

**Statement of Senator John McCain  
Indian Affairs Committee Hearing on Indian Money Account claim  
Satisfaction Act on 2003**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for scheduling today's hearing as part of this Committee's continuing oversight on issues associated with the federal government's management of individual and tribal trust funds accounts.

Today's hearing addresses a voluntary, alternative claims resolution process to reach settlement of the class action lawsuit known as Cobell v. Norton.

As I have stated before, history and the Cobell case demonstrate that the Department of Interior has flagrantly failed to fulfill its trust duties. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent on failed efforts to either identify reconciliation efforts, or have been spent on consultants to evaluate the extent of the federal government's liability for mismanagement. Despite these efforts, we still have not reached a reasonable solution.

However, the topic today addresses a potential settlement solution that is only a partial answer to a larger problem: It is merely one aspect of trust reform.

My colleagues, Senators Daschle and Johnson, and Representatives Udall and Rahall in the House, and I previously introduced "Indian Trust Asset and Trust Fund Management and Reform Act of 2003." Our bill, S. 175, would revise trust reform legislation to address the tribes' highest priority areas to improve trust funds and trust assets management. Our bill still has not received a Hearing.

I urge the Committee to consider our bill as part of the overall need for legislative reforms and to schedule a hearing as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman, I take no position at this point on the legislation being discussed today until I receive input from Native American constituents and conduct a thorough review of the proposed legislation. I look forward to what the committee has to say.

I commend the Committee for its continued efforts and focus on this critical issue.

