

Statement of Ben Nighthorse Campbell
Chairman, Committee on Indian Affairs
Hearing on the President's FY2001 Budget Request

February 23, 2000

Good morning. The Committee will come to order. This morning we will hear testimony on the President's FY2001 Budget Request for Indian Programs.

As all who are familiar with Indian country know, there are few if any matters affecting Native Americans that does not have a resources component to it.

The Congressional Research Service has documented the historic under-funding -- in constant dollars --- of most Indian programs when they are compared to non-defense spending for other Americans.

In health care, housing, education, and other categories Indians are often left to play "catch up" with the rest of America.

At the same time, we also know that money is scarce and that money alone will not improve the quality and delivery of programs and services that most Indians still need.

This reality led me to propose better coordination and integration among agencies that share mission areas serving Native people. For instance in diabetes treatment and prevention as well as alcohol and substance abuse, the federal government needs to better manage existing programs.

To strengthen and encourage self determination contracting and compacting, I am pleased to see additional resources being dedicated to contract support costs for existing and new tribal contractors.

I am also pleased to see a new emphasis in the request on a concentrated targeting of what we all know is scarce resources for purpose of business and community development in Native communities.

An integrated federal response to roads construction, technology, and access to markets holds much promise for Native communities.

With that, I look forward to hearing from the witnesses this morning.