

NCAI Update

Hosted by NIHSDA | October 21, 2025

www.ncai.org

Embassy of Tribal Nations

1516 P St NW, Washington, DC 20005





About NCAI: A Legacy of Advocacy

- NCAI is a nonpartisan organization, advocating for the rights and interests of American Indian and Alaska Native governments and communities regardless of political affiliation.
- Its focus is on policy, not politics — centered on sovereignty, self-determination, and Tribal priorities driven by the member-Tribal Nations.
- Our Strength: A member-driven, consensus-based, organization whose policy agenda is set by Tribal leaders through a formal resolution process.
- Our Role: Unified voice of Tribal Nations before Congress, the White House, and federal agencies. NCAI speaks with the collective voice of Indian Country.



NCAI Policy Team

- The NCAI Policy Team advances the sovereign rights and well-being of Tribal Nations by shaping, promoting, and defending strong, proactive, and culturally informed federal Indian policy.
- Through advocacy, research, coordination, and education, the team supports Tribal governments in navigating the federal system and strengthening their self-determination.



NCAI Policy Team Core Functions:

- **Legislative and Regulatory Advocacy:** Monitor, analyze, and shape legislation and regulations impacting Tribal Nations.
- **Research and Analysis:** Produce timely and relevant policy briefs, reports, and testimony.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Build relationships with Tribal leaders, federal decision-makers, and national partners, including supporting NCAI committees and task forces.
- **Support for Tribal Consultation:** Promote meaningful and accountable Tribal-federal consultation processes.
- **Policy Education:** Develop and disseminate educational tools for Tribal leaders, policymakers, and the public.
- **Coordination of Policy Events:** Organize and support policy forums, conferences, and listening sessions.



NCAI Policy Team's Actions

- **Rapid Response:**
 - Coalition for Tribal Sovereignty
 - Shutdown Hub
- **Policy Briefs:**
 - Environmental Actions during this Administration and Impact on Tribes (Releasing November 2025)
 - Budget Briefing Book (returning for Executive Committee Winter Session in February 2026)
- **Congressional and Agency Advocacy:**
 - Regular meetings with Senators, Representatives, and legislative staff
 - Oral and Written Congressional Testimony
 - Agency engagement through meetings, comment letters, and other opportunities
- **Events:**
 - In-Person
 - Webinars



Native Children's Commission Implementation Act

- Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and former Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-MT) introduced bipartisan legislation to create the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children.
- Charged with conducting a comprehensive study of federal, Tribal, state, and local programs serving Native children, the commission's work culminated in recommendations designed to improve the well-being and opportunities of Native children housed in the *The Way Forward* report.
- Senator Murkowski released draft legislation earlier this year that contains 44 provisions across 9 titles impacting:
 - Child Welfare
 - Justice
 - Research and Data
 - Physical and Behavioral Health
 - Environmental Health Protection
 - Nutrition
 - Housing and Homelessness
 - Education
 - Workforce Development



477 Updates

- In the prior administration there were hard fought battles to include more grants in 477 plans, such as:
 - Headstart
 - Office on Violence Against Women
 - Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- In this administration, we are seeing a roll back of these and other grant approvals in Tribal 477 Plans
- Talking points:
 - President Trump, in his first administration, signed the 477 amendments into law that strengthened the program.
 - 477 aligns with the desire to get Washington D.C. out of micromanaging Tribes and agencies should incorporate applicable grants liberally into 477 plans.
 - The Native Children's Commission Implementation Act further strengthens 477 and reduces agency ability to contest inclusion of grants into 477 plans - Congress should work to get this important part of the NCC enacted once the legislation is introduced next year.



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Questions?





Upcoming Conventions & Events for 2025

82nd Annual Convention &

**November 16 - 21,
2025**

Seattle Convention Center

www.ncai.org/events





National Congress of American Indians

Thank You!

Defending Sovereignty Since 1944