

Opening Statement of Chairman Ben Nighthorse Campbell  
On the Nomination of Montie Deer  
As Chairman, National Indian Gaming Commission

September 16, 1998

Now we will turn to the nomination of Montie Deer of Kansas to become Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission.

Since 1988, Indian gaming has become a source of much-needed revenue for tribal governments. There are now 185 tribes operating some form of gaming operations, generating nearly \$6 billion dollars a year.

The National Indian Gaming Commission, created by the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988, is a three member agency charged with monitoring gaming activities on Indian lands. The NIGC has the authority to approve management contracts, conduct background investigations, approve tribal gaming ordinances and audit the books and records of gaming operations. The NIGC also has the authority to enforce the law against violations federal laws, regulations and tribal gaming ordinances.

Everyone involved in Indian gaming understands the need for a strong, effective commission. This committee is currently working on ways to increase the commission's capabilities with additional revenues. All that will mean nothing without leadership from the NIGC chairman.

Should Mr. Deer be confirmed to this position, he faces what I believe to be a daunting task. The purpose of this hearing is to determine if he is up to it. Before we begin, I would like to thank the outgoing chairman, Tadd Johnson, for his commitment to protecting the integrity of Indian gaming and ensuring that gaming remains a viable option for tribes.