



Charles Banks Wilson-21

The Strength of Our Nation: Honoring the Past, Present, and Future

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS **ANNUAL REPORT** • OCTOBER 1, 2005 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2006



FREEDOM'S WARRIOR

Charles Banks Wilson
1942

Pictured behind the World War II combat soldier are the famous American Indian generals (left to right) Geronimo, Tecumseh, Sitting Bull, Chief Joseph, Powhatan, Blackhawk, Pontiac and Osceola. The painting is a tribute to the American Indians who have served their country in numbers far beyond any other minority.

The World War II soldier in the forefront, Charles Chibitty, was the last living Comanche "code talker" until his death in 2005.

Photo courtesy Charles Banks Wilson

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NCAI Charter Members at the
Constitutional Convention in
Denver, CO November 15-18, 1944.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS (NCAI)

NCAI was founded by tribal leaders in 1944 in response to termination and assimilation policies that the United States forced upon the tribal governments in contradiction of their treaty rights and status as sovereigns. These leaders stressed the need for unity and cooperation among tribal governments for the protection of tribal sovereignty and self-determination. Over a half a century later, our goals remain unchanged. Since 1944, the National Congress of American Indians

has been the guardian of the governmental rights of American Indians and Alaska Natives in Washington, DC.

NCAI is the oldest, largest and most representative national Indian organization in the country. The organization serves the needs of a broad membership of Indian and Native governments, organizations and people. NCAI is organized as a representative Congress to establish a consensus on national priority issues. Tribal governments pass laws to become members of NCAI, selecting

official delegates to the NCAI Convention, Executive Council, and Conferences. The delegates debate and deliberate on issues of pressing concern at NCAI meetings, presenting viewpoints in accordance with their governments' policies, goals and needs. This structure enables NCAI to monitor national policy and coordinate efforts to impact federal decisions that affect the interests of tribal governments.

Message from the President

**SENGITHAMU, OHKAY OWINGEHI
NA?INBI SENGITUU WAY
MA?I?,TAHKIDIBO NA?INBI T'OWA
BAHBEMUU**

What a year it has been for Indian Country. My first year as president of this great organization has been stock full of challenges and great accomplishments.

As I noted in my first *State of Indian Nations* address in February, Indian Country faces four areas of great challenge – Public Safety; Healthcare; Education and the Economy; and The Trust Settlement.

I called these *The Four Great Steps* – the agenda for the Indian Nations and called upon you to do your part to help meet the challenges in these areas. I am more than encouraged and very humbled in the amount of support and hard work I have witnessed in such a short amount of time.

With the support of The White House and Members of Congress, we have created a methamphetamine task force to help deal with the health and public safety issues meth use and distribution is causing in our communities. We have collaborated with national organizations and federal officials, working together to fight this problem head on.

Together, we have come together with one voice to push for the Indian Health Care Improvement Act Reauthorization of 2006. Because of your voice and your hard work, we are closer than ever before to bringing Indian health care into the modern age. We cannot wait any longer and must continue the push for reauthorization.

Finally, the realization of settlement of the *Cobell* litigation is within our grasp. For the sake of our future generations, this must be settled now so that Congress can focus on pertinent legislation to improve the well being of Native people. With the support of the Administration and Congress and the voice of Indian Country I am confident we can now bring this dispute to a close.

I want to thank you for all you have done this year to address these important issues, making Indian Country a better place. Day-by-day, month-by-month and year-by-year, working together we can make a difference. I look forward to the challenges ahead.

**WAY TO? PINPEH,TASNPEH, AAKONPEH,
THANPIEH, NA?INBI SEDO INDEE WOWAY
WOWATSIMAANI HEDA BISEEGIMUNI,
SEHKANAAMUNI, T'AHKIDIBO?**

– Joe A. Garcia



Message from the Executive Director

WÁA SÁ ITUWATEE.

Washington, D.C. is a busy place. The pace of following the legislative calendar, making meetings on Capitol Hill, planning for conferences & events and keeping the pulse of Indian Country can sometimes be close to overwhelming – but it is something I wouldn't trade for the world. The busy pace is an easy exchange for the end result of an Indian Country that has become increasingly proactive, visionary and challenge driven.

The progress we have seen in the last year in terms of a productive legislative strategy and a proactive vision for the future of Indian Country has been monumental.

In early 2006, Indian Country found itself in the crosshairs of the media and Congress when unfair campaign finance reform proposals for tribes were floated on Capitol Hill. NCAI aggressively countered the argument that tribes were being provided with a 'loophole' in campaign giving. Through work on Capitol Hill, in the media and with help from throughout the country, we won this legislative battle with no new reforms to tribal campaign giving.

The current media and political environment has put NCAI and Indian Country in a place where we must be ahead of the game on all legislative and media fronts. We have legislative and media campaigns in place now for other issues such as Indian Rights-of-Way, 8(a) government contracting, trust reform settlement and the battle to fight meth use among Native people.

NCAI's Policy Research Center is also breaking new ground that will provide tremendous resources to aid in moving our agenda forward. In June, hundreds of tribal leaders participated in the first annual NCAI Policy Research Center Tribal Leader/Scholar Research Forum. This new stage for tribal leaders and scholars to collaborate is historic in nature and I am confident that it will soon be the most established Indian think-tank in the country.

From tribal leaders to youth in our communities, Indian people are coming together in ways that I have never seen in the years I have spent working on Indian issues. I encourage you to continue your dedicated work for Indian Country and thank you for your commitment to NCAI.

GUNALCHÉESH.

– Jacqueline L. Johnson



Embassy of Tribal Nations

In 1944, the founding members of NCAI gathered to create an organization that would serve as the collective voice for all Indian Country. More than 60 years later, NCAI continues its mission to advocate on behalf of all American Indians and Alaskan Natives, through preserving sovereignty and enhancing self-determination. Today NCAI is taking the next step in fulfilling our founders' vision by building the Embassy of Tribal Nations.

In October 2004, NCAI made a monumental decision to acquire its own building and launched the Embassy of Tribal Nations Capital Campaign to support this effort. A building purchase presents many benefits that meet the needs and goals of the organization. Foremost, NCAI will gain long term financial sustainability by reducing its current occupancy costs, building equity and ownership in prime Washington, DC real estate. Second, NCAI will increase its available office space to meet the expansion needs of its growing organization. Finally, the building also allows NCAI to house other national Indian organizations and tribes under one roof, thereby enhancing collaboration and coordination.

TO DATE, THE EMBASSY CAMPAIGN HAS RAISED APPROXIMATELY \$1.5 MILLION in donations and pledges. In February 2006, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community of Minnesota became the campaign's first eagle donor by presenting a \$1 million challenge contribution, encouraging Indian Country to donate to the Embassy campaign.

Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Vice-Chairman Glynn A. Crooks said, "We know that many tribes are not in the position of making a million dollar contribution to this project. But considering the many tribes that are members of NCAI, anything you are able to give would help to make the embassy a reality."

The excitement and enthusiasm builds as donors continue to come forward to support the Embassy of Tribal Nations Capital Campaign. The response from tribes is strong and now more than ever NCAI encourages individual tribal members, businesses, companies, partners and friends of Indian Country to become a part of this monumental effort to create a permanent presence for Indian tribes in our nation's capitol, Washington, DC.

AS INDIAN COUNTRY'S COLLECTIVE VOICE IN WASHINGTON, DC FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS TO COME, WE OWE IT TO FUTURE GENERATIONS TO MAKE SOUND FINANCIAL DECISIONS TODAY.

For more information on how to contribute to the Embassy of Tribal Nations Capital Campaign please contact:

Mellor C. Willie
Director of Development
National Congress of American Indians
1301 Connecticut Avenue, NW Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036



NCAI First Vice-President Jefferson Keel accepts a \$1 million challenge contribution for the Embassy of Tribal Nations Capital Campaign from Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community Vice-Chairman Glynn A. Crooks.



Communications

NCAI's Communications and External Relations is crucial to the work of the organization and is now a part of NCAI's legislative agenda more than ever before. NCAI is involved in an ongoing effort to bring Indian Country together as one collective voice, which is essential to our agenda set forth to improve the lives of Native people through better health care, enhanced public safety and other issues important to Indian Nations.

As more and more Native publications and broadcasting units are covering Indian issues, there is also an increasing amount of mainstream media coverage of our issues and NCAI is using its new communications strategy to present a collective voice to be actively involved in reporters' stories. NCAI's new communications plan will ensure that Indian Country is ahead of the media curve for years to come.

This year brought some significant media challenges for NCAI and Indian Country as a whole. As an organization, NCAI found itself in the heart of many stories involving campaign finance reform and the so-called "loophole" language bantered about in the media and Congress implying there was a significant tribal loophole when it came to campaign finance. NCAI actively countered these stories in the

LEFT: Native America Calling broadcasts live from Tulsa at NCAI's 62nd Annual Convention and Trade Show

RIGHT: National Native News reporter Antonia Gonzales/McConkey interviews then NCAI regional Vice-President Arlen Melendez

media and made sure Congress had the right message that there was no loophole. NCAI won this effort and in turn, hired a Washington DC based public relations firm to assist with tackling these issues when they come up. This step is historic for NCAI as we ramp up the effort to stay "ahead of the story" and move forward with an aggressive media strategy in the months and years to come.

In the last year NCAI released over 50 press releases, 4 issues of *The Sentinel* and responded to over 500 media inquiries. NCAI also planned and coordinated more than 8 press events. NCAI appeared in major publications such as The Washington Post, The Seattle Times and the Arizona Republic, among others.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

While much of the country is leaping ahead in the digital revolution, Indian communities continue to struggle with issues of basic access to telecommunications services. Without this access, tribal nations simply will not be able to compete and fully prosper in the 21st century. NCAI continues its efforts to raise awareness about the importance of telecommunications services and technologies in Indian Country.



In May 2006, NCAI offered testimony before Congress on the importance of addressing the unique needs and status of Indian tribes in the formulation of telecommunications policy. In addition, NCAI and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) have convened on multiple occasions to address the development and deployment of telecommunications technologies and services in Indian Country. In March of 2006, the NCAI Telecommunications Subcommittee and the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau of the FCC hosted the 4th Annual FCC-NCAI Dialogue on Improving Telecommunications in Indian Country. The meeting between NCAI subcommittee members, Tribal representatives and FCC senior officials served as a forum for discussing how the FCC and NCAI can work together to improve telecommunications accessibility. In July 2006, as part of the FCC's Indian Telecommunications Initiatives (ITI), the FCC and NCAI held a regional workshop and roundtable discussion in San Diego, CA focused on broadband deployment issues on Tribal lands and the related economic empowerment of Indian Country.

Membership

NCAI membership continues at an all-time high with over 250 member tribes and over 1,500 individual members. In August of 2003, NCAI launched a membership campaign, "Strengthen the Circle." Through this initiative, the NCAI continues to reach out to Indian Country to further develop a strong and united voice in Washington, D.C. and throughout the country. According to tribal enrollment figures from the BIA Indian Labor Force Report, NCAI's combined tribal enrollment of member tribes is 1,223,783 out of the total tribal enrollment of 1,698,883. NCAI's member tribes represent 72 percent of all enrolled tribal members in the country. This shows the strength and unity of tribes as they continue to work together in protecting tribal sovereignty and advancing the welfare of Indian Country.

Meetings

ANNUAL CONVENTION

"Celebrating 30 Years of Indian Self-Determination" was the theme for NCAI's 62nd Annual Convention in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Tribes were the host for this annual convention, held October 30th - November 4th, 2005. The theme was selected to acknowledge the 30 years that have passed since the Indian Self-Determination Act and celebrate how far we have come while envisioning self-determination in the future. This was an election year for NCAI and new officers and executive board members were selected by the Tribes and individual Indian NCAI members present. Other highlights included the 3rd Annual Health Walk partnered with NIKE and Indian Health Services featuring Olympic Gold medalist Billy Mills; the Gala Banquet featuring Native American comedians and performers; and the Miss NCAI pageant.



Newly elected NCAI officers (L to R) Secretary Juana Majel-Dixon, Treasurer W. Ron Allen, First Vice-President Jefferson Keel and President Joe A. Garcia receive well wishes shortly after the Executive Committee elections in Tulsa.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL SESSION

Tribal Leaders and representatives turned out in great numbers for the NCAI's Annual Executive Council Session in Washington, D.C. February 27th - March 1st, 2006. This Tribal Nations Legislative Summit "109 Congress Executive Council" focused on the upcoming legislative issues concerning Indian Country and the session provided an opportunity for tribal leaders and advocates to visit congressional offices to discuss current legislation as well. The session also included the annual Leadership Awards Banquet and the Capitol Hill Legislative Reception held at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.



NCAI Elections Chair Juanita Ahtone swears in newly elected members of the NCAI Executive Committee.



NCAI hosted a number of meetings throughout the year at our headquarters in Washington, D.C. NCAI's location in the heart of Washington provides a place where tribal leaders can meet.

NCAI Policy Research Center Convenes 1st Annual Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum

MID-YEAR CONFERENCE

The Mid-Year Conference was hosted by the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Michigan June 18th - 21st, 2006. The theme was "Not Our Borders: Culture & Commerce in the Era of Homeland Security". Sault Ste. Marie, known as "The Gathering Place", was an ideal location for tribal leaders to meet for issue-specific, in-depth, working sessions on culture and commerce in this new era of Homeland Security. General Assemblies and Break-Out Sessions provided a forum for Tribal, Federal, state and international representatives to inform participants on a range of international and border issues as well as other current pressing issues facing Indian Country today. A spotlight feature was the NCAI Policy Research Center's first Tribal Leader/Scholar Research Forum on Tuesday during the Mid-Year Conference. It gave attendees a valuable opportunity to hear about the latest policy research with implications for tribal communities.



On June 20, 2006, hundreds of tribal leaders participated in the first annual NCAI Policy Research Center Tribal Leader/Scholar

Research Forum, held in conjunction with the 2006 Mid-Year conference in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. This interactive forum allowed Native and non-Native scholars addressing Native issues to present their work and have discussion with tribal leaders and representatives about their research findings and implications.

By sponsoring the forum, the Policy Research Center began the practice of convening tribal leaders and scholars to better understand the research that is being conducted and to discuss future research directions that would be meaningful to tribes. Tribes have important guidance and considerations for the work of researchers who are interested in their communities. They have significant contributions that can influence future research.

At this year's Forum, the general assembly session included current research findings and policy recommendations related to such topics as sovereignty and law, economic development, finance, and research methodologies that allow

tribes to exercise their sovereignty to control research on their lands and with their citizens. Among the presentations were:

- "Testing U.S. Supreme Court Assumptions Regarding Tribal Sovereignty,"
- "Solving the Growth Puzzle: Understanding Variation in Socioeconomic Change on the American Indian Reservations," and
- "Tribal Sovereignty and Self-Determination through Evaluation."

Throughout the afternoon, presenters from the morning sessions conducted breakout sessions on their research topics allowing for in-depth discussions to further engage tribal leaders. Ranging from such topics as "Community-Based Research and Empowerment Methodologies" to "Towards a New Realism in Federal Indian Law," the talks centered on the interpretation and validity of research findings, research methods, and how to frame future research questions.

The annual tribal leader/scholar forum is a signature product of the NCAI Policy Research Center. The next research forum will be held during the 2007 NCAI Mid-Year Session in Anchorage, Alaska. The center has

also launched a website and will continue to disseminate research finding to Indian Country.

**NCAI POLICY RESEARCH CENTER
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS INCLUDE:**

W. RON ALLEN

Chairman, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, and Treasurer, National Congress of American Indians

SHERRY SALWAY BLACK

Executive Director, Ovarian Cancer National Alliance

DR. EDDIE F. BROWN

Professor and Director of American Indian Studies, Arizona State University

CHERYL CRAZY BULL

President, Northwest Indian College

TERRY CROSS

Executive Director, National Indian Child Welfare Association

JOHN ECHOHAWK

Executive Director, Native American Rights Fund

KELLER GEORGE

Wolf Clan Representative to the Oneida Nation Men's Council, Oneida Indian Nation, and President, United South and Eastern Tribes

GRETA GOTO

Senior Vice-President, First Alaskans Institute, and Director, Alaska Native Policy Center

JACQUELINE JOHNSON

Executive Director, National Congress of American Indians

ANDREW LEE

Director of Research and Policy Analysis, Aetna, Inc.

JUANA MAJEL-DIXON

Councilwoman, Pauma-Yuima Band of Mission Indians, and Secretary, National Congress of American Indians

DR. YVETTE ROUBIDEAUX

Assistant Professor, Mel and Enid Zuckerman Arizona College of Public Health, University of Arizona

BENNY SHENDO

Cabinet Secretary, State of New Mexico, Indian Affairs Department

VICTORIA SUTTON

Chief Counsel, Research and Innovative Technology Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, and Robert H. Bean Professor of Law (on leave), Texas Tech University School of Law

EDDIE TULLIS

Councilman, Poarch Band of Creek Indians



NCAI's Policy Research Center's first World Café roundtable discussions took place at the Annual Convention in Tulsa.

Legislative Affairs

TRUST REFORM

Two issues have dominated NCAI's trust reform efforts this year. First, a great deal of tribal effort and attention has been devoted to S. 1439, the **INDIAN TRUST REFORM ACT OF 2006**. NCAI President Joe Garcia testified in support of the legislation at a pivotal hearing in early March at the same time as the NCAI Executive Council Winter Session. The hearing breathed new life into the legislation and the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs has been working to redraft and mark up the legislation.

On August 4, the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs released a new discussion draft of S. 1439, the Indian Trust Reform Act of 2006. The bill would settle all claims of Individual Indian money account holders for \$8 billion and the bill creates a voluntary process for Indian tribes to take over greater control of the trust assets on their reservations. During the August recess the staff of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs met with the Administration and held meetings in various parts of Indian Country to discuss the legislation. NCAI is committed to working with the Committee and tribal leaders to bring the issue to resolution.

Second, NCAI has been very involved with **TRUST REGULATIONS** drafted by the Department of Interior (DOI). In late December 2005, the Department of Interior sent out copies of draft trust regulations covering over a dozen critical areas, from land to trust to leases to probate. NCAI President Joe Garcia urged DOI not to take up so many regulations all in one effort. At the request of tribal leaders, DOI segmented the regulations into smaller groups, and we have spent much of this year attending consultation meetings and reviewing and commenting on probate related regulations that implement the American Indian Probate Reform Act of 2004.

The regulations for Acquisition of Land in Trust (25 CFR 151) are of critical importance to Indian Country. DOI indicates that they plan to revise these regulations in the coming year and we have been working to prepare. NCAI met with the Government Accounting Office as a part of their development of a report on the processing of land to trust applications titled "BIA's Efforts to Impose Time Frames and Collect Better Data Should Improve Processing of Land in Trust Applications." The report confirms a number of the tribal complaints about

lack of time frames and unreasonable delays and is likely to have an influence on the discussion about the 25 CFR 151 regulations.



NCAI President Joe A. Garcia prays with a supporter shortly after being elected.

Tecumseh

TRIBAL SUPREME COURT PROJECT

The Tribal Supreme Court Project and was formed in 2001 in response to a series of U.S. Supreme Court cases that negatively affected tribal sovereignty. The purpose of the Project is to improve coordination and strategy on litigation that may affect the rights of all Indian tribes. We encourage Indian tribes and their attorneys to contact the Project in our effort to coordinate resources and prepare briefs, especially at the time of the petition for a writ of certiorari, prior to the Supreme Court accepting a case for review. The Project is staffed by NCAI and the Native American Rights Fund. The Project remains very busy, monitoring numerous cases at various stages of appeal within both state and federal courts, while directly participating in the preparation of amicus briefs in the U.S. Supreme Court and the U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals.

The major Supreme Court decision this year was **WAGNON V. PRAIRIE BAND POTAWATOMI NATION**. The Tribal Supreme Court Project worked closely with the attorneys representing the Prairie Band and throughout Indian Country, coordinating four tribal amicus briefs on behalf of NCAI, the

Intertribal Transportation Alliance, the National Intertribal Tax Alliance, the other Kansas tribes, and more than 30 individual Indian tribes. The Project also worked closely with the Prairie Band in persuading the U.S. Solicitor General's Office to support the Tribe. Even with all the hard work on the case, the Supreme Court handed down a very disappointing decision that reversed the 10th Circuit opinion and upheld the state tax on tribal motor fuel sales.


The Supreme Court also denied the Tribes' and the United States' petitions for cert in **CAYUGA INDIAN NATION V. PATAKI** and **U.S. V. PATAKI**. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit relied on an extremely broad reading of last year's decision in **CITY OF SHERRILL V. ONEIDA NATION** to hold that the doctrine of laches can be used to bar tribal claims. The Project has helped to develop a workgroup comprised of tribal attorneys and law professors who will be developing strategies in order to rebut the laches defense in pending and future cases.

Much of the primary work of the Project is in opposing petitions for certiorari from tribal opponents. The Project's work included **SMITH V. SALISH KOOTENAI COLLEGE** which sought review of a Ninth Circuit

decision upholding tribal civil jurisdiction over an accident involving a non-member Indian. Cert was denied in June. The Project also worked on **MORRIS V. TANNER** and **MEANS V. NAVAJO NATION**, which both involve a challenge to tribal criminal authority over nonmember Indians. We have also been closely monitoring **UTAH V. SHIWITS BAND OF PAIUTE** and **SOUTH DAKOTA V. U.S.**, both challenges to federal authority to take land into trust. Decisions on cert should be made early in the October 2006 term.

At the Circuit Court level, the Project has been heavily involved in supporting the tribal sovereignty in **SAN MANUEL V. NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD**. NCAI, the National Indian Gaming Association and a large group of tribes submitted an amicus brief opposing the NLRB's effort to overturn thirty years of precedent and impose the National Labor Relations Act on tribal enterprises located on reservation. Oral argument is expected in the fall.

These are just a few of the most important cases that the Project addressed this year. We would like to thank all of the tribal attorneys for their generous assistance. We encourage tribes to consult with the Project at any stage of litigation, and



particularly at the certiorari stage in the Supreme Court.

NCAI PROJECT ON THE FEDERAL JUDICIARY

The NCAI Project on the Federal Judiciary ensures that the federal judiciary is composed of individuals who are knowledgeable about the unique legal status of Indian tribes and individual Indians and who will approach Indian issues from an unbiased perspective. The Project is a national effort aimed at educating members of the federal judiciary about tribal governments, educating tribal governments about the role of the federal judiciary, and increasing tribal participation in the federal judicial selection process.

Tribal governments are stronger, more vocal and more visible than ever before. For years, tribal governments have effectively focused their attention on the activities of the legislative and executive branches of the federal government. Too little attention has been paid, however, to the judicial branch, where critical decisions impacting Indian nations are frequently made. Tribal leaders and tribal attorneys have witnessed firsthand the results that the appointment of federal judges who have little or no

knowledge of the fundamental legal principles underlying Indian law has on tribal sovereignty.

In 2006, Project activities have included: the development of a federal judicial vacancy tracking system designed specifically for Indian country; research and analysis of the records of nominees to the federal bench; and dissemination of educational materials to tribal leaders.

TRIBAL-STATE RELATIONS INITIATIVES

The need to affirm Tribes' government-to-government relationship with states continues to grow. As distinct governments, Tribes are able to improve the lives of both tribes' and states' citizens by fostering working relationships between the two governments.

Opportunities for collaboration that recognize Tribes' distinct jurisdiction occurred at both the national and regional levels. Whether a national effort to integrate sales tax systems or a discussion on the appropriate standards for government issued identification, Tribes were a necessary party to these collaborations. The NCAI continues to play an important part in ensuring Indian Country's role as stakeholders in policy development.



Through the NCAI webpage, publications and interactive advocacy material the NCAI continued to promote unique partnerships and educational opportunities for both states and tribes. An ongoing initiative with the National Conference of State Legislatures, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and others provides a one of a kind training for leadership as well as policy staff working in both state and tribal governments. These opportunities enhance the quality relationships and improve the intergovernmental agreements that impact so many aspects of life for tribes' and states' citizens.

During the past year the Project played a primary role in convening the national Caucus of Native American State Legislators. During one of the Caucus' initial gatherings, the Caucus, made up of nearly fifty Native American lawmakers, established that NCAI would maintain an institutional role in the group's future work as a peer organization and a tool for advocacy.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE
2006 STATE OF INDIAN NATIONS
ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT JOE GARCIA**

“Strength, triumph over adversity, the will to succeed—the Indian Nations stand strong today. We are growing more self-sufficient, more economically developed, more politically active; and as always, steadfastly committed to the stewardship and defense of our home, the United States of America.”

“We face four areas of great challenge. And we must meet each of them in order to move our nation forward.

Number 1: Public Safety;

Number 2: Healthcare;

Number 3: Education and the Economy; and

Number 4: The Trust Settlement.

I call these The Four Great Steps—the agenda for the Indian Nations.”

“The inability of border tribes to stem the flow of illegal aliens passing through their communities is a profound problem. Some aliens may want no more than entry into our country, but there are others who cross to engage in drug trafficking and other crimes. The results for our communities are increased murder rates, higher rates of theft, more rapes and beatings, and the fear among many of even going out. This is unacceptable. We want to implement a long-term solution to the problem that is more than simply stopping those we can catch and send back, and letting the rest get through ... We want to do more, but we do not have the means.”

“Because of inferior healthcare, the quality and length of life for American Indians falls well below the rest of the U.S. American Indians have a life expectancy five years less than the rest of the country. A typical American Indian is 650 percent more likely to die from tuberculosis, 420 percent more likely to die from diabetes, 280 percent more likely to die in an accident, and 52 percent more likely to die from pneumonia or influenza than the rest of the U.S. population.”

“The solution is straightforward: let’s settle Cobell fairly and quickly, and then let’s move ahead. We want Congress to deal with this in good faith and then allow us all to put it behind us. Whatever the settlement turns out to be, the ongoing years of delay will cost millions in lost opportunity. Let’s move on.”

“As Indians, our lives are defined by our history and our rich cultures. We believe in elevating virtue to a way of life. We believe in family, tradition, and self-determination. Our tribes exist as nations with sovereign and independent governments. And we are keenly aware of the challenges we face in providing for our people.”



NCAI President Joe A. Garcia delivers the fourth annual State of Indian Nations Address February 2, 2006 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

NCAI's NATIONAL INDIAN COUNTRY METH INITIATIVE

At the request of Tribal leaders, NCAI President Joe Garcia announced the formation of NCAI's Indian Country Meth Initiative. President Joe Garcia officially issued a "Call to Action" to address Methamphetamines in Indian Country. He called for three immediate responses (1) a joint hearing of the Senate Committee On Indian Affairs and the House Resources Committee, of which we are very grateful to the Chairman for holding, (2) a call for tribal leaders to form reservation initiatives on methamphetamine and drug enforcement and prevention, which is starting to occur, and (3) a call for a White House initiative for interagency cooperation to address methamphetamine and drug enforcement and prevention in Indian Country. Tribal leaders are delighted to announce that all three of these "calls to action" either occurred or are now in process.

The Indian Country Meth Initiative continues to grow and expand, and its projects and goals roughly fall into three categories: (1) Increasing Coordination and Communication;

(2) Education; and (3) Advocacy.

To increase coordination, NCAI has created the national Tribal Meth Initiative Task Force of tribal and local leaders working on both law enforcement and health and prevention in Indian Country. The Tribal Task Force has been working closely with The White House to coordinate with the sister federal agency Indian Country Task Force.

To increase education and prevention, NCAI, Tribal leaders, and federal agencies are working together with the Partnership for a Drug Free America to create a national Indian Country specific anti-meth television and radio campaign. NCAI continues to advocate on the Indian Country Meth Initiative. Almost daily, NCAI continues to push Congress for increased treatment and law enforcement resources.

The National Indian Country Meth Initiative is designed to listen to the struggles tribal leaders are facing in this fight against meth and help bring them the necessary resources they need to take care of their communities.

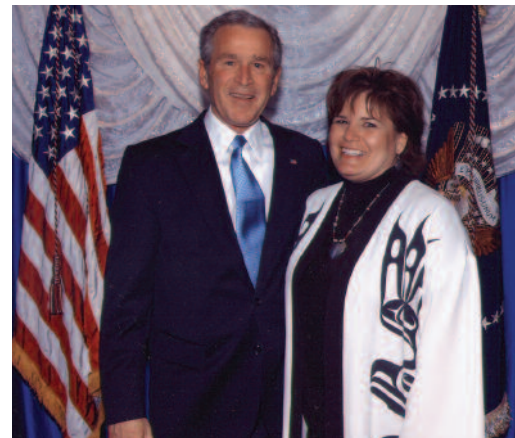


TOP ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT): Former Senator Tom Daschle at NCAI's Congressional Reception during the 2006 Executive Council Winter Session in Washington, D.C.

Ruben Barrales, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs & NCAI President Joe A. Garcia.

Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.) addresses NCAI delegates at the 2006 Executive Council Winter Session.

Congressman Tom Cole (R-OK) speaks with fellow Oklahoman and NCAI Elections Chair Juanita Ahtone.



President George W. Bush and NCAI Executive Director Jacqueline Johnson.



NCAI Executive Committee at White House meeting.

GAMING

Nearly twenty years ago, Congress' passage of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act established a role for federal and state governments in the area of tribal gaming. Gaming has played an essential role in the economic development of tribes and their neighbors by providing jobs and the financial ability for tribes to meet their people's most basic and historically unmet needs. Tribal gaming is an important exercise of governmental authority and a necessary economic development tool for many tribes.

During the last year the federal regulatory structure for tribal gaming has been the subject of Congressional hearings both in Washington, D.C. and across the country. In addition, federal courts have issued opinions describing the limits of federal regulation under existing law.

The NCAI and National Indian Gaming Association's (NIGA) Task Force on Gaming has provided an important tool for tribal leaders to discuss Indian Country's positions on regulatory and legislative proposals to change federal regulation. The Task Force has also provided a medium for federal leaders to discuss with tribes the motivations

behind such proposals. Through the Task Force tribes have been able to promote important positions amid these debates including the need to promote the importance of existing tribal regulation and the need to improve tribal state relations by addressing federal case law that limits the formation of compact agreements between tribes and states.

Amid the numerous legislative and regulatory proposals to change the federal role in regulation of tribal gaming that were posed this year, NCAI provided a forum for deliberation in several parts of the country via the NCAI - National Indian Gaming Association Joint Task Force. These meetings allowed tribes to support one another's efforts to preserve tribal sovereignty and respond with a unified voice to federal proposals.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

NCAI recognizes the important role that financial literacy plays not only in economic development, but in tribal self-governance. Given the breadth of our membership, NCAI is uniquely positioned to work with policy-makers at both the federal and tribal levels to increase awareness about the importance of financial education and

to develop policies and programs that promote financial literacy.

In April of this year, NCAI joined with the Native Financial Education Coalition to host a second annual briefing for Congress on the importance of financial literacy in Native communities. At that briefing, the Coalition followed up on the policy recommendations for federal, state, and tribal policy-makers that were made last year with more specific recommendations for action.

NCAI has also worked to elevate the issue of financial literacy in the eyes of tribal leaders through workshops, broadcast communications, and publications. We know that financial literacy and asset-building strategies are much more successful when they have the support of tribal governments. NCAI is working to deliver the message that financial literacy is fundamental for financial stability and true self-governance. It is our hope that when tribal councils are approached about innovative financial literacy or asset-building strategies they understand the importance of these programs and can be receptive and supportive.



TAXATION

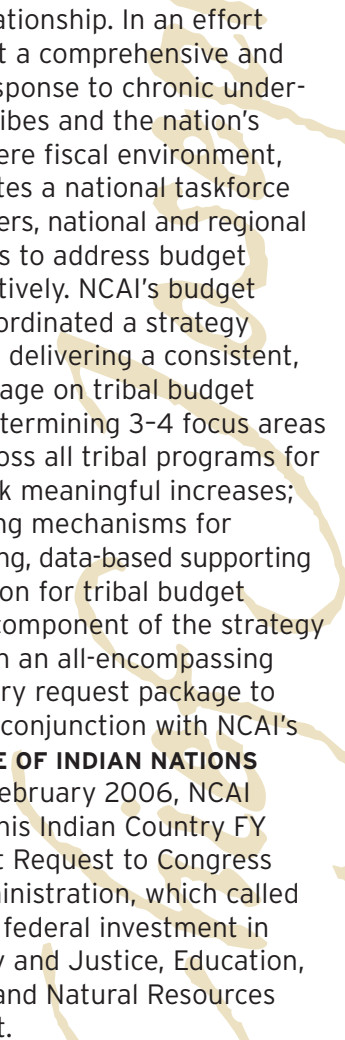
Tax issues are always an important priority for NCAI. This year we continued our push to ensure that tribes have the opportunity to participate in the **STREAMLINED SALES TAX PROJECT**, a nationwide effort by state governments that could have key benefits for tribal revenue collection. NCAI continues to work for legislative or administrative fixes on tribally issued **TAX EXEMPT BONDS**, where a rash of unjustifiable IRS decisions has hamstrung tribal economic development efforts. We have seen progress and setbacks on **TRIBAL PENSION PLANS**, as the Senate approved the tribal pension plans provisions in a comprehensive pension bill, but the House passed a last minute bill of its own that treats tribal pension plans inequitably. The House bill became law under pressure from airline bankruptcies, and we are now working to change the law in corrections legislation.

FEDERAL BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS

The federal budget process reflects the nation's priorities as a whole, symbolizing deeper debates on morality, values, and justice. NCAI continued its commitment on several fronts

to advocate for adequate funding to tribes, key to the goals of self-determination and self-sufficiency in Indian Country. The federal budget process historically has failed to reflect tribal perspectives, from the formulation and justification of budgets to the dance of the dollars in Congressional appropriations, despite the well-established U.S. trust responsibility. To ensure tribes' goals, needs, and priorities are voiced throughout the federal budget process, NCAI provided technical assistance to the BIA/Tribal Budget Advisory Council, participated in FY 2008 BIA and DHHS budget formulation and consultation meetings, contributed Congressional testimony on tribal funding in the President's FY 2007 budget request, and monitored all tribal programs throughout the FY 2007 appropriations process. NCAI and tribal leaders have significantly improved tribal engagement in the federal budget process, both at the Departmental level and with the Administration and Congress.

Severe strains on federal resources, such as the ongoing military campaigns over-seas, tax cuts, and the effects of natural disasters on U.S. infrastructure warrant increased tribal advocacy to protect Indian self-determination and



the trust relationship. In an effort to implement a comprehensive and proactive response to chronic under-funding of tribes and the nation's current austere fiscal environment, NCAI facilitates a national taskforce of tribal leaders, national and regional organizations to address budget issues collectively. NCAI's budget taskforce coordinated a strategy consisting of delivering a consistent, unified message on tribal budget priorities; determining 3-4 focus areas annually across all tribal programs for which to seek meaningful increases; and instituting mechanisms for creating strong, data-based supporting documentation for tribal budget needs. One component of the strategy culminated in an all-encompassing Indian Country request package to distribute in conjunction with NCAI's annual **STATE OF INDIAN NATIONS** address. In February 2006, NCAI distributed this Indian Country FY 2007 Budget Request to Congress and the Administration, which called for strategic federal investment in Public Safety and Justice, Education, Healthcare, and Natural Resources Development.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND TRIBAL HOMELAND SECURITY INITIATIVES

INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS CROSS BORDER SECURITY SUMMIT

In March, NCAI co-sponsored with the Assembly of First Nations of Canada, the International Indigenous Cross Border Security Summit. The Summit provided a forum for indigenous tribal and First Nations officials to comment on the tribal community impacts of international border management initiatives and policies. The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative will require a passport and other documentation for any individual to travel across international boundaries. Tribal leaders view this as an affront because tribal lands were in place before international boundaries were created. Tribal officials also view the laws as violating treaties and longstanding agreements with the United States. In addition to tribal officials, many Canadian and U.S. representatives discussed tribal compliance and timetables. The Summit was hosted by the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe.

NCAI COORDINATES INDIAN COUNTRY DISASTER ASSISTANCE TO TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

Following the devastation to the Gulf Coast and surrounding areas from last year's Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the NCAI sent out a request for contributions to a hurricane relief fund for tribal communities. The generous outpouring of contributions ranged from individual donations to tribal donations. Following a site visit and communication with tribal officials from the hurricane impact zone, NCAI identified 15 tribes as recipients of over \$200,000 from the relief fund. While expressing gratitude for NCAI's effort but stating they had adequate resources for helping community members and others, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians declined the offer of assistance. While there was a void in federal and state recovery assistance, tribal leaders expressed appreciation and thanks to all who contributed to the fund, and to the NCAI for coordinating the relief effort. In addition to monetary donations, NCAI staff assisted in directing federal and private relief organizations that provided food, water, and clothing to impacted tribal communities.



Principal Chief of the United Houma Nation, Brenda Dardar Robichaux, of Louisiana addresses members of the press in Washington, D.C. regarding Indian Country recovery efforts in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Houma



NATIVE VOTE

The Native Vote Program has continued to work to ensure a Native voice at the polls and an influence on policy that will impact our political power. This year we concentrated our Native Vote efforts on maintaining the strong infrastructure we created in 2004 and planning for the 2006 mid-year elections. At the grassroots level, with the hard work of volunteers and coordinators, NCAI's non-partisan Native Vote campaign conducted trainings throughout Indian country, built upon the strong network of organizers at the state and tribal levels by convening meetings at the NCAI conferences and regular conference calls. We have also maintained the presence of the election protection program which will ensure the Indian vote is protected by preventing voter discrimination during the 2006 Election. The Native Vote Program has inspired tribal members to become politically active and participate civically, even during the past off-election year.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

In 2006, as Congress was considering the legislation that reauthorized the Voting Rights Act (VRA) for an additional 25 years, NCAI worked closely with the Native American Rights Fund and a coalition of civil rights groups on a large campaign to educate the public, and in particular Native communities, about the importance of the VRA for Indian Country. As a part of this effort, NCAI provided testimony before Congress on the impact of the VRA for Native voters during the debate on the reauthorization of the Act.

Vigorous enforcement of the VRA, which prohibits discrimination in voting on the basis of race or minority language status, is an important component of NCAI's efforts through the Native Vote project to maximize the power of Native voices at the polls. Native Americans have experienced a long history of disenfranchisement and too many Native people continue to struggle to fully exercise their right to vote today. But as the success of NCAI's Native Vote campaign demonstrates, Native people are exercising their right to vote in ever-increasing numbers. With more and more Native people participating in

elections, the protections of the Voting Rights Act will continue to be critically important to ensuring that all individuals have full and meaningful access to participation in our democracy.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

The success of the Native Vote initiative is evidence of the recognition among Indian tribes that the best way to protect our rights is through participation in the political system. Tribal members have become more politically active in recent years and one of the important ways that tribes participate is by supporting the candidates of their choice in federal elections. In addition to encouraging tribal members to turn out to vote, one way tribes can choose to demonstrate this support is through campaign contributions.

Despite the Supreme Court's long-standing recognition that the First Amendment protects the fundamental right to political association in the form of campaign contributions, the right of Indian tribes to make contributions came under attack in 2006. The attacks were spear-headed by anti-Indian interests who hoped to capitalize on the publicity surrounding the illegal actions of a corrupt lobbyist

who defrauded his tribal clients to push through legislation that would marginalize the Native voice in the political process.

NCAI responded swiftly to these attacks and vocally defended the right of Indian tribes to participate on an equal footing in the political process. NCAI offered testimony before Congress on this topic, worked to correct the onslaught of misinformation appearing in the media, and brought Indian country together to coordinate a response to the attacks. NCAI, with the help of our allies in Congress, successfully defended the right of Indian tribes as governments to have our voices heard.

CENSUS

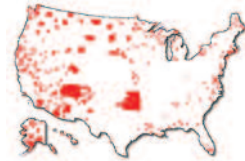
U.S. Census data forms the basis for countless critical decisions and the allocation of resources everyday throughout Indian Country and America. NCAI monitors issues arising from the Census on several fronts.

2010 CENSUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE: NCAI was appointed by the Secretary of Commerce to serve on the 2010 Census Advisory Committee, which reports to the Director of the Census Bureau, to provide advice on policy, research, and technical issues related to the design and implementation of

the census. Through this position, NCAI recommends ways the Census Bureau can most effectively reach Indian Country.

PARTNERING WITH THE CENSUS

BUREAU: NCAI includes technical training in breakout sessions during the Mid Year and Annual Sessions to aid tribal leaders in improving decision-making and policy development in tribal communities with Census data.



U.S. Census Map showing Indian Country in red.

INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS LAW AND POLICY

Tribes' involvement in the international arena promotes tribes' exercise of sovereignty, enhances federal domestic law's treatment of tribal governments, and is an essential part of the development of international law that applies to Indigenous governments.

During this last year, the United Nations has taken a critical step toward that organization's adoption of a declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Following two decades of working group sessions with Indigenous Peoples and nations

states, the declaration addresses issues critical to Indigenous Peoples included the protections provided to cultural property; and states recognition of tribal government's right to self-determination and to lands, territories and natural resources.

Amid these historic developments in the United Nations arena, tribes continue to participate in other international arenas including the Organization of American States and the development of Indigenous-to-Indigenous agreements among American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian leadership as well as Indigenous People's leadership across the globe.

NCAI's continued participation in United Nations deliberations that took place both in New York and Geneva, Switzerland served an important role in ensuring that international law did not limit those protections that tribes retain in the United States and helped to serve as the ground work for enhancing domestic policy. NCAI was also an honored participant in the second ever gathering of Indigenous Peoples from throughout the Western Hemisphere. This gathering took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina and was an historic event that resulted in a declaration by and for Indigenous Peoples.

NATURAL RESOURCES

After the implementation of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, NCAI remains to work diligently with Council on the Energy Resource Tribes (CERT), Indian tribes, advocates and Congressional staff to address the concerns over provisions in the bill impacting tribes.

Of particular concern to tribes, Section 1813 of the Energy Policy Act on Indian Energy Rights-of-Way directs the Departments of Interior and Energy to conduct a study and draft a report to Congress on three areas: 1) analysis of historical rates of compensation; 2) recommendations for appropriate standards to determine fair and appropriate compensation; 3) assessment of tribal self-determination and sovereignty interests implicated by application for rights-of-way on tribal land; 4) and an analysis of relevant national energy transportation policies.

Under current law, the Secretary cannot approve and grant right-of-ways on tribal land without consent of tribal officials. In early 2005, the New Mexico Oil & Gas Association and other energy companies began circulating a proposal to Congress to amend these statutes in the Energy

Policy Act to allow the Secretary of Interior to approve energy right-of-way on tribal lands without tribal consent.

Tribal leaders and NCAI advocated strongly against that proposal, and it was not included. However, industry was successful in including a provision to conduct a study on rights-of-way on tribal land. At the NCAI Annual Meeting in Tulsa, NCAI passed a resolution strongly opposing this study.

In June 2006, NCAI and CERT scheduled a two weeks of Congressional visits for Indian tribes to meet with their congressional delegation and key congressional committees to brief members and staffers on Section 1813. In August 2006, the Departments released the draft report of the Section 1813. The findings of the report refuted many of the energy industry's claims such as that tribes would interfere with national energy transportation and cost would not be passed down to consumers. In September 2006, NCAI and CERT will scheduled a second series of Congressional visits for Indian tribes to meet with Congress to discuss the findings made in the draft report.

NCAI in collaboration with CERT has submitted comments to the draft report. NCAI continues monitor this issue.



Tribal leaders meet at NCAI headquarters in Washington, D.C. to prepare for Capitol Hill meetings on Indian Rights-of-Way.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

NCAI entered into a cooperative agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Information Exchange Network Program on a project designed to assist tribes in developing internal accurate environmental data to improve decision making. The project has the potential to help tribes share environmental, health, geographic and other types of data with other tribes or states and territories for multi-purpose uses. NCAI convened a meeting to promulgate information to tribes about the EPA Environmental Exchange Network during April in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

EDUCATION

The youth of our communities are the future of our nations. In recognizing this, NCAI continues to make the education of American Indian and Alaskan Native one of its priorities. NCAI maintains many partnerships with education-related organizations at the national level to ensure that Native children are not left behind. NCAI keeps close relations with the National Indian Education Association (NIEA). The partnership serves to further develop the educational opportunities available to Native children. This year's most prominent collaboration with NIEA was an effort to protect Native languages, including an effort to advance language programs in schools. NCAI also works with the Tribal Education Departments National Assembly (TEDNA) by hosting national forums at our three annual meetings. These forums are an opportunity to promote tribal education departments nationwide, but also serve as a vehicle for developing relationships between the departments and NCAI. NCAI staff attends conferences and meetings of both organizations in order to maintain the close working relationship between both NIEA and TEDNA.

At the 2005 Annual Convention and the 2006 Mid-Year Conference, NCAI held various workshops on and hosted many guests to speak about Indian education. The 2005 Annual provided our membership with an opportunity to hear from the Secretary of the Department of Education, Margaret Spellings. Secretary Spellings emphasized the importance of educating Native youth and committed to supporting the advancement of Native education. At the 2006 Mid-Year Conference, NCAI held a session that examined intergenerational teaching. The workshop identified tribal communities that integrate teaching from elders into their youth curriculum.

NCAI continues to work closely with the Administration, both with the Department of Education and with the newly established Department of Indian Education within the Department of Interior, to help Native children meet the academic standards put in place by the No Child Left Behind Act.

NCAI TASK FORCE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIAN WOMEN

In response to the tragic rates of violence against Native women in many Native communities, NCAI established a Task Force on Violence Against Indian Women. The Task Force has established a nationwide network of domestic violence and sexual assault activists and tribal leaders who are committed to raising awareness about the dire situation facing many Native women. The NCAI Task Force has worked hard to educate tribal, state, and federal policy-makers about the unique nature of violence against Native women. In 2006, the Task Force continued to work closely with a diverse coalition of groups to strengthen the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which was reauthorized early in 2006. Because of the Task Force's education efforts, the VAWA reauthorization legislation included for the first time a Tribal Title that will enhance the ability of Indian tribes to protect their citizens.

Pontiac

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Maintaining healthy communities is a priority for Indian Country and for NCAI. NCAI remains active in promoting the improvement of health and the quality of service for Indian people. NCAI collaborates with national and regional health organizations, as well as with the Administration to ensure that the health of Indian Country is a prominent national focus. NCAI has partnered with the National Indian Health Board (NIHB) along with a coalition of tribes, lawyers and lobbyists to advocate for the passage of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act which serves to modernize the healthcare delivery system throughout Indian Country.

NCAI's Annual Convention and Mid-Year Conferences serve as venues to promote healthy lifestyles. Our 2005 Annual included the third annual health walk and run in partnership with Nike and the Indian Health Service (IHS). The walk provided a platform to promote healthy lifestyles and was headlined by Bill Mills, a member of the Oglala Sioux and an Olympic Gold Medalist. At the 2006 Mid-Year Conference, representatives from the Indian Health Service provided a workshop on the national

pandemic influenza planning strategy which showcased some tribal responses to a pandemic influenza breakout.

NCAI continues to be extremely active with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) by helping to facilitate and participating in the annual tribal budget consultations. This year HHS implemented a new and improved strategy for holding these sessions by adding a preliminary consultation session to prepare for the large department-wide session. In March, NCAI helped facilitate the First Annual Divisional Budget Consultation and Formulation Session. This was followed by the larger 8th Annual Department Wide Budget Consultation Session held in May that was attended by many HHS agency leaders.

NCAI also administers a diabetes prevention program in partnership with IHS, the Boys and Girls Club of America, and Nike, Inc. The program aims to reduce the onset of diabetes among Native youth by weaving together the importance of teamwork, self-esteem and community service. The curriculum incorporates traditional traditions and history to learn about nutrition, food choices and the impact of diabetes. Additionally, the program encourages the participation of

families and communities at large in an effort to promote healthy lifestyles community-wide.



One of many youth who participated in NCAI's Annual Health and Fitness Walk at the 62nd Annual Convention in Tulsa.



Diabetes and health screenings were a part of NCAI's Annual meeting.

CHILD WELFARE

INDIAN CHILD PROTECTION AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACT OF 2006

This year, NCAI worked diligently on the bill to amend the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act of 2006 (S. 1899), which provides for a five-year reauthorization of child abuse prevention and treatment programs and conforms the Act to other federal child abuse reporting and confidentiality laws. S.1899 helps Congress to identify the scope of child abuse and family violence in Indian Country and encourages inter-agency coordination between the Indian Health Service and public and private medical or treatment organizations in the treatment and examination of children through the use of telemedicine; and reauthorizes the Indian child sexual abuse treatment and the Indian child protection and family violence prevention grant programs.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES ACT

As part of NCAI's meth initiative, the organization advocated for the Improving Outcomes for Children Affected by Meth Act of 2006, which reauthorizes the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) programs to increase the well-being of, and improve the permanency outcomes for, children affected by methamphetamine abuse and addiction. It also addresses the mentoring children of prisoners program. The bill increases the amount reserved under the PSSF program for allotments to Indian tribes and authorizes tribal consortia to receive such allotments.



CULTURAL CONCERNS

Cultural considerations are always a top propriety for tribes and NCAI. Through, S.536, the Native American Omnibus Act of 2005 technical corrections were made to several laws relating to tribes. Section 111 amends the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 to authorize other federal investigative bodies, in addition to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), to investigate offenses involving the sale of Indians arts and crafts misrepresented as an Indian product. It also provides for recovery in a civil action and payment of damages to the Indian tribe, the Indian, or the Indian arts and crafts organization on behalf of which the civil action was initiated.

DISABILITY

Native people with disabilities face an uphill battle when it comes to funding to assist with overcoming their challenges. This year, NCAI advocated for the Promoting Wellness for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2006. The bill establishes accessibility standards for medical diagnostic equipment and creates wellness grants to fund health programs that focus on the unique challenges faced by individuals with disabilities.

ELDER ISSUES

One of the tenets of NCAI is to bring about improved comprehensive services to American Indian and Alaska Native Elders. NCAI supports the reauthorization principles articulated by the National Indian Council on Aging (NICOA).

Twelve hundred delegates from across the United States appointed by Members of Congress, state Governors, the National Congress of American Indians and the WHCOA Policy Committee through the at-large process attended the White House Conference on Aging from December 11-14, 2005. The number one resolution at the WHCOA receiving the most votes was the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA).

NCAI submitted comments to the Senate Committee on Aging on the OAA.

MEDICAID

NCAI is a member of The Tribal Technical Advisory Group (TTAG). The TTAG serves as an advisory committee to the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) on important health care matters associated with the Medicare, Medicaid, and State

Children Health Insurance Programs. The TTAG made formal recommendations to CMS and to the Medicaid Commission regarding tribal Medicaid beneficiaries.

NCAI alerted tribes about new provisions regarding eligibility for Medicaid services. As of July 1, 2006, all Medicaid recipients, which include approximately 40% of Indians who receive their healthcare through the Indian Health Service, will have to produce birth certificates, passports or other documents to prove that they are United States citizens. This provision will have an untold effect on tribal members who are not born in traditional settings and, therefore, do not possess a traditional birth certificate.

NCAI recommended that Indian tribal enrollment documents be accepted as proof of U.S. citizenship for purposes of complying with the citizenship requirement for Medicaid eligibility ordered in Sec. 6036 of the Deficit Reduction Act.

NCAI also provided oral and written comments to the Medicaid Commission regarding reforms to the Medicaid program as a whole. NCAI is closely monitoring the progress of these recommendations and will alert tribes as soon as CMS formulates a response.

NAGPRA

This year, NCAI also strongly advocated for the protection of ancient Indian remains through S.536, the Native American Omnibus Act of 2005, which makes technical corrections to several laws relating to tribes. Section 108 amends the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act to provide that "Native American" refers to a member of a tribe, a people, or a culture that is or was indigenous to the United States. This measure would ensure that ancient remains, no matter how old, could be returned to tribes.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

NCAI board members and staff regularly engage in public educations by speaking at international, national and local events. NCAI also participates in community gatherings and classroom events throughout the year. Student groups frequently visit the NCAI office in Washington, D.C. for classes on history and contemporary policy issues regarding American Indian and Alaska Natives.

NCAI STAFF

JACQUELINE L. JOHNSON

Executive Director

NKETIA AGYEMAN

Office Manager

JANICE CALDWELL

Accountant

DANIEL CORDALIS

Legislative Associate

VIRGINIA DAVIS

Associate Counsel

JOHN DOSSETT

General Counsel

AMBER EBARB

Legislative Associate

CHRISTY FINSEL

Policy Research Center

Research Associate

IRENE FOLSTROM

Native Vote Program Director

JAMIE GOMEZ

Conferences and Events Director

SARAH HICKS

Policy Research Center Director

ROBERT HOLDEN

Emergency Management &

Radioactive Waste Programs Director

CINDA HUGHES

Legislative Associate

BERNIDA HUMETEWA

Membership & Exhibition

Management Director

SHARON IVY-WEISS

Finance Director

ADAM MCMULLIN

Communications Director

JENNIFER RACKLIFF

Legislative Associate

GWEN SALT

Legislative Associate

SEQUOYAH SIMERMEYER

Legislative Associate

HEATHER DAWN THOMPSON

Governmental Affairs Director

MELLOR WILLIE

Development Director

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San Carlos Apache

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jacqueline Johnson
Tlingit



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS
1301 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, NW, SUITE 200
WASHINGTON, DC 20036
202-466-7767
202-466-7797 FAX
WWW.NCAI.ORG