

**Ben Nighthorse Campbell**  
**Committee on Indian Affairs Hearing on S.612**  
**The Indian Needs Assessment and Program Evaluation Act of 2000**

**April 5, 2000**

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Good morning. This morning the Committee will hear testimony on S.612, the *Indian Needs Assessment and Program Evaluation Act of 2000* which I introduced along with Senator Inouye in March, 1999.

At least since the early 1990s, the methodology, allocation and distribution formula for key Indian program funds have been criticized by members of Congress, Indian tribes, and others. For instance, the FY1998 and FY1999 Interior Appropriations acts included mandates to review existing funding formulae and look at ways to develop more equitable methods of allocating Tribal Priority Allocations (TPA).

Some see changes to the current system as “unfair”. Others see the current system as “corrupt”. Still others think the only thing wrong is lack of adequate funding.

But there are some things we all agree on: one is the need for accurate data and a more rational basis for allocation decisions.

For instance, recent reports by the BIA, as well as the Tribes both highlight the need for accurate data collection systems as a key in more accurate funding methodologies and allocation formulae.

Another area of general agreement is our collective desire to require agencies to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs while at the same time not unduly burdening them with reporting requirements.

Yet another area that I intend to pursue is increasing coordination of existing federal resources between and among agencies that share mission areas and program objectives.

The 5 themes of S.612 are the following:

1. Do the agencies have meaningful data on Indian needs?
2. What is the performance of the agencies related to those needs?
3. Do agencies effectively convey program information to tribes?
4. What programs and services are positioned to be better coordinated to better serve Indians?
5. Do we need an “Indian Czar” to oversee such coordination?

I look at this legislation as a starting point so that solid data can be collected and solid criteria and methodologies can be developed. I look forward to working with the members of the Committee, the Indian tribes and the agencies to refine the bill and help the tribes and the agencies make real and measurable progress in these areas.