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Chairman - Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
Oversight Hearing on the FY2004 Budget Request

March 5, 2003

Now the Committee will turn to the second of our two Committee Oversight Hearings on the President's Fiscal Year 2004 Budget Request for Indian Programs.

Today we are joined by representatives of 5 Federal agencies whose business affects the lives of Native people across the country.

As I said last week, the President's Budget Request reflects what looks like imminent war in the Middle East and our nation's efforts to protect our homeland and our people.

The request for the BIA is \$2.314 billion, with an additional \$275 million for the Special Trustee.

The Indian Health Service account would receive \$2.89 billion, an increase of \$68 million over FY2003.

The Indian housing block grant request includes \$647 million which is level funding compared with FY2003.

There are specific increases in several Indian accounts notably trust reform, substance abuse, school operations and a continued effort to eliminate the backlog in BIA School

Construction.

I want to assure the members and the audience that these hearings are only the beginning of the FY2004 Appropriations Process and that this Committee will be involved for the duration and paying particular attention to the homeland security budget and the degree to which it involves tribal governments, law enforcement, and medical personnel in our security efforts.

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