

“For Such a Time as This” Pray. Fast. Act.

SUPPORTING AND PROTECTING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

“Scripture tells of a diverse people reconciled to God through the blood of the cross, a people set free for the work of reconciliation. It heralds a new freedom and future in one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”¹ We accept and understand our responsibility to all humanity—to care for, protect, advocate for all, and work to right the wrongs that have at times been inflicted on others even from our hands. We confess that the treatment of our indigenous brothers and sisters has a history of unfairness.²

“Numerous treaties, statutes, and court decisions have created a fundamental contract between tribal nations and the United States: tribes ceded millions of acres of land that made the United States what it is today, and in return tribes have the right of continued self-government and the right to exist as distinct peoples on their own lands. And for its part, the United States has assumed a trust responsibility to protect these rights and to fulfill its solemn commitments to Indian tribes and their members. Part of this trust responsibility includes basic governmental services in Indian Country, funding for which is appropriated in the discretionary portion of the federal budget... The federal budget for tribal governmental services reflects the extent to which the United States honors its promises to Indian people.”³ Congress appropriates funding for programs administered by the Departments of Justice, Interior, Commerce, Health and Human Services, and the Environmental Protection Agency. We urge Congress to continue fully funding programs that protect and support American Indians and Alaska Natives.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

The public safety problems that continue to plague tribal communities are the result of decades of gross underfunding for tribal criminal justice systems; a uniquely complex jurisdictional scheme; and the historic, abject failure by the federal government to fulfill its public safety obligations on American Indian and Alaska Native lands. Crime rates in tribal communities are among the highest in the nation and American Indians and Alaska Natives experience rates of violent crime that are 2.5 times the national average. Residents and visitors on tribal lands deserve the safety and security that is taken for granted outside of Indian Country.⁴

For Fiscal Year 2018, we request Congress provide \$85.5 million dollars plus additional funding for the Office of Justice tribal program, Crime Victim Fund, and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE (DOC)

The DOC administers the Minority Business Development Agency, Office of Native American Affairs, and certain fisheries management fund such as the Salmon Management Activities.

For Fiscal Year 2018, we request Congress provide \$74.5 million dollars to fund DOC administered programs.

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR’S BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS (BIA)

BIA provides services (directly or through contracts, grants, or compacts) to approximately 1.9 million American Indians and Alaska Natives. There are 567 federally recognized American Indian tribes and Alaska Natives in the United States. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is responsible for the administration and management of 55 million surface acres and 57 million acres of subsurface minerals estates held in trust by the United States for American Indian, Indian tribes, and Alaska Natives. Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) provides education services to approximately 42,000 Indian students.

For Fiscal Year 2018, we request Congress provide \$2.867 billion to fund BIA and its programs.



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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S STATE AND TRIBAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

These grants provide for funding programs that include finance for drinking water system infrastructure improvements; hazardous waste sites cleanup; Tribal lead educational outreach activities; implementation of air quality standards; and other areas to support and assure environmental compliance.

For Fiscal Year 2018, we request Congress to provide \$3.553 billion to fund this grant program.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES'(HHS) INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE (IHS)

IHS is an agency within HHS whose goal is to ensure that comprehensive, culturally acceptable personal and public health services are available and accessible to American Indian and Alaska Native people.

For Fiscal Year 2018, we request Congress to provide \$5.04 billion to fund this program.

INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE CULTURE AND ARTS (IAIA) DEVELOPMENT

The mission of IAIA is dedicated to the preservation, study, creative application, and contemporary expression of American Indian and Alaska Native arts and cultures.

For Fiscal Year 2018, we call on Congress to fund this program at least at the 2017 level of \$15.2 million.

LEARN MORE:

¹ *The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) [Social Statement on: Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture](#)*

² *Creation Justice Ministries, [Environmental Justice with Indigenous People](#).*

³ *National Congress of American Indians, [Testimony to the House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies](#).*

⁴ *Ibid.*

[ELCA's American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan](#)

[ELCA Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery](#)

