

**Statement of Ben Nighthorse Campbell  
Nomination Hearing of Thomas N. Slonaker  
to be Special Trustee for American Indians  
March 22, 2000**

This morning the Committee considers the nomination of Thomas N. Slonaker to be the Special Trustee for American Indians.

In the course of my Chairmanship of this Committee, I have never been as frustrated as I am with the Indian trust management problems.

Along with many in Indian country and many here in Congress, when the 1994 *Indian Trust Fund Management Reform Act* was enacted I was hopeful that the United States was finally serious about its solemn obligations to American Indians.

As many here know, the Tribes have been through numerous hearings, several bills, untold GAO reports, and now class action litigation to achieve some justice.

My frustration led me in February, 2000, to circulate to all Tribal Leaders a draft bill to create a temporary, but *independent* body to do what the Department has been unable to do so far.

With regard to this Nominee, I am anxious to hear his views on what can and should be done at this point in time to remedy what we all acknowledge is a complex and serious situation.

I am also anxious to hear from Chief Tillman, Chief of the Osage Nation of Oklahoma representing the ITMA this morning.

I will submit the rest of my statement for the Record.

For a variety of reasons, including what we hear from the ITMA today, I will tell the members that it is not my intention to vote on this Nominee at the conclusion of the hearing.