

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR TOM DASCHLE
ON THE
S. 1658, WAKPA SICA RECONCILIATION PLACE ACT
May 17, 2000**

Mr. Vice-Chairman, I would like to express my appreciation to you, Chairman Campbell and members of the Committee for allowing me to testify this afternoon on legislation that I introduced to establish the Wakpa Sica Reconciliation Place. A few years ago, I received a letter from all nine tribal chairmen in South Dakota asking that I help establish a Sioux Nation Supreme Court. I would like to ask that this letter be incorporated as part of my testimony for the record. That original effort has grown to include a Historical Archive and Display Center, a Sioux Nation Supreme Court and a Native American Economic Development Council.

The Reconciliation Place will enhance the knowledge and understanding of the history of Native Americans by displaying and interpreting the history, art, and culture of the tribes of this region. It will also provide an important repository for the Sioux Nation history and the family histories for members of tribes, and other important historical documents. The majority of historic documents and archives for this region are kept in government facilities that are scattered across the West and are almost inaccessible to the people of this area.

Another important aspect of the Reconciliation Place will be to establish a Native American Economic Development Council. The council will assist tribal governments and individuals in promoting the growth of economies on the reservations and surrounding communities. It will raise funds from private sources to match federal assistance and provide grants, loans, scholarships, and technical assistance to tribes and their members to help generate news jobs.

Finally, the Reconciliation Place will house the Sioux Nation Tribal Supreme Court. The court will bring a sense of stability to reservations, so that investors develop a greater degree of certainty and confidence for their investments. Strengthening tribal court systems will ultimately provide a greater opportunity for tribes to develop the infrastructure that is needed to create more jobs on reservations.

The strength of the Reconciliation Place lies in its diversity of purpose. The Reconciliation Place will have many funding sources and support many purposes. Each agency mentioned in the bill will assist in providing funding and technical assistance to the tribes and tribal members through the Reconciliation Place. This assistance will not diminish the government-to-government policy established by the United States, but instead, it will provide a focal point for government and private organizations to expand their ability to help in Indian Country.

You will hear testimony today from an array of supportive witnesses from South Dakota, including Governor Bill Janklow and Lower Brule Sioux Tribal Chairman Mike Jandreau, of the need for the Wakpa Sica Reconciliation Place.

I look forward to working with you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, and the other members of this Committee to move this legislation forward. I respectfully urge this Committee to recommend

the approval and passage of S. 1658, the Wakpa Sica Reconciliation Place this year.

This concludes my statement. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.