



NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
Advancing Excellence for All Native Students

June 1, 2018

The Honorable Chairman Roy Blunt
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Witness Name: Ahniwake Rose, Executive Director of the National Indian Education Association
Subject of Testimony: Education for Native Students in FY 2019 Labor, HHS, Education Bill
Agency Addressing: Department of Education

Dear Chairman Blunt:

On behalf of the National Indian Education Association (NIEA), I respectfully submit the following comments in response to the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Budget Request for programs that impact Native students.

NIEA is the most inclusive national organization advocating for improved educational opportunities for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students. Our mission is to ensure that Native students have access to a high-quality academic and cultural education, a goal that is only possible if Congress upholds the federal trust responsibility to tribes.

The Federal Trust Relationship

Congress has a federal trust responsibility for the education of Native students. Established through treaties, federal law, and U.S. Supreme Court decisions, the federal government's trust responsibility to tribes includes the obligation to provide parity in access and equal resources to all American Indian and Alaska Native students, regardless of where they attend school. The federal trust responsibility is an obligation shared between the Congress and the Administration for federally-recognized tribes.

NIEA's Specific Requests

NIEA's budget requests for 2019 are outlined below:

ESSA Title VI: Indian Education Formula Grants

Provide \$198 million for Title VI, Part A. *An increase of \$92.7 million above FY 2018 enacted.* Authorized funding for Title VI, Part A for FY 2018 is \$105.3 million. Increases are needed as this critical grant funding is designed to supplement the regular

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school program and assist Native students so they have the opportunity to achieve the same educational standards and attain parity with their non-Native peers.

- Title VI funds support early-childhood and family programs, academic enrichment programs, curriculum development, professional development, and culturally-related activities.

ESSA Title VI, Part A, Subpart 2: Special Programs and Projects to Improve Educational Opportunities for Indian Children

Provide \$67.9 million for Title VI, Part A, Subpart 2: Special Programs and Projects to Improve Educational Opportunities for Indian Children. *An increase of \$10 million above FY 2018 enacted.*

- ED's Native Youth Community Projects initiative provides better comprehensive, community-driven strategies to improve college and career-readiness of Native youth.

ESSA Title VI, Part A, Subpart 3: Language Immersion and National Activities

Provide \$10 million for Title VI, Part A, Subpart 3. *An increase of \$3.1 million above FY 2018 enacted.*

- Native language funding is critically important to tribes and Native communities across the country. The research supporting Native language funding is clear and the investment in the National Activities fund will support the critical building block of Native languages for our students.

ESSA Title VI, Part B: Native Hawaiian Education Program

Provide \$36.4 million Title VI, Part B. *Level with the FY 2018 appropriation.*

- The Native Hawaiian Education program empowers innovative culturally appropriate programs to enhance the quality of education for Native Hawaiians. When establishing the Native Hawaiian Education Program, Congress acknowledged the trust relationship between the Native Hawaiian people and the United States.

ESSA Title VI, Part C: Alaska Native Education Equity Assistance Program

Provide \$36.4 million for Title VI, Part C. *An increase of \$1.1 million over the 2018 enacted.*

- This funding is crucial to closing the gap between Alaska Native students and their non-Native peers as eligible activities include professional development for educators, activities carried out through Even Start programs and Head Start programs, family literacy services, and dropout prevention programs.

ESSA Title VII: Impact Aid

Provide \$2 billion for Title VII. *An increase of \$589 million above FY 2018 enacted.*

- Impact Aid provides direct payments to public school districts as reimbursement for the loss of traditional property taxes due to a federal presence or activity, including the existence of an Indian reservation.
- With nearly 93 percent of Native students enrolling in public schools, Impact Aid provides essential funding for schools serving Native students.

HEA Title III: Tribal Colleges and Universities: Supporting Financially Disadvantaged Students

Provide \$65 million (\$35 million in discretionary funding and \$30 million in mandatory funding) for Title III-A grants under the Higher Education Act for Tribal Colleges and Universities. An increase of \$5.3 million above the FY 2018 enacted.

- Titles III and V of the Higher Education Act, known as Aid for Institutional Development programs, support institutions with a large proportion of financially disadvantaged students and low cost-per-student expenditures.
- Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) clearly fit this definition. The nation's 36 accredited TCUs serve Native and non-Native students in some of the most impoverished areas in the nation.

HEA Title III: Tribal Colleges and Universities: Adult/Basic Education

Provide \$8 million for American Indian Adult/Basic Education at Tribal Colleges and Universities, from existing funds appropriated for state block grant funding. No such set-aside from existing funds included in FY 2018 enacted.

- Despite an absence of dedicated funding, TCUs must find ways to continue to provide basic adult education classes for those American Indians that the present K-12 Indian education system has failed.

Perkins: Tribally Controlled Post-Secondary Career and Technical Institutions

Provide \$10 million for postsecondary career and technical institutions program funds under Carl Perkins Technical and Career Education Act. An increase of \$1.7 million above FY 2018 enacted.

- Section 117 of the Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act authorizes funding for operations at tribally-controlled postsecondary career and technical institutions.
- Vocational education/training programs are very expensive to conduct, but are vital to preparing a future workforce that will operate safely and efficiently contributing greatly to the global economy.

Conclusion

Through these recommendations on the FY 2019 Budget Request for Indian programs, NIEA looks forward to working with the Chairman to pass a budget that serves the unique needs of the only students that the federal government has a direct responsibility to educate – Native students. If you have any questions, please contact Matt de Ferranti, NIEA's Legislative Director, at mdeferranti@niea.org or 202-847-0039.

Sincerely,



Ahniwake Rose
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