



Message from the Chair

Dear Fellow Caucus Members,

The caucus has been very busy over the last few months. In addition to many of us wrapping up our legislative sessions we've also been working hard at our caucus responsibilities. In June, many of you traveled to Anchorage, Alaska for the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) mid-year conference. I'd like to extend a special thank you to all the caucus members who took time out of their busy lives to attend. Anchorage was beautiful, but I totally lost my sense of direction, since the sun almost seemed to be stationary in the sky.

Just before the NCAI meeting got underway, NCNASL held a one-day meeting. Since the caucus reorganized three years ago, this was the best turnout of our membership. We had a very productive meeting and again, my thanks to those who were there. One topic we discussed at the meeting was caucus fundraising. If the caucus is to survive, we need to increase our recruitment of new members and encourage our current members to be more active. We need current members to start "dialing for dollars" to keep us going. Many of you have excellent relationships with a number of businesses and organizations that could help NCNASL remain alive and vibrant.

Former Representative Mark Cloer (Colo.) is an excellent example of fundraising by an active committee chair. During his time as chair of the caucus Health and Human Services Committee, he raised money to have conferences and included his donors as active participants in these events. The caucus was sad to see Mark leave when he decided to move on to "greener pastures." The NCNASL could really use him and other former legislators in an ex officio capacity, but we need to raise funds to make that happen. NCNASL's profile continues to grow on the national front as well, so it's especially important that we raise funds to continue this momentum. If you have a fundraising lead or any questions please contact Linda Sikkema (Linda.sikkema@ncsl.org) with the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) State-Tribal Institute.

Our next NCNASL meeting will be during NCAI's Annual Meeting in November that will be held in Denver. We also have an Educational Summit planned in Helena, Montana September 28 - 29 to discuss the study we have commissioned on the American Indian/Alaska Native Student Achievement Gap. I look forward to working with all of you in the upcoming months.

- Representative John McCoy (Wash.; Tulalip)

Committee Updates

Spotlight On: Education Committee

By Senator Carol Juneau (Mont.; Hidatsa Mandan), Committee Chair

I am happy to report that the NCNASL Education Committee has been extremely busy over the last few months. We've met together as a group several times and have decided to focus our efforts on the educational achievement gap that faces

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American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) students. Closing the achievement gap for minority and poor students, especially AI/AN children who are often invisible in the available reports and statistics, is one of the greatest challenges facing our nation's public schools. NCNASL's Education Committee wants to find solutions to this challenge and is leading the effort to develop a national report on policies to help eliminate the disparities in our educational systems for AI/AN students. The AI/AN dropout rates should be a national embarrassment, and a 50% high school graduation rate is unacceptable. When we leave AI/AN students behind, we are leaving our tribal communities behind as well. Long-term impacts can easily be measured in our unemployment rates, our welfare rates, and in some cases, our incarceration rates.

The Education Committee is excited to announce that we are working with a professional education researcher to conduct a study and prepare a final report on the achievement gap. We will be working with Mr. Christoher Lohse, a well-respected researcher from Montana. Mr. Lohse will be compiling information from 10 targeted states— Alaska, Arizona, California, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota and Washington—on achievement, demographics, schools/communities that appear to be having success, impacts of poverty, and other factors that will help educational leadership design policies that will help close the gap.

Our nation's public education systems serve 92 percent of the AI/AN students in the nation, but we do have a significant number of AI/AN students in some states who attend Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) or tribal schools. The study will also include BIE and Tribal K-12 educational systems.

As a part of this process, a Policy Summit is scheduled for September 28-29, 2007 in Helena, Montana to bring NCNASL members as well as educational policymakers from the 10 states together to review the research, discuss the issues, and develop policy recommendations that we can take to our respective states, congressional delegations and tribal leadership.

Montana's Governor Brian Schweitzer and Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction Linda McCulloch have both agreed that the state of Montana will serve as host of this national summit. Governor Schweitzer and Linda McCulloch have provided strong leadership in the past two legislative sessions in Montana to provide additional funding for closing the achievement gap for Indian students, as well as advocating for funding for at-risk students.

NCNASL members are working hard on fundraising efforts, and have done a great job so far. We want to recognize the National Education Association (NEA) as a major funder for this project. NEA has partnered with the Black and Hispanic Caucuses in the past to do similar educational achievement gap reports.

This issue is not new to those of us who have worked on this effort for many years in our respective states, but perhaps when we join together as a coalition of 10 states with one voice, we may be heard and will make positive changes in our educational systems to help AI/AN children find success.

When we leave AI/AN students behind, we are leaving our tribal communities behind as well. — Senator Carol Juneau

Community Wellness & Criminal Justice Committee

Committee Chair, Representative Joey Jayne (Mont.; Navajo), along with NCSL staff Andrea Wilkins, Anne Teigen and Sarah Hammond, participated in the 20th Annual Oklahoma Sovereignty Symposium (<http://www.oscn.net/sovereignty/agenda.aspx>) in Oklahoma City on May 31. Representative Jayne was a panelist for a discussion entitled "Native American Criminal Justice Issues." Representative Jayne specifically referenced House Bill 211, passed by the Montana legislature in 2003, which added two auxiliary members to the parole board—one of whom was Native American—and also required all board members to receive training about American Indian culture so that they could deal appropriately with American Indian inmates appearing before the board.

NCSL staff also submitted a paper entitled "Criminal Justice in Indian Country: State-Tribal Intergovernmental Strategies to Reduce Crime and Promote Community Wellness." This study was a result of work conducted for the Community Wellness & Criminal Justice Committee.

Committee Meets with NCSL/NCAI Advisory Council

On July 19-20, the NCNASL Community Wellness & Criminal Justice Committee conducted a joint meeting in Portland, Oregon with the NCSL/NCAI State-Tribal Relations Project Advisory Council to discuss strategies for promoting collaborative policy development between state and tribal governments in the areas of community wellness, mental health and criminal justice.

The meeting included a presentation by Professor Eileen Luna Firebaugh with the University of Arizona's American Indian Studies Program and Sarah Hammond with NCSL's Criminal Justice Program. The presentation was designed to provide the Advisory Council and NCNASL members with data pertaining to tribal jails, law enforcement and state legislation designed to address crime in Indian Country.

The Advisory Council, made up of state legislators and tribal leaders, guides the work of NCSL and NCAI on the state-tribal relations project.

Environment, Energy, Water and Natural Resources Committee

As Chairman of the Environment Committee, I would like to welcome five new members to the committee: Representatives Karen Awana, Mele Carroll and Faye Hanohano of Hawaii, Scott BigHorse of Oklahoma, and Reggie Joule of Alaska. The scope of issue areas our committee is responsible for is vast, so there are plenty of opportunities to become involved. The committee has jurisdiction for environmental, energy, water and natural resources issues. Right now, the issues before the committee include global climate change, water rights and uranium related issues. In order to move the work of the committee forward, we need to identify potential funding sources. Please let me know if you can help in this endeavor.

- Representative Albert Tom (Ariz.; Navajo), Committee Chair



Committee Chairman Attends DOE Tribal Workshop

In April, Representative Albert Tom (Ariz.) accompanied several NCSL staff at the Department of Energy's (DOE) Transportation External Coordination Working Group (TEC) (<http://tecworkinggroup.org/>) Tribal Workshop in Denver, Colorado. TEC is a collective group of various stakeholders that meets twice a year to discuss DOE's plans for transporting spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste from 77 sites around the country to the proposed Yucca Mountain repository in Nevada. The Tribal Workshop in Denver was the first meeting of its kind—focusing solely on tribal interests and concerns regarding the proposed shipments of nuclear waste. DOE has preliminarily identified approximately 50 tribes and more than 40 states that may be affected by its transportation plans.

Committee Members Meet with DOE to Discuss Federal Facilities Cleanup

In May, a joint meeting of the State and Tribal Government Working Group (STGWG) and NCSL's Environmental Management Roundtable was held in Santa Fe, New Mexico. STGWG is made up of state and tribal environmental officials that are impacted by radioactive contamination stemming from the production of nuclear weapons over the last 50 years. The spring meeting of STGWG and the NCSL Environmental Management Roundtable provided an opportunity for key stakeholders, including members of the NCNASL committee, to hear from Department of Energy (DOE) officials about several issues that impact the environmental management of the former nuclear weapons complex, including: DOE's Fiscal Year 2008 Budget Request for nuclear waste cleanup, natural resource damage assessments, long-term stewardship, and several tribal issues.

Presentations from the meeting are available on NCSL's Federal Facilities website
<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/environ/fedfacilities/FedSTGWGmeetingarch.htm>

During the meeting, committee members Representative John McCoy (Wash.) and Representative Albert Tom (Ariz.) met with STGWG member tribes during a Tribal Executive Session. STGWG tribal members who participated were pleased with the state legislator participation and the likelihood of future coordinated efforts between STGWG and NCNASL.

Before kicking off the plenary sessions, STGWG members and several state legislators toured Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque and the Cochiti Pueblo Reservation. These educational tours set the stage for meaningful dialogue during the main meetings. Speakers included Dr. Ines Triay, Chief Operating Officer for DOE's Office of Environmental Management; Teresa Gomez, New Mexico Deputy Cabinet Secretary for Indian Affairs; and Seth Kirshenber, Executive Director of the Energy Communities Alliance.

Other NCNASL Activities

Members Attend Forum on Working Families

On June 11-12, NCNASL members Representative Suzanne Williams (Colo.; Comanche), Representative Don Barlow (Wash.; Ottawa), and Representative Shannon Augere (Mont.; Blackfeet Nation) joined members of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators, National Asian Pacific American Caucus of State Legislators and the Women's Legislative Network to discuss strategies for developing policy that meets the needs of women, minorities and working families in a way that furthers the economic and social interests of states. The discussion was part of the "Opportunities for Working Families: A Leadership Forum for State Lawmakers" sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

National Conference of State Legislatures Unveils State-Tribal Institute

At the end of 2006, NCSL announced the creation of the State-Tribal Institute. The creation of the Institute is the result of a long history of work on state-tribal relations at NCSL. Over the last few years, this work has evolved and expanded in scope. It has brought attention to the government-to-government relationship that exists between the tribes and the states. And at the personal level it highlights the unique leader-to-leader relationships that exist between tribal leaders and state legislators. For this reason, the state-tribal work of NCSL, which was once located in the Environment, Energy and Transportation Program, is now part of the NCSL Leadership Services Division. This placement of the State-Tribal Institute provides opportunities for NCSL staff to collaborate in a new way. The Institute has several projects in the works that will involve NCSL policy experts in researching and writing on a variety of policy issues as they apply to state-tribal relations.

NCSL State-Tribal Institute Provides Technical Assistance to Osage Legislature

In March 2006, the Osage Nation ratified a new constitution that created a three branch form of government. Five staff members from NCSL visited the Osage Nation in June 2006 to provide technical assistance for the newly elected 12-member Osage Congress about the various aspects of the legislative process, including basic rules and skills for legislators, leadership responsibilities, committee structures, legislative drafting and ethics. Another technical assistance project was conducted in August 2006 by two NCSL staff to train the Osage legislative staff about legislative rules, parliamentary procedure, office structures and job responsibilities.

In February, NCSL staff Ron Snell, Douglas Shinkle, and Brice Kindred provided a technical assistance project on state budgets for the Osage Congress. Mr. Snell and Alan Conroy, Director of the Kansas Legislative Research Department, gave presentations and answered questions from the congressional members on a wide range of topics including budget scheduling, funding priorities and the roles of the different branches of government.

State News

Judge Dismisses ADA Suit Against Alaska Dental Therapist Program

In a decision (http://www.ada.org/prof/advocacy/legal/alaska/media_lawsuit.pdf) handed down on June 27, 2007 a Superior Court judge in Alaska dismissed a legal challenge to a dental therapist program for Native villages. The American Dental Association (ADA), the Alaska Dental Society and four dentists sued the state and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, alleging that the dental therapist program puts Alaska Natives at risk by providing substandard care. The suit also sought to require the dental therapists, who undergo two years of special training and work under a licensed dentist, to obtain state licenses in order to practice in Native villages. The presiding judge ruled that upholding the challenge would frustrate tribal self-determination under the Indian Health Care Improvement Act and the Indian Self-Determination Act. Alaska Natives, especially children, suffer tooth decay and other mouth problems at a much higher rate than other



Americans. Therapists typically serve small, isolated villages where dental care availability is limited or non-existent; they fill cavities, make tooth extractions and perform other procedures, but they do not perform surgical operations.

Bill Prentice, Associate Executive Director-Government Affairs of the ADA, and Peter Milgrom of the University of Washington and Director of the Northwest/Alaska Center to Reduce Oral Health Disparities, spoke to NCNASL members in July 2006 in Denver about this issue. Mr. Prentice briefed the caucus about the suit and Mr. Milgrom discussed potential settlements between ADA and the University of Washington.

Arizona Enacts Legislation Benefiting Indian Children

On July 2, Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano signed House Bill 2332 (http://www.azleg.gov/DocumentsForBill.asp?Bill_Number=HB2332), sponsored by NCNASL member Representative Albert Tom (Ariz.). The legislation retroactively allows a school district governing board to admit children who are nonresidents of the state without the payment of tuition. A "certificate of educational convenience" is provided to a student who is precluded by distance or lack of adequate transportation from attending a school in the school district, or if the student resides in an unorganized territory. The legislation is especially important given the fact that some Navajo children live in one state but must attend school in another.

The legislation allows a school district governing board to admit children without the payment of tuition if:

- the children are U.S. residents;
- the children are members of a federally recognized tribe;
- the children reside on Indian lands that are under the jurisdiction of the tribe of which the children are members; and
- the area in the boundaries of the reservation where the children reside is located both in Arizona and another state.

Arizona Agrees to Reimburse Navajo Nation for Foster Care

The state of Arizona and the Navajo Nation now have a Title IV-E intergovernmental agreement that allows the tribe to be reimbursed by the state for the foster care of Navajo children. Under the agreement, family members who are relatives of the foster children will be trained and licensed. The Navajo Nation, the first Arizona tribe to have such an agreement with the state, also has a similar agreement with the state of New Mexico that has resulted in 99 percent of tribal foster children being placed with relatives since 2002.

Idaho Creates New Indian Education Coordinator Position

Idaho's Department of Education has created a new Indian education coordinator position to oversee the education of the state's American Indian students. The candidates for the education coordinator position will be selected with assistance from Idaho's five recognized tribes: the Coeur d'Alene, Kootenai, Nez Perce, Shoshone-Bannock and Shoshone-Paiute.

There was a similar effort last year to create the position, but it lost momentum due to a lack of funding. This year the position will be created using existing resources without having to seek funding from the legislature. The Indian education coordinator position will communicate the special needs of Indian

Related Links

NCNASL Homepage

<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/statetribe/nativecaucus.htm>

NCSL Database of State Legislation

<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/statetribe/database.htm>

State Committees and Commissions on Indian Affairs

<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/statetribe/stlegcom.htm>

students to teachers and try to identify the reasons Indian students are not achieving at the same levels of other students in the state.

Maine Passes Resolution to Continue Tribal-State Work Group

On June 29, Maine Governor John Baldacci signed a resolution, LD 1263, (<http://janus.state.me.us/legis/LawMakerWeb/summary.asp?ID=280023964>) enabling Maine's Tribal-State Work Group to continue its work on improving relations between lawmakers and the state's Indian tribes. The Tribal-State Work Group was originally formed to study issues associated with the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act and the accompanying Maine Implementing Act.

Minnesota Tribes Breaking Ground with Child Welfare Initiative

The Minnesota Department of Human Services created the American Indian Child Welfare Initiative in 2005 with the approval of the state legislature. The initiative will transfer the responsibility for American Indian child welfare services on the reservations from the counties to the tribes. Some Minnesota counties are working with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and the White Earth Band on a child welfare initiative that will begin in the fall of 2007.

The state will provide funding and support to the tribes to ease the transition of services. State statistics show that American Indian children are six times more likely to be taken from their homes than are other children. Because the tribes and counties have sometimes disagreed on child welfare authority and obligations, the initiative should benefit the tribes by giving them more control over the welfare of their children. The tribes will be subject to the same state and federal regulations and standards for child protection as are the counties.

Montana Indian Education for All Funding Levels Locked In

It was a rocky road for Indian Education for All (IEA) during the 2007 legislative session in Montana. In the early weeks of the session, IEA funding for the Office of Public Instruction was completely gutted (but thankfully it was restored during the Special Session). We worked very hard to try to get \$50.00 per student for IEA in our schools to continue to support their work in implementing IEA. We had many "friends" including the Montana Women's Lobby and the Education Forum who joined our effort and made this one of their priorities.

The great beginning given to IEA in the 2005 sessions (\$68.00 per student of one-time-only and ongoing funding) was cut back in the Executive Budget to \$20.40 per student, and we did not believe this was adequate. We proposed increasing this amount to \$50.00 per student through SB 390, but when all was said and done through the regular session and the special session, we ended up with \$30.40 per student per year going to all schools in Montana (\$20.40 ongoing and \$10.00 one-time-only money). It remains to be seen whether this amount is adequate for our schools to continue their work on IEA for the next two years.

- Submitted by *Senator Carol Juneau*

Montana Governor Signs Medicaid Pact with Chippewa Cree

Montana's Governor Brian Schweitzer signed an agreement with the Chippewa Cree tribe on May 24 that will allow a local official on the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation to determine tribal members' eligibility for Medicaid. The agreement is seen as a way to make tribal members more comfortable in seeking the Medicaid benefits they may be entitled to because the members will be dealing with

IEA Resources

(<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/>)



someone they know. The local official likely will be able to explain the program requirements in a culturally-competent manner, thus encouraging the members to have more regular health checkups, which should lead to better overall community health.

Montana Tribal Colleges See Increase in Funding

The Montana legislature increased the amount each of Montana's Tribal Colleges will receive for non-beneficiary students over the next two years. Non-beneficiary students are non-enrolled members of federally recognized tribes or tribal members of non-federally recognized tribes attending federal tribal colleges. The amount per student was increased to \$3,024 —almost double the current \$1,500 per non-beneficiary that was approved in the 2005 session. Some of the additional money added for this program is one-time-only funding, which means that tribal colleges will have to go back to the legislature in 2009 to seek additional support.

- Submitted by *Senator Carol Juneau*

North Dakota Tribal College Bill Signed

North Dakota Governor John Hoeven signed House Bill 13-95 (<http://www.legis.nd.gov/assembly/60-2007/bill-actions/ba1395.html>) (Senate Bill 2404) into law on May 10. The new law allocates \$700,000 to North Dakota's five tribal colleges to help pay for some of the education costs of non-tribal students. Funding for the colleges will be generated by state tax revenues from oil production on the Fort Berthold Reservation. The bill had been voted down since 1989, but both the House and Senate passed it this year with the support of tribal college presidents and Governor Hoeven.

South Dakota Enacts Indian Education Bill

South Dakota Governor Mike Rounds approved legislation to incorporate American Indian culture and history into South Dakota's K-12 curriculum. The Indian Education Bill (HB 1290) <http://legis.state.sd.us/sessions/2007/1290.htm>, had tremendous legislative support and provides state school districts with educational programs aimed at increasing American Indian cultural awareness.

The bill creates an Office of Indian Education within the state's Department of Education to develop and implement the new curriculum. The new office will work closely with an Indian Education Advisory Council consisting of American Indian educators and a representative from each of South Dakota's nine tribes. Representatives are nominated by tribal governments and then appointed by the state Secretary of Education for three-year terms.

Indian Law Added to South Dakota Bar Exam

The South Dakota Supreme Court has adopted a rule requiring law students to answer a question about American Indian law on the state bar exam. Starting with the July 2007 exam, applicants will be required to answer a question involving the basic principles of federal Indian law, but they will not be required to know about tribal codes or customary laws. New Mexico and Washington are the two other states that currently cover American Indian law on their state bar exams.

Wisconsin Legislators Hear 'State of the Tribes' Address

On March 1, 2007 Wisconsin legislators listened to an Ojibwe tribal leader's request for cooperative action between tribal and state lawmakers. The 3rd Annual "State of the Tribes" address was delivered by Patricia DePerry, chairperson of the Red Cliff Band of Ojibwe and the first woman chair of Wisconsin's Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council.

Speaking on behalf of Wisconsin's 11 tribes, DePerry addressed current issues facing the tribes, including conflicts between the state's game wardens and tribal members resulting from misunderstandings about tribal sovereignty. Other issues she mentioned were gaming, racism and under-funded health, education and welfare programs. DePerry's most urgent request was that state lawmakers respect tribal sovereignty. She also asked for continued cooperation between tribes and states.

National News

Sex Offender Registry Deadline Passes

July 27, 2007 was the deadline for tribes to opt in to the national sex offender registry required by the Adam Walsh Act

(http://www.missingkids.com/en_US/documents/AdamWalshAct.pdf),

which Congress enacted in the summer of 2006. Under the act, if a tribe did not opt in by the deadline, the state in which the tribe is located will be granted enforcement jurisdiction under the act. A tribe that did opt in to the national sex offender registry has until July 2009 to develop and maintain its sex offender registry. The U.S. Department of Justice can extend this deadline and provide grants to tribes to help them come into compliance with the act, but thus far no money has been appropriated. A congressional bill to extend the July 27 deadline by one year passed the U.S. House of Representatives on July 23, but the Senate failed to act.

Alaska Natives Sue Over Voting Rights Violations

On June 11, 2007 the Native American Rights Fund and the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit in federal district court in Anchorage, alleging that state and local elections officials violated the federal Voting Rights Act (VRA)

(http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode42/usc_sec_42_00001971----000-.html) by denying voter assistance and by failing to provide oral language assistance and voting materials to Natives in the Bethel region who primarily speak their first language, Yup'ik. If successful, the suit would lead to the requirement that ballots and other election materials be translated into Yup'ik, and that bilingual staff be present to help register and assist voters at the polls.

Alaska, Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas are the five states that are entirely covered by the language assistance provisions of the VRA. Section 203 of the act (added in 1975) requires certain jurisdictions to provide bilingual language assistance to voters in communities where there is a concentration of citizens who have limited English proficiency. The language assistance provisions apply to four language groups: American Indians, Asian Americans, Alaska Natives, and those of Spanish heritage. In 2006, Congress reauthorized the temporary language assistance provisions for another 25 years.



Indian Land Rights-of-Way Study Released to Congress

In May 2007, the Departments of Energy and Interior released the final version of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, Section 1813 Indian Land Rights-of-Way Study. Section 1813 required the two departments to conduct a study of issues regarding energy rights-of-way on tribal land. The study includes:

- an analysis of historic rates of compensation paid for energy rights-of-way on tribal land;
- recommendations for appropriate standards and procedures for determining fair and appropriate compensation to Indian tribes for grants, expansions, and renewals of energy rights-of-way on tribal land;
- an assessment of tribal self-determination and sovereignty interests implicated by applications for the grant, expansion, or renewal of energy rights-of-way on tribal land; and
- an analysis of relevant national energy transportation policies relating to grants, expansions, and renewals of energy rights-of-way on tribal land.

The study concludes in part that there is no evidence that tribal rights-of-way agreements have ever had an impact on energy prices. It also recommends that negotiations should be left to tribes and energy companies, mainly out of respect for tribal sovereignty and self-determination. The study does state that Congress should only become involved if a tribe and energy company cannot come to an agreement and have a dispute that has a "significant regional or national effect on the supply, price, or reliability of energy resources." If an impasse situation occurs, the study recommends that Congress approach each situation on a case-by-case basis through specific legislation rather than through broad legislative changes that would affect tribal sovereignty or self-determination generally.

Report Released on Tribal Successes in Protecting the Environment and Natural Resources

In May 2007, the Offices of the Inspector General for the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Interior released a report (<http://www.doioig.gov/upload/2007-G-0020.pdf>) entitled "Tribal Successes: Protecting the Environment and Natural Resources." The purpose of the report was to show examples of successful tribal practices in achieving natural resource and environmental goals, and to encourage government agencies and other stakeholders to use the report to enhance relationships and partnerships with tribes.

Report Released on Sexual Violence Against Indigenous Women

In April 2007, Amnesty International released a report (<http://www.amnestyusa.org/women/maze/report.pdf>) entitled "Maze of Injustice: The Failure to Protect Indigenous Women from Sexual Violence in the USA." Among the findings of the report are statistics showing that Native American and Alaska Native women are more than 2.5 times more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted than other women in the United States, more than one in three Native women will be raped in their lifetimes, and in at least 86 percent of the reported cases of rape or sexual assault, the perpetrators are non-Native men.

The report laments the fact that tribal law enforcement agencies, justice systems, and health clinics are chronically under-funded. Additionally, law enforcement

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personnel and nurses are lacking in numbers and are not properly trained to deal with sexual assault victims. Jurisdictional complications further the problem and often lead to the perpetrators escaping justice, leaving the victims with little to no recourse. The report focused on three regions with distinct jurisdictional issues: Alaska, Oklahoma and the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North and South Dakota.

NAGPRA Rule May Help Tribes Reclaim Artifacts

A new regulation

http://www.nps.gov/history/nagpra/mandates/Future_Applicability_Final_Rule.htm by the U.S. Department of the Interior under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) may make it easier for Native Americans to identify and reclaim cultural items currently in the possession of museums and federal agencies. The new regulation requires museums and federal agencies to provide new and updated lists of their tribal collections or holdings to lineal descendants, Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations by October 20, 2007. This may encourage more repatriation claims by tribes that have had their artifacts lost or stolen over the years.

Upcoming Events

NCNASL Education Summit

Helena, Montana
September 28-29, 2007

State and Tribal Government Working Group

Snowbird Ski & Summer Resort, Utah
October 16-18, 2007

38th Annual NIEA Convention

Honolulu, Hawaii
October 25-28, 2007

64th Annual Convention of the National Congress of American Indians

Denver, Colorado
November 11-16, 2007

