

Statement of Chairman Ben Nighthorse Campbell
U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
Hearing on S.2052
The Indian Tribal Development Consolidated Funding Act of 2000
September 27, 2000

Now we will turn to the hearing on S.2052, the *Indian Tribal Development Consolidated Funding Act of 2000*, a bill I introduced earlier this year.

Despite a handful of successful Gaming tribes, Native people remain stuck in poverty, unemployment and hopelessness.

Indian schools are falling apart.

Indians continue to suffer the worst health status in the Nation.

Housing stock is insufficient and the quality is poor.

Indian youth suicide rates are among the highest in the Nation.

This is an unacceptable reality that I am hopeful we can change.

In this Congress alone, I have introduced legislation aimed at regulatory reform, needs assessment, good governance, physical infrastructure, trade and commerce, and agriculture, just to name a few.

One of the biggest problems I believe is the “fractured” way the U.S. administers Indian resources. Whether or not an “Indian Program Czar” in the White House will solve these problems I do not know.

S.2052 addresses this problem and builds on Indian Self Determination and Self Governance – the most successful Federal Indian policy ever – to bring more effectiveness to Federal resources targeted at Indian economic development problems.

Though there are some \$9 billion in Federal funds appropriated annually for Indian programs, I am convinced that the current piecemeal administration of those funds is inadequate and unacceptable.

In my experience as Chairman of this Committee, I have seen far too many instances where agencies are NOT cooperating and NOT coordinating their resources and efforts for the benefit of Indian people.

With that, I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today on this important legislation.