decisions that have diminished jurisdiction over non-Indians. By gathering concrete data on the practical implications of recent case law, this survey effort can help to educate policy makers on the confusion that has resulted from the increasing complexities of jurisdiction in Indian Country and point to areas that could benefit from clarifying legislation.

TGEEI Education & Public Outreach

As an important component of the Initiative's outreach efforts, an independent public opinion poll was conducted to survey the general American public on support for American Indian tribal sovereignty. The results of the survey, announced at a press conference held in the Senate Indian Affairs Committee room, indicated that 74 percent of Americans support American Indian self determination.

NCAI has developed several vehicles to educate tribes about the issues surrounding TGEEI, and has initiated a public outreach campaign to educate federal, state, and local legislators and the general

educate federal, state, and local legislators and the general public on the importance of tribal sovereignty. Key components of this effort have included Native Vote 2002 efforts to ensure that Indian and Alaska Native people have a voice at the polls, a 2800 mile Sovereignty Run from the Quinault reservation to the Supreme Court, and a National Tribal Rally in Washington, DC to mark the first day of the Supreme Court's 2003 docket.

The Sovereignty Protection Fund

NCAI has maintained a dedicated sovereignty protection fund to address the costs of these critical efforts. The Sovereignty Run served as the principal fundraising effort to date for TGEEI, with nearly \$17,000 raised for the Initiative.

Supreme Court Project

The Supreme Court Project is improving coordination among tribes and their attorneys in ongoing Supreme Court litigation. The Project recently completed amicus briefs in two cases that will be heard by the Supreme Court this fall - *United States v. White Mountain Apache Tribe* and *United States v. Navajo Nation*. The Supreme Court Project is housed with the Native American Rights Fund (NARF), with direction provided by an advisory group of tribal leaders.

National Indian Project on the Judiciary

In response to the increasingly hostile stance courts have adopted towards tribal sovereignty and rights, this committee has established a National Indian Project on the Judiciary to evaluate judicial nominees, provide reports and make recommendations on nominees, educate federal and state judges on Indian law and tribal sovereignty, and advance American Indian judicial candidates.

FOSTERING HEALTHY GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

The government-to-government relationship between the U.S. government and tribal governments is a key concern of tribes. Meaningful federal consultation with tribes on policy matters that impact them is of utmost importance to this relationship. NCAI has worked to foster consultation with the federal government on an array of fronts over the past year, including in complex ongoing efforts to address reform in the wake of devastating federal mismanagement of tribal and Indian Individual trust accounts. Tribes' relationship with the federal government remains a central concern to NCAI. But while state governments historically had no role vis a vis tribal lands and people, contemporary realities of devolution, jurisdictional complexities, and a desire for positive neighborly relations have made it increasingly important to foster constructive state-tribal relationships. NCAI has engaged in a range of comprehensive efforts to foster positive dialogue and model best practices for cooperation between state and tribal governments.

Models of Cooperation between States and Tribes

In their ongoing partnership to foster improved state-tribal relations, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and NCAI partnered over the past year to produce the joint publication, *Models of Cooperation between States and Tribes*. This book highlights some of the broad strategies and institutions that tribes and states have used to build communication and respect between their governments. This book serves as a follow-up to the initial NCSL/NCAI joint publication, *Government to Government: Understanding State and Tribal Governments*.

Trust Reform Task Force

In December of last year, NCAI coordinated with Indian tribes and the Department of the Interior (DOI) to form a joint Trust Reform Task Force to address the ongoing crisis in federal management of Indian trust funds. Through this Task Force, tribal leaders have sought to develop and evaluate organizational options to improve the integrity and effectiveness of the DOI's Indian Trust Operations consistent with trust law and treaty rights.

The Task Force has been negotiating potential legislation that would define the trust obligations of the United States and reorganize the Department's lines of authority and accountability for trust management. Despite significant progress, efforts to draft legislation ended in an impasse over legal standards for federal management of Indian trust property. Also, tribal leaders insisted that the legislation include an oversight mechanism that would create accountability. Due to the impasse, the tribal caucus developed a tribal draft bill independently which is now being discussed with key members of Congress. NCAI continues to seek restored dialogue between tribal and federal representatives to address remaining areas of potential agreement on implementing critical reforms outside the legislative arena.

The Task Force has been successful in confronting trust management issues in a very serious and deliberate fashion. Perhaps for the first time, all the major issues are on the table, and tribal leaders,

the major issues are on the table, and tribal leaders, the federal courts, Congress, and Interior are fully engaged in the discussion. NCAI will continue to move forward with tribal leadership to ensure that accountability is created for Indian trust fund and trust resource management.

Land to Trust Task Force

In light of more pressing matters, the Department of Interior has not taken any action on the Land to Trust issue since withdrawing the "Final Rule on Acquisition of Land in Trust" on November 9, 2001. The lack of activity stands as a victory for NCAI and tribes, as the Administration now has a much greater understanding of the importance of land to trust. Despite the quiet on this issue, NCAI has sought to ensure that tribes will be prepared to address this issue substantively if it returns to the Department's agenda.

Justice Research Statistics Association Partnership

NCAI has partnered with the Justice Research Statistics Association to promote the creation of Tribal Justice Statistics Assistance Centers. In an effort to strengthen individual tribal justice systems and their associated governing institutions, these centers will provide technical assistance and training to teach tribes how to better utilize justice statistics.

Indian Land Consolidation Act and Land Fractionation Task Force

With trust reform efforts increasing attention to the enormous challenge of ongoing land fractionation, NCAI is working with Congress and the Administration to address this ever-expanding problem that lies at the root of many of the problems plaguing trust management. The Department of Interior, tribal representatives, and members of Congress and their staff are engaged in discussions regarding administrative and legislative means to slow, stop, and reverse the fractionation of trust land, and will continue to work together to create legislation that seeks to balance the many pressing concerns at play in this extraordinarily complex issue.

MOBILIZING TO ADDRESS HARMFUL LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

NCAI continually monitors legislative developments in Congress, and keeps a close eye on appropriations measures of concern to Indian Country to ensure that harmful riders are not included in these must-pass measures. NCAI has activated its communications network several times in recent months to alert tribes to troubling developments and aid tribes in timely and effective response to these proposals. Through these efforts, as well as through direct advocacy and education with members of Congress and their staff, NCAI has played a key role in the defeat of several potentially damaging legislative proposals that have come before Congress this session.



NCAI Executive Council Winter Session, Washington, D.C., February 2001. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Breyer addresses the NCAI General Assembly

Dodd Moratorium on Federal Recognition

In late September, the Senate overwhelmingly defeated Senator Dodd's amendment to the FY 2003 Interior Appropriations bill that would have placed a moratorium on the federal recognition of Indian tribes. While almost everyone is in agreement that the process needs reform, NCAI and tribes throughout Indian Country were united in articulating that such a rider was an inappropriate vehicle by which to approach such a complex and sensitive area. NCAI continues to work with key players to foster longer term substantive steps toward reform of the BAR process in close consultation with tribes.

Trust Fund Accounting Limitation

The committee-passed version of the FY2002 House Interior Appropriations measure included language which would have enabled the Bureau of Indian Affairs to determine the amount owed to individual Indian allottees based on the 1985 balance in those accounts, in total disregard of funds lost or mismanaged prior to that date. An amendment offered by Representative Hayworth to strike that language passed in a resounding vote of 288-144.

Wolf Gaming Amendment

Congress voted overwhelmingly in favor of striking Representative Wolf's proposed amendment to the 2003 Senate Interior Appropriations bill that sought to redirect \$200,000 from the Bureau of Indian Affairs' administration line item to create a Commission on Native American Policy—comprised largely of representatives from entities that have generally been outspoken critics of tribal governments—to undertake a study of selected issues affecting Indian Country. The proposed study, which would have duplicated previous studies sought by the congressman, represented a highly political effort to attack tribal gaming enterprises.

DEVELOPING HEALTHY ECONOMIES IN INDIAN COUNTRY

The need for sustainable economic development in Indian Country has been advanced by tribal leaders as one of the most pressing concerns facing tribes today. Despite decades of initiatives and programs, and the notable success of a small segment of tribes as a result of gaming and related enterprises, unemployment remains at over 50 percent in numerous reservation communities, and many tribal communities continue to be plagued by capital flight and stagnant economies. NCAI has made the quest for meaningful, innovative approaches to economic development in Indian Country a top priority.

Economic Development Initiative

The 2002 Midyear Session in Bismarck was devoted to a single theme of economic development, with several days of plenary and breakout training sessions focused on building concrete solutions to the need for economic development in Indian Country. Recognizing that truly sustainable economic development involves not just business and finance but a range of infrastructure and community development elements, all NCAI committees were asked to develop position papers to explore areas within their oversight that could contribute to comprehensive economic development. NCAI is compiling these priorities into a comprehensive Tribal White Paper on Economic Development which will present an array of concrete proposals for pursuing substantive growth and economic health in Native communities. This document can be used to inform policy development, serving as an invaluable tool in NCAI's efforts to promote economic development in Indian Country.

Transportation Task Force

Transportation infrastructure has been identified as one of the key issues that must be addressed to secure lasting and meaningful economic development throughout Indian Country. The Transportation Task Force, formed by a resolution passed at the 2001 Midyear in Spokane, has held a series of meetings and conference calls to coordinate a unified tribal position on key priorities for tribal-specific components in the reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century. In September 2002, NCAI hosted a National Tribal Transportation Summit with support from the Federal Highway Administration to further explore Indian Country transportation needs and formulate concrete options for addressing areas of concern.

Economic Development Summit

NCAI served as a co-sponsor for the Bureau of Indian Affairs/Tribal Budget Advisory Council National Summit on Emerging Tribal Economies, held in Phoenix, Arizona September 16-19, 2002. The conference sought to advance the Department of Interior's goal of creating 100,000 jobs in Indian Country by 2008 and self-sustaining tribal economies by 2020. Several high-profile speakers participated at the conference, including numerous tribal leaders, the Secretaries of Interior and Commerce, the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, and the CEOs of Siemens Corp. and Hewlett-Packard/Compaq.

Financial Literacy Curriculum Development

Financial literacy has been identified as a key component of building and keeping capital in Indian Country economies. NCAI is working with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the First Nations Development Institute, and the Community Development Financial Institutions to develop a Financial Literacy Curriculum to expand the financial skills of individual Indians.

Homebuyer Education Initiative

Homeownership has long been limited in Indian Country due to complications in lending and other impediments. Together with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Fannie Mae, the National Indian Housing Council, and the Commerce Department, NCAI has been formulating a curriculum which will assist individual Indians who are in the process of buying a home and improve home ownership rates in Indian Country.

Addressing the Technology Gap in Indian Country

In the past year, NCAI worked with a coalition of public interest groups to restore funding to the Technology Opportunities Program and Community Technology Centers, which was eliminated in the President's budget request.

NCAI also worked to pass the NATIVE Act, which would provide financial incentives to increase basic phone service to Indian communities, and the Community Telecommunications Planning Grant Act, which would provide funding to tribal governments and other entities to conduct technology planning and feasibility studies. NCAI worked with Senate Indian Affairs Committee and Senate Commerce Committee staff to secure a hearing on tribal telecommunications issues this spring, and has been working with several Senators to provide guidance in shaping a comprehensive tribal telecommunications bill.

In 2002, the Ford Foundation awarded a \$66,000 grant to NCAI to continue our work to close the technology gap in Indian Country. Grant funding will be used for a variety of purposes, including hosting two additional NCAI Tribal Leader Meetings in 2002-2003, the redesign and maintenance of www.indiantech.org, advocating and implementing the policy recommendations contained in *Connecting Indian Country: Tribally-Driven Technology Policy*, and providing outreach to tribal leaders, public agencies, and private organizations through participation in national and regional meetings focused on telecommunications access issues.

ENSURING QUALITY OF LIFE FOR INDIAN PEOPLE

Fostering the well being of American Indian and Alaska Native people in a range of areas, from health care to education, environmental protection to child welfare, is a chief concern of NCAI. The organization has actively pursued this aspect of its work on an array of fronts, monitoring legislative developments, providing information to tribes and tribal organization on issues of concern, and facilitating dialogue in an effort to substantively address these matters. The following initiatives represent just a few of the ways NCAI engages to promote a better quality of life for Indian and Alaska Native people.

Welfare Reform Program

For the past four years, NCAI has taken a lead role in facilitating dialogue and policy development in Indian Country relating to the implementation of welfare reform and its related programs: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Child Care, Employment and Training, Child Support, Medicaid and Food Stamps. NCAI convenes tribes operating or interested in operating TANF on a quarterly basis to share best practices, provide information about federal and state policies, and organize to impact TANF reauthorization. With reauthorization of welfare reform on Congress' agenda in the 107th Congress, NCAI has served to provide educational information and data to congressional committee staff who have sought guidance as they draft elements of the reauthorization measure relating to tribes. NCAI continues to work with national organizations representing the interests of state human service programs to foster coordination of state and tribal programs.

Budget and Appropriations Tracking

One of the key concerns of tribes in the congressional and executive arenas is the development of the federal budget and the subsequent annual appropriations process, with funding in the balance that stands to have a significant and immediate impact on the well being of Indian tribes and individuals in an array of areas. NCAI remains closely engaged in this annual effort, meeting with key administration officials throughout the budget formulation process for the coming fiscal year, providing testimony to a range of congressional appropriations committees and subcommittees on budget areas impacting tribes when they receive the Administration's proposed budget, and keeping tribes informed of developments as House and Senate appropriations measures advance to final passage.

Environmental Protection in Indian Country

Throughout the past year, NCAI has been engaged in discussions with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding the potential award of state status to tribes under certain environmental statutes. The goal of the discussions has been to develop plans to assist and advise tribes with their EPA applications and to provide technical support on the practical application of state status.

The NCAI Nuclear Waste Program (NWP) continues to track issues impacting tribal cultures, lands, and people, including proposed construction of a geologic repository for the disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste at Yucca Mountain in Nevada. The NWP also monitors developments within the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as transportation and interim storage matters related to radioactive waste management programs. In addition, the NWP works with the Department of Defense (DOD) to identify and address environmental and safety concerns related to munitions remaining at out of use DOD ranges in or near Indian Country. Over the past year, staff for the NCAI Nuclear Waste Program have continued to host workshops, speak at conferences, and assist organizations in drafting procedural documents related to environmental safety. Staff also continue to work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency on emergency response issues in Indian Country, and on homeland security issues in which tribes represent important players.

Department of Health and Human Services Consultation

NCAI worked to coordinate the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Fourth Annual Tribal Budget Consultation meeting held in May 2002. This effort offered an important opportunity for tribal leadership to make their voices heard in the budget formulation process within the Department. NCAI President Tex Hall and Executive Director Jacqueline Johnson were among presenters who engaged in a daylong dialogue with Claude Allen, Deputy Secretary, DHHS and several other key officials from agencies throughout DHHS on issues from healthcare to self governance to homeland security.

National Indian Alcohol & Substance Abuse Task Force

Over the past year, NCAI has continued to coordinate the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force, established in an agreement between NCAI, the BIA, and the former National Committee on Indian Alcohol and Substance Abuse. The goal of the NIASA Task Force is to assist Tribal communities in the prevention of alcohol and substance abuse, and facilitate the healing, recovery, and lifetime wellness of Indian people. NCAI participated in coordinating the Healing our Spirits Worldwide...

IHS Restructuring Workgroup

The Indian Health Service (IHS) Restructuring Initiative Workgroup, comprised of Tribal Leaders from each IHS area, is charged with developing recommendations to realign the delivery of health care to meet current and particular changes in the national environment, including recommendations to fit Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Secretary Tommy Thompson's "One-DHHS Initiative."

NCAI has participated in Workgroup meetings over the course of the year, and has joined in developing an interim report with the group's recommendations for how to best proceed. As the principal federal health care provider, the IHS provides health services to approximately 1.5 million American Indians and Alaska Natives who belong to more than 557 federally recognized tribes in 35 states.

Diabetes Initiative

The Diabetes epidemic in Indian Country is well documented, with vastly disproportionate numbers American Indian and Alaska Natives impacted by the crippling effects of this disease. Approximately half of American Indian/Alaska Native adults have diabetes, and are three times more likely to acquire diabetes than non-natives. NCAI and the National Indian Health Board (NIHB) recently joined in an effort to seek legislation extending the Special Diabetes Program for American Indians and Alaska Natives for a period of ten years, and to increase funding for the program by \$100 million annually. The Special Diabetes Program, set to expire at end of FY 2003, distributes funds to tribal governments through the twelve Indian Health Service Areas Offices. The NIHB, a non-profit organization, supports the health care systems of tribal governments by performing research, policy analysis, and program assessment and development.



NCAI Executive Council Winter Session, Washington, D.C., February 2001. Nike, Inc., Director of Nike's Diabetes Program Sam McCracken accepts award on behalf of Nike, Inc. at the 4th Annual Leadership Awards Banquet.



NCAI Executive Council Winter Session, Washington, D.C., February 2001. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson accepts award on behalf of the agency at the 4th Annual Leadership Awards Banquet.

CELEBRATING AND PROTECTING TRIBAL CULTURES

Of utmost concern to NCAI is the protection of the lifeways that lie at the heart of tribal cultures. Tribal self-determination would be an empty promise if the rich cultures, religions, and practices that make American Indian and Alaska Native tribes what they are were lost. Over the past year, NCAI has worked hard to bring attention to religious and cultural concerns in a myriad of areas.

Sacred Lands Protection Coalition

Responding to frustration with the inadequate solutions available to tribes and traditional practitioners for the protection of sacred places, the Sacred Lands Protection Coalition (SLPC) was formed by a resolution passed at the 2001 NCAI Annual Meeting to rejuvenate efforts to strengthen legal protections for sacred lands and secure administrative accommodations for the use of sacred places by Indian religious practitioners. The SLPC is coordinated by NCAI in collaboration with the Seventh Generation Fund, the Association on American Indian Affairs, the Morning Star Institute, the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and several tribal nations. Over the past year, the coalition has sought to achieve its goals of promoting education, consultation and legislation in support of sacred lands by hosting a forum at the Department of Interior on protection of sacred lands, holding several press conferences on issues relating to sacred sites protection and providing ongoing testimony before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs on specific sites and general concerns relating to protection of sacred areas.

Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Internationally

NCAI has worked closely with the Native American Rights Fund and the Indian Law Resource Center to ensure a voice at the table for U.S. tribes in arenas where the rights of indigenous peoples internationally are being discussed. NCAI has participated in meetings at the Organization of American States and in the United Nations focused on the drafting process for their respective declarations on the rights of indigenous peoples, as well as in the first meeting of the permanent UN forum established to address indigenous rights issues. NCAI has hosted numerous international visitors throughout the year, and has sought to foster dialogue and deeper relationships between indigenous peoples in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world. NCAI also worked with the Canadian Forum of Federations and the Canadian Assembly of First Nations to host a joint conference on taxation issues impacting tribes in the U.S. and Canada.

Recognizing the Contributions of Native Veterans and Highlighting Native Hawaiian Sovereignty

NCAI joined with the Alaska Federation of Natives, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement and the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands to sponsor several days of events to honor the contributions of American

Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian veterans. As part of these efforts, a roundtable discussion and related events sought to call attention to the issue of Native Hawaiian self-determination in honor of a Native Hawaiian veteran who played a prominent role in the struggle for Native Hawaiian rights, seeking to serve his people as he had his nation.

BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR INDIAN COUNTRY

Mentoring Young Leaders

At the 2001 Annual Session, NCAI introduced a plan to institute an intern and fellow program at NCAI to provide up and coming young American Indian and Alaska Native leaders with a unique opportunity to engage on the front lines of legislative action and policy development from within the oldest, largest, and most representative organization of tribal governments. Semester internships are available to students, and year-long fellowships are available to college graduates looking to gain experience in the legislative arena. The program has been an enormous success to date. Three students have served semester or summer internships with the organization this year, and have provided valuable project assistance. Three fellows are currently serving with the organization for the 2002-2003 inaugural year of the program, and have proved to be an invaluable asset to the organization, bringing new energy and skills to the fold and becoming integral to the work of NCAI.

Laying the Groundwork for a National Native Research Entity

The NCAI Fund has begun outreach to partners to begin the implementation stage of its proposed research and policy development entity, the National American Indian Research Institute, independent of the National Congress of American Indians' current advocacy functions. This Institute will serve to gather and assess data on conditions and trends in Indian Country, as well as to develop ideas and options for new approaches to federal Indian policy, Tribal governance, and a range of related areas. This proposed "think tank" to focus on native issues can play a critical role in shifting the discourse in Native policy from a problem-focused approach to truly proactive, future-thinking strategy development.

COALITIONS AND OUTREACH

Outreach to religious, social justice, civil rights, and issue-based organizations, state and local governments, and other potential allies forms a critical part of NCAI's efforts to take on the challenges tribes face. In addition to regular meetings and contacts with an array of representatives from national and international entities, NCAI participates in several key coalitions in an effort to bring the voice of tribes to these influential entities.

Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

NCAI sits on the core executive committee of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, a coalition which has led the fight for equal opportunity and social justice since its founding in 1950. With more than 180 national organizations committed to the protection of civil and human rights in the United States represented in LCCR, this coalition has presented many opportunities for NCAI to provide education and outreach to groups who would like to support American Indian and Alaskan tribal governments in their efforts to protect their way of life and seek fairness in their relations with the U.S. government.

National Voices for an Inclusive 21st Century

Recognizing that an attack on any one group is an attack on all, National Voices was formed in 1996 under the wing of the National Conference for Community and Justice as a collaborative effort to engage our diverse population in constructive interaction and collaborative problem solving. NCAI participates on a regular basis with six other human relations and civil rights organizations in this coalition which seeks to emphasize the common values, concerns, goals, beliefs, and struggles of all people.

NABRE (Network Of Alliances Bridging Race And Ethnicity)

NCAI serves on the core steering committee for the NABRE coalition, a project of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies which seeks to cultivate and nurture leaders of local organizations bridging racial and ethnic divisions.

Maintaining Relationships with National and Regional Tribal Organizations

NCAI maintains formal relationships with a number of national issue-based tribal organizations, and works closely with regional tribal organizations on a regular basis. Agreements with organizations such as the National Indian Education Association, the National Indian Health Board, the National

Indian Business Association, and the National American Indian Housing Council stipulate that the leadership of these organizations serve in a leadership role within NCAI committees or subcommittees in their area of expertise.

Census Advisory Committee Seat

NCAI maintains a position on the Census Advisory Committee, which reports directly to the Secretary of Commerce. Through this position, NCAI provides recommendations to the Census Bureau on how to most effectively reach Indian country in upcoming censuses, surveys, and other statistics gathering activities.

Understanding the Past, Shaping the Future

In its ongoing effort to raise consciousness of Native American issues among Americans at large, NCAI published "Understanding the Past, Shaping the Future," a special brochure to commemorate National American Indian Heritage Month. The brochure, which was designed to educate the general public about basic issues impacting American Indian and Alaska Native people, was distributed locally and nationally.

"West Wing" Contribution

NCAI served as a script-writing advisor to the producers of the popular NBC nighttime drama, "The West Wing," in a special episode highlighting the issue of land-to-trust. Native actors Gary Farmer and Georgina Lightning were the featured guests on the episode.



Tribal Chairmen queue up to ask questions at 58th Annual Session in Spokane, Washington, 2001

GROWING A STRONGER NCAI

Strengthening NCAI's Committee Structure

Recognizing that the NCAI committees and subcommittees represented a vast untapped resource of expertise from throughout Indian Country in a range of issue areas, NCAI has sought to increase the focus on committee meetings and processes at NCAI Annual and Midyear sessions, and to build stronger relationships between committee leadership and corresponding staff to promote dialogue and coordination in our day to day work. NCAI has also sought to improve its resolutions process to promote a more efficient use of committee time and to ensure that the resolutions passed by our body truly carry the weight of carefully considered consensus positions of the tribes represented.

Enhancing NCAI's Presence on the Internet

NCAI has significantly revamped its internet presence over the past year, introducing a newly redesigned and retooled website to provide enhanced access to information for tribes and other interested bodies.

Improving Communications Tools

NCAI has transferred its communications network from an outdated broadcast fax system to a mixed e-mail/fax electronic broadcast system, enabling the organization to improve its ability to provide immediate information to member tribes and subscribers on legislative developments and other matters of concern.

Reinforcing Sound Financial Systems

NCAI has instituted a range of increased fiscal controls over the past year, and has introduced a new accounting software system to better manage its accounts.

Strengthening NCAI's Public Relations

Over the past year, NCAI has put new energy into enhancing the organization's public and media profile through a more aggressive public relations program and strategy that gets the NCAI name and issues of concern out to Indian Country and the American public at-large. Regular issuance of press releases, placement of relevant news stories to Indian Country and mainstream print, radio, TV, and electronic media outlets, and the regular hosting of press conferences in Washington, D.C., and other areas of the country where NCAI member tribes come together to confront common issues of concern are only a few of the methods NCAI is using to "get the word" out about the organization and its important work on behalf of tribes.



September 2001. NCAI is honored at the Grand Entry of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian's Inaugural Powwow on the National Mall. Robert Holden (center) represented NCAI.

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