

Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell  
Chairman, Senate Committee on Indian Affairs  
Oversight Hearing  
On the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988

July 9, 2003

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Good morning and welcome to the Committee's second oversight hearing in the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress on the *Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988*, known by its acronym "IGRA".

Congress enacted the IGRA in 1988 after the U.S. Supreme Court handed down the *Cabazon* case which confirmed that Indian tribes have inherent authority to conduct gaming on their own lands.

I think it is fair to say, that 15 years ago nobody could have seen that by 2002 Indian gaming revenues would grow to \$14.5 billion, which is the most recent revenue data collected by the National Indian Gaming Commission.

What many did foresee back then was the possibility that States would try and exact their share of gaming revenues from the tribes.

Anyone who reads the papers today realizes that with many states struggling to balance their own budgets, that day has come.

The IGRA does make it clear that Congress views gaming as

an economic activity that Indian tribes can develop, and that they should be the primary beneficiary of their efforts.

The drive by States to get shares of tribal gaming revenues has only increased since the 1996 *Seminole* decision.

Tribal leaders are informing this Committee that many States will not even begin to negotiate without first getting an agreement on "revenue sharing."

We have asked the Department of Interior to explain to the Committee the authority and criteria it uses in approving compacts that contain revenue-sharing components.

We have also asked Indian tribes and tribal associations that conduct gaming to describe their experiences with the compacting process and demands for revenue sharing.

They will also share with us the many good things they are doing with their gaming revenues.

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