

**Statement of Ben Nighthorse Campbell**  
**Hearing on Draft Amendments to the Education Act of 1978 &**  
**Draft Amendments to the Tribally Controlled Schools Act of 1988**  
**April 26, 2000**

Good morning. The committee will come to order. This morning we will receive testimony on very important draft legislation related to the Indian provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

The main authorizing legislation for the ESEA will be debated on the Senate floor beginning next week, so this hearing is timely indeed.

The two drafts are **1.** Draft Amendments to the Education Amendments of 1978 related to BIA Schools; and **2.** Draft Amendments to the Tribally Controlled Schools Act of 1988.

As a former teacher and one who knows all-too-well the problems faced by Native youth, I feel strongly that education holds the key to both individual accomplishment, the promotion of developed Native communities, and real self determination.

In the Era of Indian Self Determination, it is appropriate that the drafts before us stress local Tribal flexibility in developing education programs, and continue the trend toward increasing Tribal contracting of federal services and programs.

As we have done for other programs such as job training, alcohol and drug abuse, and others, I am supportive of any effort to integrate and coordinate existing programs provided that integration brings greater efficiency and improves the services to intended users.

With nearly \$900 million in facilities needs, a long-term solution to school construction continues to be elusive. Realistically, federal appropriations alone will not eliminate the backlog and I feel strongly that creative financing mechanisms such as co-financing and bonding need to be explored if we are to succeed in eliminating the backlog.

With that, I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses as we strive to reauthorize the Indian portions of the ESEA.

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