

**Statement of Ben Nighthorse Campbell
Oversight Hearing on the Indian Arts and Crafts Act**

May 17, 2000

Good afternoon. Today the Committee will receive testimony regarding the implementation of the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 which was enacted with two goals in mind:

1st - to promote Indian and Alaska Native economic development through the expansion of the arts and crafts sector;

2nd - to strengthen the enforcement provisions for violations of the Act to ensure that counterfeit goods do not distort the market and ultimately reduce the value of authentic Indian goods.

Today's market for Indian-made goods is roughly \$1 billion, but by some estimates half of that demand, nearly \$500 million, is satisfied by counterfeit goods — much of which is produced off-shore and imported into the United States.

The Indian Arts and Crafts Board (IACB) is charged not only with promoting Indian arts and crafts, but is supposed to work with the Justice Department in bringing complaints alleging violations of the Act.

It troubles me greatly that since the original Act was passed in 1935, civil and criminal prosecutions have been rare and enforcement of the Act has been left largely to the tribes themselves.

I firmly believe that *at a minimum* the United States can and should assure itself that whatever goods are sold in federal facilities and on federal lands are in compliance with the Indian Arts and Crafts Act.

As far as tribal enforcement, at least one Indian tribe, the Ho-Chunk Nation, has

succeeded in obtaining injunctions and other relief in bringing suit seeking the enforcement of the Act and we will hear from the Chairman of the Ho Chunk Nation today.

In the weeks ahead we will be reviewing the Act and looking at various ways to ensure that Indian artisans and craftsmen get the benefit of their labors and that consumers receive the benefit of the bargain when they buy "Indian arts and crafts".