

**RECLAIMING OUR IMAGE AND IDENTITY FOR  
THE NEXT SEVEN GENERATIONS**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS**

**UNITED STATES SENATE**

**ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS**

SECOND SESSION

NOVEMBER 29, 2012

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# RECLAIMING OUR IMAGE AND IDENTITY FOR THE NEXT SEVEN GENERATIONS

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2012

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:15 p.m. in room 628, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Daniel K. Akaka, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

## OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. DANIEL K. AKAKA, U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII

The CHAIRMAN. I call this hearing to order, the hearing of the Committee on Indian Affairs. I want to say aloha and thank you so much for being here today for the Committee's oversight hearing on Reclaiming Our Image and Identity for the Next Seven Generations.

Over the past few decades, November has been a time to recognize and honor the contributions indigenous peoples have made in the United States. At the Federal level, what began as a day to honor Native peoples grew into a week and now it is the entire month of November. President George H.W. Bush declared in 1992 the Year of the American Indian.

But for Native peoples, every day is Native heritage day. Every month is Native heritage month, and every year is the year of the American Indian. Tribes celebrate their vibrant cultures with centuries-old ceremonies, feasts, pow-wows and other celebrations throughout the entire year. Native languages are spoken, traditional foods are eaten. Songs and dances are shared, and most importantly, these traditions are passed on to the next generation.

The month of November provides Native peoples opportunity to educate by sharing their history and culture with a larger audience. Many times this begins with breaking down harmful stereotypes of Native peoples perpetuated in many movies, television shows and by Native-themed mascots.

Through continuous outreach and education, we will continue reclaiming our image and identity. Indian Country is privileged to have countless ambassadors, past and present, and many who are here today to shine a positive light on Native cultures and identity.

As we tell our stories, more people learn about our contributions to government, military, science sports and other fields. As we tell our stories, people learn about how the Iroquois Confederacy influenced the founding fathers in drafting the United States Constitu-

tion with the concepts of freedom of speech, separation of powers and checks and balances. As we tell our stories, people learn about the contributions Natives had made to the United States Armed Forces, including the work of the Code Talkers in World War I and World War II.

As we tell our stories, people learn about our contributions to science, including the work of Mary Golda Ross, the first Native American female engineer, and one of the most prominent scientists of the space age. As we tell our stories, people learn about the Big Kahuna, Duke Kahanamoku, a Native Hawaiian who was a five time Olympic medalist in swimming, and a member of the surfing hall of fame. And this was done in the 1920s. And Chris Wondolowski, from the Kawai Tribe, who became the most valuable player of major league soccer today.

Today, we have two excellent panels of witnesses who will tell their stories and share their ideas on how we can continue to reclaim our image and identity for future generations. At this point, I would like to ask the members of the Committee to make their opening statements, and I will call on our friend and our leader here, Senator Barrasso, for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN BARRASSO,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM WYOMING**

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for holding this hearing. I want to thank all of our guests for being here.

You introduced and I co-sponsored Senate Resolution 561, naming November as the National Native American Heritage Month. The resolution subsequently passed unanimously. Commemorating National Native American Heritage Month in our hearing today presents a very timely opportunity, an opportunity to reflect on how you, Mr. Chairman, have been a champion for Native Americans during your distinguished career in Congress.

Mr. Chairman, I am not certain if we will be having additional hearings under your chairmanship and under your leadership. I did want to say it has been a great honor for me to serve with you as the Vice Chairman on this Committee. You have been a great friend and a wonderful teacher to so many of us that have had the privilege of working with and serving with you. You have led by example in carrying out our bipartisan tradition, and in your opening statement, you made reference to the Big Kahuna. I always thought of you as the Big Kahuna.

[Laughter.]

Senator BARRASSO. You have been a great friend to Indian Country as well. As Chairman of this Committee, you have brought to the forefront many pressing issues facing Indian Country today. You have generated significant dialogue to build upon for future Congresses. The challenges in Indian Country can at times be daunting. Yet you, you so diligently worked to find and to advance solutions which improve the lives of Indian people.

So I just wanted you to know that I appreciate all of your work, all of your dedication, on all of these matters. I do again want to welcome the witnesses, thank them for their testimony. But finally,

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your service to Indian Country and to this Nation as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Applause.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.  
Now, Senator Jon Tester.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JON TESTER,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM MONTANA**

Senator TESTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also want to welcome the witnesses in today's panels, and I will get to one of them in a minute.

I too want to echo the Ranking Member's sentiments. I have had the honor and privilege of serving on two committees now of which you were chair. With you retiring out of the Senate after this session is over with, I just want to say thank you, thank you for your advocacy for the veterans across this Country in the Veterans Affairs Committee which you chaired, and thank you very much for your advocacy for Native Americans across this Country. Your quiet style of leadership I very much appreciate. You really have set the standard, and I want to thank you for it and thank you for your serving as Chairman of this Committee. I think you have made this Committee what it has been over the last two years. I want to thank you for bringing up important issues that impact Indian Country up and down the line

The other person that I want to talk about very quickly is a chap by the name of Sam McCracken, who works for Nike Corporation, he oversees the N7 program. We will hear from Sam on the second panel. Sam is a Native Montanan from Wolf Point, I believe. We want to thank Sam for being here. We look forward to your testimony.

As Montana's only member of the Indian Affairs Committee, I am proud to represent the interests of Native Americans, not only from Montana but also around the Country, to educate folks about how we all play a role in making things better in Indian Country. I have told this story very many times, about when I first got elected to the Senate six years ago and met with some Indian Tribes, talked about the challenges, and the challenges were many. They were so many that I said, time out, prioritize them. And the fact is, most if not all of the challenges that Indian Country faces revolve around poverty. And things that we can do to make that better, because we are not going to change that overnight, it is going to take time, and we need to continue to make inroads into the poverty that is in Indian Country by putting forth common sense policies to address those.

But the bottom line is, there are a lot of other things we can do, and that is what this hearing is about, to reflect a better, positive self-image. I think it is critical, in this image-conscious society that we live in today.

Now, last year, we had a hearing on this issue. I think it was helpful. But we need to know: are we headed in the right direction? Are we moving the ball down the court? Is modern media educating our communities in the proper way? I look forward to hearing from the witnesses about how things have gotten better, hopefully not worse. But if they have, I want to hear about that, too. Because

we have to really listen for specific policies, specific recommendations for what this Committee can really push forward to improve the situation, focusing on those things that are truly bipartisan in nature.

With that, Mr. Chairman, once again, thank you for your service.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you very much, Senator Jon Tester.

Senator Al Franken?

**STATEMENT OF HON. AL FRANKEN,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM MINNESOTA**

Senator FRANKEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to associate myself with the comments of the Vice Chairman and Senator Tester in thanking you for your leadership on this Committee and your consistent efforts to support Native people.

The only part I don't want to associate myself with however, is that I never thought you were the Big Kahuna. I would like to disassociate myself there from the Vice Chairman.

[Laughter.]

Senator FRANKEN. But I would echo everything else he said about your leadership and your bipartisanship, even if what I just said didn't seem bipartisan.

Your dedication to American Indians, to Native peoples, is inspiring. I want to thank you in particular for helping to pass the Nelson Act, after so many years. With your help, we were able to resolve a 60-year old issue and now six bands of the Minnesota Ojibwe Tribe can access the funds that are rightfully theirs.

This year is the 150th anniversary of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. It is an anniversary that serves really as a reminder of why this hearing is so important. This terrible war resulted in hundreds of deaths, the expulsion of the Dakota from Minnesota, and the hanging of 38 Dakota men, the largest execution in American history. Tragedies like the U.S.-Dakota War happened across the map of this Country during our Nation's early years, and remind us of why it is so important to commemorate Native Tribes and their contributions to this Country and their history.

I was proud to join many of my colleagues on this Committee in introducing the resolution to designate November as National Native American Heritage Month. And I look forward to the testimonies of all our witnesses. We must continue to highlight contributions of indigenous peoples all across our Country and to support Tribal efforts to reclaim their identity, their culture, their history, their language. That is why I was so happy to co-sponsor Senator Johnson's bill authorizing the Native American Languages Program.

I got to see one such program in action myself when I visited the White Earth Band of the Ojibwe's Circle of Life Academy, which offers daily Ojibwe culture and language classes. These programs are vitally important to keeping the culture alive, which is part of keeping your identity alive. American Indians are contemporary people. And we all need to understand that you are contemporary people, but you have a culture.

I grew up in a town where we had the most Jewish suburb of Minneapolis, and we had Hebrew school. That is our language, and

that is part of our identity. So when I go to a pow-wow and see Native members of Tribes in Minnesota celebrate their culture, they are doing what every culture in the Country does, which is celebrate their culture. But the American Indian has a special place, because they were the first, you were the first Americans.

So I want to thank you, all the witnesses, for coming today. And I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman. If Big Kahuna sticks, I will go with it.

[Laughter.]

Senator FRANKEN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Al Franken.

Senator FRANKEN. I will be here all week.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. As Chairman, it is my goal to ensure that we hear from all who want to contribute to the discussion. The hearing record is open for two weeks from today. I encourage everyone to submit your comments through written testimony.

Serving on our first panel is Ms. Lynn Valbuena, Chairwoman, Tribal Alliance of Sovereign Indian Nations; Mr. Andrew J. Lee, Trustee, The National Museum of the American Indian and Executive at Aetna Inc.; Ms. Mary Kim Titla, Educator/Journalist. Welcome, all of you here, to this hearing today.

Ms. Valbuena, will you please proceed with your testimony?

**STATEMENT OF LYNN VALBUENA, CHAIRWOMAN, TRIBAL ALLIANCE OF SOVEREIGN INDIAN NATIONS**

Ms. VALBUENA. Thank you, Chairman Akaka.

Good afternoon, Chairman Akaka, Vice Chairman Barrasso and distinguished members of the Committee. My name is Lynn Valbuena, Chairwoman of the Tribal Alliance of Sovereign Indian Nations, or TASIN, as we are more commonly referred to. I am also the former Vice Chair of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians near San Bernardino, California, and previously served as Secretary of the National Indian Gaming Association.

I currently serve as the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American Indians. I am also a trustee for the Autry National Museum in Los Angeles, California.

Thank you for holding this hearing. TASIN is an intergovernmental association of nine federally-recognized Tribal governments throughout southern California. Our members include the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, the Augustine Band of Cahuilla Indians, the Cahuilla Band of Indians, the Chemehuevi Indian Tribe, the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, the Santa Rosa Band of Mission Indians, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians and the Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians.

Our purpose is to protect and promote the Tribal sovereign governmental rights, our cultural identity and interests of federally-recognized Tribes located within the Federal Central District within the State of California. TASIN and member Tribes have been at the forefront of almost every major public policy issue in California affecting Tribal governments, either sponsoring or helping to change or shape legislation regarding Indian Health Welfare, the Indian Gaming Special Distribution Fund, sacred sites protection,

Internet gaming, protection of Tribal gaming exclusivity, off-reservation gaming, and the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for non-gaming Tribes.

I thank and commend you, Chairman Akaka, and members of the Committee and all of the senior staff here today for your diligence in reaching out to Indian Country throughout the year. We hope future committees will continue the regular and ongoing dialogue with Indian Country that you have helped to initiate.

Our Native culture is central to the identity of American Indians. Our traditions, our belief systems, our inherent rights, our way of life, have all been handed down by our forefathers generation by generation.

My daughter teaches my grandchildren the stories and traditions I taught her as a child, just like my mother did, who learned them from my grandmother, who taught me. My mother, Pauline Murillo, intuitively understood and would often talk about Indian people living in two worlds. In fact, I brought a book today to show you, my mother did write this book, *Living in Two Worlds*, that she did publish. I would like to give all of you a book when I leave today. This will tell of her life living in two worlds.

She and my grandmother instilled in us kids the importance of educating the public and non-Indian people about who we are as Tribes and Tribal people. In fact, my mother even wrote a book about her experiences of living on the San Manuel Indian Reservation while she was also being an active citizen in the non-Indian world.

Growing up, my mother and other Tribal children were teased and harassed by the non-Indian kids. They tolerated and endured a lot of bigotry and isolation, just like so many of our Tribal elders across the Country, because of stereotypes and inaccuracies. But the foundation of the modern rights and identity of sovereign nations is our unique legacy of traditions, language, values and beliefs, tested throughout history that shape and inform every Tribal member.

It is for this reason, and despite past misguided Federal policies, hostilities, Hollywood stereotypes and hardships suffered by American Indians, that the self-identity of America's indigenous people remains strong and vibrant. We know who we are: the descendants of the original people who governed this land now called America. We are also her stewards.

For much of the 20th century, the stereotype of a Native person was that of a feather bonnet-wearing Indian living in a tepee. I remember growing up and being asked about my tepee and if I put on my costume and feathers when I get home back to the reservation. But tepees, of course, were not indigenous to Southern California.

Another heinous stereotype, which sadly continues to be perpetuated today, is that of the drunken Indian. Sadly, most of the public believes the stereotype. In 2010, TASIN conducted a statewide public opinion poll of California voters and found that 60 percent of respondents believe Indians living on a reservation have a high degree of alcoholism and substance abuse. Obviously, we recognize the rate of alcoholism and substance abuse among Native Americans being higher than the general population, but at the same

time, a 2007 study by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration found that fewer American Indians and Alaska Natives used alcohol in the past year as compared to other racial groups.

Yet, the perception continues to hold. This has deep consequences for our youth since their self-worth has such a bearing on their long-term success in life. Research has concluded that negative stereotypes foster feelings of inferiority, shame and low self-esteem among our Native youth. Low self-esteem, which has been linked to academic performance and social adjustment, has also been identified as a factor in Native youth's historically low high school graduation rates and high suicide and homicide rates.

I submit to you that history demands that we define ourselves to the non-Native world; otherwise these and other stereotypes will take hold and redefine our children and grandchildren.

Clearly, IGRA's policy goal of promoting Tribal economic development, self-sufficiency, and strong Tribal governments through Indian gaming has brought unprecedented economic opportunities to Tribes and Tribal people. But it has also thrust Indian Tribes and Indian people into a very bright spotlight, raising awareness and creating greater interest into our way of life that for generations has been deeply cherished and held private.

To a large extent, IGRA's success has resulted in a new stereotype: that every Indian is wealthy and owns a casino. In fact, our public opinion survey from 2010 found that 53 percent of Californians think Indian casinos have made Indian people rich. Naturally, this perception breeds envy and results in a backlash toward Tribes which creates new challenges with real policy and human consequences.

In 2003, for example, Arnold Schwarzenegger ran a political ad saying he would force Tribes to pay their fair share. He exploited the commonly misunderstood circumstance that Tribal government gaming operations don't pay taxes. Of course he ignored the long-held principle that governments don't tax other governments. And when Schwarzenegger became governor, he demanded Tribes renegotiate their compacts and make payments into the State's general fund in order to help solve the State's budget crises.

The result of this misguided policy was that the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals last year ruled Schwarzenegger negotiated in bad-faith by effectively demanding an illegal tax. Even many elected officials, the people charged with policymaking, are also uninformed about our rights and who we are.

This is one of the reasons TASIN has partnered with the California League of Cities, which is a coalition of 478 cities in California, to help educate elected officials at the local government level about Tribal governments. Each year, TASIN participates in an annual conference, and we welcome the local officials to come by and ask us questions about what we do. They always come by and ask us, are you here to build another casino, we want one in our city. The first year we participated, several elected officials asked, "why are the Indians at our conference? What is the purpose of you being here? Why are you building more casinos?" Even today, some just don't understand that we have governmental rights and responsibilities.

That is why several TASIN Tribes every year undertake an educational campaign to bring awareness to people throughout our region about our rights, history and our cultural heritage. Every year, my Tribe and other Tribal governments air and place ads in regional media to tell our story in our way. We recognize that we bear the responsibility of educating non-Native people about ourselves, but Congress and this Committee can and should take a couple of simple steps to help us, particularly since past Federal policies have contributed to and perpetuated the stereotypes that exist.

It is very fitting that this hearing is held this month, November. November, as you are aware, is National American Indian Heritage Month. Before, it was Native American Week, which was held in November, then September, then the first week of December. My point is, not until 1995 have Presidents issued annual proclamations consistently designating November as National American Indian Heritage Month. And we deeply appreciate that President Obama signed into law the Native American Heritage Day Act of 2009, declaring the Friday after Thanksgiving as Native American Heritage Day. This was an important and long overdue acknowledgment by Congress, but we all need to do more to raise awareness of this important month and day.

If you were to ask most Americans what the day after Thanksgiving is called, I would venture to guess that 99.9 percent would say Black Friday instead of Native American Heritage Day. We all need to do more to raise awareness about this important day if we expect it to become a meaningful and relevant American tradition like Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Labor Day, or even Columbus Day.

Another important step this Committee can take is to reauthorize and fund the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act, which was enacted in 2006 to preserve and increase fluency in Native American languages. Language shapes everyone's identity, but for Native communities there is an urgent need to protect our languages from extinction.

In closing, let me say that we recognize that most education policy is decided at the State and local levels. However, you in Congress can do a lot to encourage States and school districts to adopt curricula that accurately reflect the history, culture, and experience of local American Indian Tribes. As early as the 1950s, my mother and grandmother would visit local schools to counteract inaccurate and misleading stereotypes of Indian people. They worked hard to teach as many people as they could. More than 50 years later, we are still visiting schools to correct inaccurate accounts of our history and our culture. Tribal people should not be in the position of constantly having to undo misperceptions caused in part by flawed policies.

In California, Tribes have worked for more than a decade to encourage the adoption of curriculum that teaches local children about the history and culture of the local Tribes. We still have more work to do, but we believe accurate and appropriate lessons would go a long way toward helping to undo stereotypes and misunderstandings.

Indian Tribes and Indian people are part of America's past, present and future. We look for Congress's collaboration into the future so that our image and identity is strong and vibrant for the next seven generations. And as my mother and grandmother would always tell me, never forget who you are and where you came from.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Valbuena follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LYNN VALBUENA, CHAIRWOMAN, TRIBAL ALLIANCE OF SOVEREIGN INDIAN NATIONS

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Growing up, my mother and other tribal children were teased and harassed by the non-Indian kids. They tolerated and endured a lot of bigotry and isolation, just like so many of our tribal elders across the country, because of stereotypes and inaccuracies.

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Yet, the perception continues to hold, and this has deep consequences for our youth since their self-worth has such a bearing on their long-term success in life. Research has concluded that negative stereotypes foster feelings of inferiority, shame, and low self-esteem among Native youth.<sup>1</sup> Low self-esteem, which has been linked to academic performance and social adjustment, has also been identified as a factor in Native youth's historically low high school graduation rates<sup>2</sup> and high suicide and homicide rates.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pewewardy, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Payment, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Harjo, 1990; Young, 1993; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012

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Another important step this committee can take is to reauthorize and fund the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act, which was enacted in 2006 to preserve and increase fluency in Native American languages. Language shapes everyone’s identity, but for Native communities there is an urgent need to protect our languages from extinction.

In closing, let me say that we recognize that most education policy is decided at the state and local levels; however, you and Congress can do a lot to encourage states and school districts to adopt curricula that accurately reflect the history, culture, and experience of local American Indian tribes.

As early as the 1950s my mother and grandmother would visit local schools to counteract inaccurate and misleading stereotypes of Indian people. They worked hard to teach as many people as they could. More than 50 years later, we are still visiting schools to correct inaccurate accounts of our history and our culture. Tribal people should not be in the position of constantly having to undo misperceptions caused in part by flawed policies.

In California, tribes have worked for more than a decade to encourage the adoption of curriculum that teaches local children about the history and culture of the local tribes.

We still have more work to do, but we believe accurate and appropriate lessons would go a long ways toward helping to undo stereotypes and misunderstanding.

Indian tribes and Indian people are part of America’s past, present, and its future. We look for Congress’s collaboration into the future so that our image and identity is strong and vibrant for the next seven generations.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for your testimony.

Mr. Lee, please proceed with your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF ANDREW J. LEE, TRUSTEE, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION; EXECUTIVE, AETNA, INC.**

Mr. LEE. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee.

My name is Andrew Lee. My Seneca name is Ono-dah-Geyh. I am a trustee of the National Museum of the American Indian, and a member of several boards serving Indian Country. I currently work at Aetna, where I am president of one of the company’s new businesses. I also have the honor of serving as a Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum.

As a mixed-race Native, it took me many years to view my background and heritage as assets that allowed me to walk comfortably in many worlds. When I moved to New York City in the mid-1990s, it became clear that I could help shape how Indians are viewed. One day I asked a friendly-looking man if he had seen an article about American Indians in that day’s newspaper. He had. And then

he added, but I think they got it right in South America by wiping out the indigenous population.

I said nothing and walked away. But after that, I went out of my way to spend time with him. We talked about Wall Street, history and the arts. And I never brought up that repulsive comment. Over time, I introduced him to Indian sovereignty. Ultimately, he became an unlikely ally.

For me, this experience underscored the need to build bridges of understanding across communities, cultures and sectors. Most importantly, it taught me that I can make a difference. My career has spanned philanthropy, American Indian affairs and now business. Across this diversity, I have remained committed to building bridges, whether it is encouraging mainstream philanthropy to pay attention to Native America, helping Tribes share best practices or finding ways for corporations to work with Native populations.

Although I no longer work on Indian issues as my day job, I stay very involved through volunteerism and board service.

Reflecting on my journey, I would like to offer three ideas about image and identity. First, our ability to reclaim our image and identity is inextricably tied to our continued support for the policy of self-determination. Extensive research concludes that successful Indian nations assert the right to govern themselves. And they exercise that right by building capable and culturally-appropriate institutions of self-governance.

Astonishing success is possible when Indian nations put themselves in the driver's seat for decisionmaking on everything from social service provision to natural resource management. The right way forward is to sustain and advance this policy of self-determination, enabling Tribes to define themselves and govern themselves to brighter futures.

Second, we should showcase the growing number of success stories in contemporary Native America. Indian nations are at the forefront of innovation, like the Winnebago Tribe, which turned around its economy, plagued by 60 percent unemployment, by launching a diversified Tribal enterprise. Like the Tohono O'odham Nation, building a skilled nursing facility that is now a national model. Or the Zuni, building the first-ever eagle sanctuary operated by Indians. These success stories paint a picture of Native America that is very different from what we see on television or learn from textbooks.

Finally, we need to accelerate the ascension of Natives into positions of influence in all aspects of society. No nation, Native or non-Native, can be successful over the long term without its best and brightest participating in public service. Too often, however, talent leaves reservations.

Indian nations can reverse this trend by creating environments that nurture talent, where people with good ideas are supported by a well-functioning government. Tribal governments can help by engaging their off-reservation citizens in Tribal affairs, training their elected officials and teaching Tribal civics.

In this inter-connected world, we also need more Natives to take on positions of leadership in business, non-Native government and civil society. I look forward to seeing more Natives among the ranks of Rhodes scholars, U.S. Ambassadors, CEOs and Nobel

Prize winners. This is possible if we set our sights high, ensure youth know what opportunities exist and work with diverse stakeholders to make sure they partner with Indian Country, not only because it is the right thing to do but because it leads to better outcomes from everyone.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for bringing this concept of seven generations to the floor. I believe we can and will reclaim a positive American Indian image and identity for the next seven generations. But it requires that we all remain steadfast in our support for self-determination, tell the many stories of Tribal success and cultivate Native leadership into positions of influence within and beyond Indian Country. If we do these things, we will do our part to restore Indian nations to their rightful place of honor among the world's great nations.

Thank you for this opportunity.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lee follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANDREW J. LEE, TRUSTEE, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION; EXECUTIVE, AETNA, INC.

#### **Introduction**

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice-Chairman, and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear here today. My name is Andrew Lee; my Seneca Indian name is Ono-dah-geyh.<sup>1</sup> I have the pleasure of serving as a trustee of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, as well as numerous other boards and advisory councils in service to Indian Country. Currently, I am an executive at Aetna Inc., where I am president of one of Aetna's new non-insurance businesses, serve on the board of directors for the Aetna Foundation, and lead an employee resource group dedicated to American Indian issues. I also have the honor of serving as a Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum, which each year selects up to 200 individuals under age 40 from around the world who share a commitment to shaping the global future.

#### **My Personal and Professional Journey**

As a mixed heritage Native, it took me many years to become comfortable with my identity. As a boy, I thought being half-Seneca was a convenient novelty. To my non-Indian friends, it meant I was naturally good at shooting arrows, playing lacrosse, and connecting with the outdoors. By high school, I did not think about or talk very much about my heritage because I wanted to be just like all the other non-Native kids. In college, my attitude changed when I met a professor who challenged me to imagine ways I could give back to my community. I began to think of my background and heritage as assets, and I started to develop a sense of responsibility to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

This responsibility became much clearer after I finished graduate school and moved to New York City to start my career. One day, I struck up a conversation with a friendly enough looking man and asked him if he had seen an interesting article about American Indians in that day's newspaper. He responded yes, he had seen the article. Then he added, *but I think they got it right in South America by wiping out the indigenous population*. Stunned by what I heard, I decided it was not a good idea to respond in the way I wanted. Instead, I said nothing and walked away.

The next morning, I decided I needed to get to know this person. So virtually every day for two years, I went out of my way to spend time with him. I discovered that he was a highly educated and widely respected individual. We talked about Wall Street, politics, history, and the arts—and I never brought up the repulsive remark he made. Over time, I introduced him to the concepts of Indian sovereignty and self-determination. Though I never would have imagined it possible, he eventually came to support the dignity, strengths, and diversity of this country's first peoples. When he died a few years ago, we lost an unlikely ally.

<sup>1</sup>This testimony and the opinions expressed at the November 29 hearing are solely those of Andrew J. Lee, and do not reflect the opinions of the Smithsonian Institution, Aetna Inc., the World Economic Forum, or any other organization or affiliation.

This experience in the mid-1990s showed me the importance of changing attitudes, the value of exchanging knowledge, and the need for individuals who are able—and willing—to build bridges of understanding across communities, cultures, and sectors. Perhaps most importantly, this experience taught me that I can help build those bridges.

My career has also been an amalgamation of experiences, with some unlikely twists. I had an incredible opportunity to work in the field of American Indian affairs for the better part of a decade, serving as the executive director of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, where I was the founding director of the Honoring Nations tribal governance awards program. After that, nearly eight years ago, I decided to enter the business world, motivated in part by the fact there are so few Indians working in positions of leadership in corporate America and wanting to push myself with a completely new professional experience. Importantly, I have found I can build bridges in my own career by working for a world class Fortune 100 company while staying very involved in Indian affairs through volunteerism and board service. I have the privilege, for example, to serve as a trustee of the National Museum of the American Indian, which tells the real story of Native peoples in the Western Hemisphere, educating and inspiring millions of visitors from America and around the globe.

### **Ideas for Reclaiming Image and Identity**

Reflecting on my personal and professional journey, I would like to offer three ideas for how we can positively shape our image and identity for the next seven generations.

*First, our ability to reclaim our image and identity is inextricably tied to our continued support for the policy of self-determination.* Nearly two decades of research by my former colleagues at the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development points to a fundamental conclusion: Successful Indian nations assert the right to govern themselves, and they exercise that right effectively by building capable and culturally appropriate institutions of self-governance. Astonishing success is possible when tribes seize control of their own futures, spend less time blaming 'others' for their problems and instead put themselves in the driver's seat for decision-making—on everything from running their health care to building and managing their own law enforcement systems, and from creating their own culturally relevant, yet stringent, standards for educational achievement to managing the natural resources on their lands in a responsible manner that is informed by tradition.

The Federal Government can play an important role in helping Indian nations rise to their full potential by sustaining self-determination as the cornerstone of U.S. Indian policy. Clearly, a continuing view of Indian nations merely as wards of the Federal Government is untenable. The Federal Government can provide expanded opportunities for tribes to exercise their sovereignty in fresh ways, offer even greater flexibility in how funding is used within the confines of mutual accountability, and support tribal efforts to reform their constitutions and governments in culturally appropriate ways. It is telling that the policy of self-determination is the only policy approach in over a century that has led to meaningful improvements in the material health and welfare of Indian Country. The right way forward is to stay the course on self-determination, facilitating Indian nations' ability to govern themselves to brighter futures.

*Second, we have a collective responsibility to showcase the incredible stories of tribal success in this era of self-determination.* Throughout history, American Indians have made enormous contributions to humanity. The Iroquois Confederacy was an important influence in the development of the Constitution of the United States of America. Sacajawea's incredible leadership was instrumental to the success of the Lewis and Clark expedition. And Natives pioneered countless agricultural, medical, architectural, and other innovations on which the rest of the world now depends. As one of my distinguished colleagues in the field of Indian affairs is fond of saying, when it comes to Native America, "the truth is much more interesting than the lies." Yet these truths are rarely communicated to the next generation.

Too often, we fail to pay sufficient attention to the impressive success stories of contemporary Native America, which are becoming easier to find. That needs to change. As we have learned from Harvard's Honoring Nations tribal governance awards program, tribes are at the forefront of innovation, doing lots of small and big things that contribute to a better future for Native people and the world more generally:<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Summaries provided by the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. For more information, visit [www.hpaied.org](http://www.hpaied.org).

- Chartered under the laws of the Winnebago Tribe and wholly owned by the Tribe, Ho-Chunk, Inc. was launched in 1994 to diversify the Tribe's business interests while maintaining a separation between business and tribal government. The general purpose company promotes economic self-sufficiency and creates jobs through its actively managed enterprises, joint ventures, and passive investments, which include hotels, convenience stores, websites, and an order fulfillment center. Today, Ho-Chunk, Inc. employs more than 1,400 people and has 24 businesses with operations in ten states and four foreign countries.
- The Lummi Indian nation established the Lummi Tribal Sewer and Water District in 1983 to ensure the Nation's role in the provision of safe drinking water and discharge of clean wastewater across and beyond its reservation, located 100 miles north of Seattle. The District's managerial, financial, and technical competence—emerging at a time when the Lummi Nation confronted serious challenges to its jurisdiction over non-tribally owned lands within the reservation—has enhanced tribal sovereignty while providing critical infrastructure services to the reservation's 5,000+ Native and non-Native residents.
- The Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians have long depended on the fish that live in Red Lake, the sixth largest body of freshwater in the United States, located in Minnesota. Both the waters and the walleye of the lake are central to the Red Lake Band people, its history, economy, and culture. But by the mid-1990s, the walleye population had collapsed from over-fishing. Taking drastic but necessary action, the Band negotiated a consensus arrangement with local fisherman and state and federal officials to ban fishing in the lake. Over a ten-year period the fish recovered at an astonishing rate. The tribally led Red Lake Recovery Project now determines when, how, and who can fish the historic waters from which the Band claims its name.
- For decades Tohono O'odham elders in need of skilled nursing had to move far away from family and friends to receive care, or stay home and forgo long term care services. However, with the opening of the Archie Hendricks, Sr. Skilled Nursing Facility, O'odham elders can now remain in the community. Combining today's latest technologies and world-class clinical care with traditional values, the nursing home has become one of the finest elder care facilities anywhere in the United States.
- The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) have become one of the largest employers in Eastern Oregon, and along with economic success came the return of tribal citizens. A lack of transportation options, however, prevented tribal citizens from taking advantage of local employment opportunities. In 2001, CTUIR Public Transit was started to address the need for public transportation. The comprehensive system includes both a free bus and a taxi voucher service, encompassing a large service area within and beyond the reservation boundaries, which is interconnected with other non-tribal regional systems. Remarkably, the transit system has helped alleviate poverty, promoted stronger inter-governmental relations, and facilitated cross-cultural understanding as Native and non-Native ride together.
- Created in 1999, the Zuni Eagle Sanctuary is the first eagle sanctuary owned and operated by Native Americans as well as the first aviary constructed for the purpose of cultural preservation. Combining both functional aspects of eagle care with an aesthetic that reflects the natural surroundings of Zuni, the Sanctuary is home to more than two dozen eagles that otherwise would have been destroyed. Successfully meeting the Zuni's demand for molted eagle feathers that are used in religious and cultural ceremonies, the Sanctuary is also a model of intergovernmental cooperation between a tribal government and federal agency.

These and countless other stories of Native ingenuity and success are powerful. They give tribal decision makers fresh ideas and practical knowledge about how to create sustainable economies, improve service delivery, and manage vital resources. These stories also raise the bar for tribal government performance and shape dreams of what is possible.

At the same time, these success stories present a picture of Native America that is very different from what we see on television, and different from what children learn in social studies. These are stories that need to be told because they help restore Indian nations to their rightful place of honor among the world's nations.

*And finally, we need to accelerate the ascension of Natives into positions of influence in all areas of society—starting with tribal governments and extending beyond Indian Country.* While there are many reasons why Natives have faced, and con-

tinue to face, long odds bringing individual achievement to scale, I believe we need to do better.

One area that needs our attention is tribal governance. No nation—Native or non-Native—can be successful over the long term without some of its best and brightest participating in public service. While there are a growing number of tribes developing, attracting, and retaining leadership from within their own populations, the unfortunate presence of nepotism, cronyism, and rent-seeking behavior persists in far too many places. Indian nations can stop the flood of talent leaving their reservations. The challenge for tribal leaders and, indeed, communities themselves is to create an environment where talent can be nurtured, where hard work is expected and appreciated, and where people with good ideas are encouraged and supported. To be sure, creating this kind of environment is not easy—but it is necessary.

The good news is that in this era of self-determination, there are many things Indian nations can do. I have been inspired by interventions made by forward-thinking tribes, such as investing in youth leadership programs that give young people a formal voice in tribal affairs, finding ways to engage off-reservation citizenry to participate in tribal government, developing formal training programs for tribal legislators and candidates so they are prepared to govern, and ensuring children on the reservation and in surrounding communities are taught tribal civics.

I would also submit that in an increasingly complex and interconnected world, we need more Natives to take on positions of leadership in business, non-Native government, and civil society. This does *not* conflict with the need to attract the best and brightest to serve in tribal government. Rather, it means we need to expand significantly the pool of available talent. Both the Federal Government and the tribes can facilitate this through smart investments in education, training, and enrichment programs. I look forward to the day that Natives are appropriately represented in institutions and programs with national and global significance. That we see more Native participation among the ranks of Rhodes scholars, MacArthur fellows, Young Global Leaders, White House Fellows, and Nobel prize winners. That more Native kids and young professionals set their sights on becoming U.S. ambassadors, serving as CEOs of global companies, becoming board members of major foundations, and launching start-ups. We need to set our sights high, make sure our young people know what opportunities exist, and work with diverse stakeholders in business, government, and civil society to make sure they are partnering with Indian Country not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because it leads to better outcomes for everyone.

### **Conclusion**

Like most Haudenosaunee, I was taught at an early age that before making important decisions, we have a responsibility to reflect on the wisdom of seven generations behind us, and to consider the impact of our decisions seven generations ahead.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for bringing this principle of seven generations to the fore. When it comes to image and identity, there is a lot at stake for Indian people. My own experiences working with Indians and non-Indians make me optimistic we can build new bridges of understanding. And a big part of what it'll take to reclaim our image and identity in a very positive way for the next seven generations is to stay steadfast in our support for self-determination, shine a bright spotlight on tribal success stories, and cultivate and accelerate Native leadership into positions of influence inside and beyond Indian Country.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Lee, for your testimony.

Mr. Titla, will you please proceed with your testimony?

### **STATEMENT OF MARY KIM TITLA, COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, SAN CARLOS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT; BOARD MEMBER, NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

Ms. TITLA. Chairman Akaka and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today. Thank you for all you do for Indian Country.

My name is Mary Kim Titla. I am a member of the San Carlos Apache Tribe in Arizona. I was born and raised on the San Carlos Apache Reservation.

Currently I work as the Communications Officer for the San Carlos Unified School District. I am also a former TV news reporter, working for NBC News in Tucson and Phoenix. I am a freelance writer, I serve as Secretary for the Board of Trustees for United National Indian Tribal Youth, also known as UNITY. And I am on the board for the National Indian Education Association. I am a proud descendant of three Apache chiefs, an Apache Scout, military veterans, a former Tribal councilwoman and a master wood carver and schoolteacher.

Now I would like to introduce myself in Apache. Dagot'ee. [Greeting and introduction in Native language.]

Like many on my reservation, I am not a fluent Apache speaker. Less than 20 percent of my people speak the language fluently. The Apache language coordinator in our school district recently informed me that only one student in our elementary school of more than 900 students can speak the language. That is only one student.

Our language is the heart of Native people. Our elders say without the heart our people will cease to exist. Without the heart, there is no image, no identity. We need the heart to keep our songs, our ceremonies and our culture alive. The next seven generations are counting on us, all of us, lawmakers, educators, Tribal leaders, activists, parents and especially our elders, to work together, so that we do not lose the heart of our people.

My ancestors, including the three chiefs I descended from, fought hard and sacrificed greatly so that we could be here today. I am doing my part by taking an Apache language class at the local community college. I hope to one day say, if I can learn the language, you can too. Our language teachers are working very hard to make sure our language never dies. But there are two few teachers, and the pressure to do NCLB academics is effectively minimizing the language and the arts.

Our children are eager to learn, and many are like a sponge, ready to soak in everything that is Native. However, according to the 2011 National Indian Education Study, almost half of Native youth in fourth grade, in 12 States, including my great State of Arizona, know little or nothing of their Tribe's history. And it gets worse. Nearly two-thirds of Native eighth graders know little or nothing of their Tribe's history and heritage.

The same two-thirds are also unaware or know little of the issues that are important to Indian Country. I don't know about you, but that is very alarming to me.

Fortunately, in our school district, we are working hard to change that by teaching Apache history. I know all too well the lack of positive self-image. As a child, I experienced two events that are forever etched in my mind. When I first went to public school in our nearby town, we took a field trip through the reservation. One of the non-Indian students in my class pointed to an Indian home and laughed.

During the 1960s, when I first started public school, many of the Indian homes did not have plumbing or electricity. And when I was

a teenager, my friends and I decided to go to a dance in another nearby town. At this dance, there were mainly non-Indians. As we drove around the building before even setting foot inside the dance, someone outside, a non-Indian, yelled "dirty Indians." My friends shouted profanities and we drove away. As I said, these are memories that are etched in my mind.

Our schools and teachers desperately need your help. We need more technology infrastructure and we need more Native teachers. My father was one of a handful of Apache teachers who, more than 20 years ago, helped pave the way and set an example for other Apache teachers. Today, there are 15 Apache teachers working in our school district, and next month, another 10 will be certified and will graduate and will teach in our schools. Another six Apaches are in administrative positions.

San Carlos Apaches are taking ownership of their education in a big way. This helps to build image and identity for our young people. They need role models, so they can not only embrace who they are but also realize their dreams. A future role model is a Native American woman in Congress.

We also have wonderful organizations like UNITY, United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc., helping to mold and inspire our young Native people. I don't where I would be today if it wasn't for the UNITY organization. Though this organization has been around for more than 30 years and has affected thousands of young people's lives, it may close its doors at the end of December. This organization focuses on the social, spiritual, physical and mental well-being of Native youth. Unfortunately, as I mentioned, this on-profit may have to close its doors at the end of December.

I bought one Power Ball ticket in Arizona. I haven't checked it. I am really hoping that I won, so that I can give some money to UNITY. There was someone who won from Arizona, you know.

[Laughter.]

Ms. TITLA. In order for our children to truly reclaim their image and identity, Tribes, parents and community members must have a say in shaping and controlling what their children learn in school. Earlier this year, our school district received unprecedented support from the San Carlos Apache Tribal Council, which provided incentives for students who passed the AIMS test, Arizona's instrument to measure standards. More importantly, Tribal leaders are giving their time and talking personally with students at the schools.

Indian Country needs strong, concerted and sustained support to pass the Native Class Act, culture, language and access for success in schools. While not a fix-all, the Native Class Act does address many of the systemic problems in Native education, and includes strengthening Tribal control of education, preserves and revitalizes Native languages and encourages Tribal-State partnerships.

We must also reaffirm and acknowledge the Department of Education's Federal trust responsibility for American Indian and Alaska Native students. The President issued his memorandum on Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, in 2009. The Department of Education has yet to release its consultation policy.

As a result, Tribes are still struggling to be at the table, both with the Department of Education and States, in developing meaningful education policy for Native students. We are rapidly moving through the 21st century. Our children do not know or comprehend what it means to be American Indian in this modern age. We must work together, with the support of lawmakers, if our next seven generations are to reclaim their heritage and capture the vision of American Indians in the 22nd century.

I have a vested interest. I am the mother of an 11th grader and the grandmother of three grandchildren, who are counting on me to take a stand on Indian education issues. Today I take this stand for them and for all Native children. Ahiyei. Thank you and God bless you. When appropriate, I can answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Titla follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARY KIM TITLA, COMMUNICATION'S OFFICER, SAN CARLOS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT; BOARD MEMBER, NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

#### **Introduction**

Chairman Akaka, Vice-Chairman Barrasso, and Members of the Committee:

Dagot'ee. Thank you all for the work you do on behalf of Native people and thank you for this opportunity to address you about the future of our people. My name is Mary Kim Titla. I'm a member of the San Carlos Apache Tribe in Arizona. I was born and raised on the San Carlos Apache reservation. Currently I work as the Communications Officer for the San Carlos Unified School District. Last year, thanks to the iLead program at Arizona State University, I had the privilege of interning as Principal at San Carlos Secondary School where I learned first-hand the challenges facing educators. I'm also a freelance writer and former TV News Reporter. I serve as Secretary for the Board of Trustees for United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc. I'm a board member for the National Indian Education Association and a Co-Lead Advisor for the San Carlos Apache Youth Council. I'm a proud descendant of three Apache chiefs, an Apache Scout, military veterans, a former tribal councilwoman and a Master wood carver and schoolteacher.

#### **Embracing Identity**

How can we, as Native people, reclaim our image and identity for the next Seven Generations? First, our Native children must fully embrace who they are. An estimated 93 percent of Native children attend both urban and rural public schools. The remaining 7 percent attend Bureau of Indian Education schools. I'd like to share some alarming statistics.

According to the 2011 National Indian Education Study, which involved a survey of Native students in 12 states, including my great state of Arizona, only 44 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native fourth-graders reported knowing a little or nothing of their tribe or group's history. A mere 32 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native eighth graders had some knowledge of their Native history, and 32 percent had some knowledge of their Native traditions and cultures. That means two-thirds knew little or nothing of their Native history and heritage.

This lack of knowledge about their identities as members of proud and powerful cultures, along with the lack of self-pride, is devastating. It is one reason why just three out of every five of our American Indian and Alaska Native high schools graduated on time last year.

I know this all too well. My first negative experience surrounding image and identity began when I attended public school as a young child. I attended a school with non-Indian students in a nearby town. During a field trip that required traveling through my reservation, a non-Indian student pointed at an Indian home and laughed. Most Indian homes in the 1960s, including mine, did not have plumbing or electricity. The statement did not make me feel good about myself. When I was a teenager, my friends and I decided to attend a dance in another nearby town. Mostly non-Indians were at the dance. As we drove around the building, a young man shouted "Dirty Indians!" My friends reacted by shouting profanities. We drove away. Those memories are forever etched in my mind. How many Native American children today still live in situations that are embarrassing to them or are victims

of racism? We must continue to work hard to educate the ignorant and put an end to racism.

World-class culturally based education is one way to help Native students reclaim their proud image and identity. It is also one of the most-important solutions to helping our children and communities succeed in a world in which knowledge is economic, social, and political power.

### **Academic Progress**

In order for our Native students to reclaim their image and identity, the Federal Government must do everything possible to ensure schools serving Native students meet benchmarks for academic progress. Many of our schools serving Native students in Arizona are labeled failing schools. The failing label should be applied to a system that knew the struggles in these communities and did little to intervene in a meaningful way until President Barack Obama took office. It is the label that should be applied to the level of helpful educational research related to American Indians on reservations.

We must work together to ensure our students stay in school and ensure our graduates are equipped with 21st Century skills. This includes keeping pace with technological infrastructure to support e-learning initiatives. The intent of the 2011 National Indian Education Study was to address issues, specifically those related to identifying practices and methods that raise the academic achievement of American Indian/Alaska Native students, and assessing the role of Native language and culture in fostering that improvement. Recently, an Apache language coordinator in our school district, after conducting an assessment, informed me that only one student out of more than 900 students in our elementary school can speak Apache fluently. A 2007 survey of San Carlos Apaches shows less than 20 percent of more than 14,000 tribal members are fluent Apache speakers. Our language is not to the point of extinction but at this rate, it's just a matter of time.

Native education is in a state of emergency. Many elders believe our language is the glue that holds our culture together. Many believe without our language, we will no longer be Apache. We will no longer be Indian. Fortunately, we have Apache language teachers who are working very hard to make sure our language never dies but there are too few language teachers and the pressure to do No Child Left Behind academics is effectively minimizing the language and the arts.

### **Role of Community**

Parents of course play a very important role in helping their children with self-image and identity. My parents are the driving force behind my desire to prove myself to the world. My parents, Phillip and Charlotte Titla, raised me to do my best in school and to aim for the stars. They said education is the key to success and the key to breaking the cycle of poverty and alcoholism. They stressed "when you go to college" not "if you go to college." Growing up, I was the exception rather than the norm. All five of the Titla children graduated from college, with three obtaining Master's degrees but that's not the best part of the story. The best part of the story is my parents quit their jobs and graduated with my youngest brother from Grand Canyon University. My mother went on to become a social worker. My father and brother became schoolteachers. That was more than 20 years ago when only a handful of Apache teachers worked for our school district. Today 15 Apache teachers work in our school district and another 10 Apaches will be certified to teach next month through the iTeach program at Arizona State University. Six Apaches are part of the district leadership team. San Carlos Apaches are taking ownership of their schools in a big way.

In order for our children to truly reclaim their image and identity, tribes, parents and community members must have a say in shaping and controlling what their children learn in school. Earlier this year, our school district received unprecedented support from the San Carlos Apache Tribal Council who provided incentives for students who passed the AIMS (Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards) test. More importantly, tribal leaders are giving their time and are talking personally with students at the schools.

### **Native CLASS Act**

Indian Country needs strong, concerted, and sustained support to pass the Native CLASS (Culture, Language and Access for Success in Schools) Act in Congress. While not a fix-all, the Native CLASS Act does address many of the systemic problems in Native education and includes strengthening tribal control of education, preserves and revitalizes Native languages and encourages tribal/state partnerships.

### **Trust Responsibility**

We must also reaffirm and acknowledge the Department of Education's federal trust responsibility for American Indian and Alaska Native students. The President issued his memorandum on Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, in 2009. The Department of Education has yet to release its consultation policy. As a result, tribes are still struggling to be at the table—both with the Department of Education and States—in developing meaningful education policy for Native students. The Department must ensure that tribes are key stakeholders and that it consults with tribes prior to the development of regulations that will affect how Native students and schools are funded. We desperately need increased funding for Title VII Indian Education, and full funding for Title I and Impact Aid.

### **Institutional Racism**

While my testimony today focuses on Indian education, I'd also like to take this opportunity to stand with employees and visitors at the Ariel Rios Federal Building, the Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) and the National Congress of American Indians, who have raised objections over six historical murals that are considered offensive and stereotype Native Americans. The old western images are located in elevator lobbies on upper floors and are visible to employees and visitors. While consultation has occurred and a recommendation made to leave the murals in place with interpretative panels, I join with those who protest the images, on behalf of Native children, and ask that they be removed as they create a hostile work environment. It's important to teach the next seven generations to stand up for what is right.

### **Conclusion**

We are rapidly moving through the 21st Century. Our children do not know or comprehend what it means to be American Indian in this modern age. We must work together with the support of lawmakers if our next seven generations are to reclaim their heritage and capture the vision of American Indians in the 22nd Century. I have a vested interest. I'm the mother of an 11th grader and the grandmother of three grandchildren who are counting on me to take a stand on Indian education issues. Today, I take this stand for them and for all Native children. Ahiyéi! Thank you and God bless you!

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you very much, Ms. Titla.

Ms. Valbuena, thank you for your testimony. My question to you is, how can Tribal leadership empower young people to excel while maintaining their identity and culture?

Ms. VALBUENA. I think it is important, and I am speaking for my Tribe, we have to teach our children as babies, when they are growing up. I know at San Manuel we have our education department and our tutoring, and we have our language programs, like some of the other Tribes also do.

So I think at the very beginning, just teaching the kids their culture and identity, and keeping them in school. Because I know nowadays, with all the technology, from computers to everything else that is going on that we didn't have when we were their age as children, kids may not be active, whether it is in sports at school or other extracurricular, after school. So I think we just have to keep on telling our children as they grow older and keeping their culture and their identity, and teaching them as just young kids. I know that is what we do at San Manuel.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. There will be time for other questions.

I am going to ask Senator Jon Tester for any questions he may have.

Senator TESTER. Yes, first of all, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the panelists today.

I could go a lot of different directions, but I think we are going to start with education. Mary Kim, you talked about the need for more Indian educators. I agree. I think that it solve a whole bunch of problems, as to a basis for the beginning of an understanding of where you have been.

The question is, is there, from our level, any recommendations on what we can do to encourage the kids that are in school right now, I am talking K-12 kids, to go into education, to become teachers?

Ms. TITLA. Well, you can visit our schools, for one thing. So I would like to invite all of you today to come to the San Carlos Apache Reservation to visit our schools, to see all of the wonderful things that we are doing. I think our school district is serving as a model for the rest of the Country due to the number of Native educators who are working in our schools. As I said, we have 10 teacher interns, Apaches, who will be graduating next month.

I went through the iLead program last year, through Arizona State University. We have two others who went through the same program, to be administrators. As I mentioned, we are taking ownership of our schools. What we need is more support. We need more programs like the iLead program, the iTeach program. We hope that more colleges and universities will create programs that are similar to that, to allow Native teachers to have the kind of support that they need to stay in school and eventually return to their communities.

We have a teacher recently, in fact, my cousin, Leslie Van Hernandez, who was named one of ten exemplary teachers in Arizona. She is a member of our Tribe, she doesn't work in our school district, she works for the Mesa Public Schools. But she is a fine example of what our teachers can do. They are doing great things. And many of them aren't winning awards, but they are doing award-winning work. So we need to recognize our teachers.

We also need to make funding available so that we can increase their pay. There are a lot of people who don't go into this honorable profession because there simply isn't enough money there. They aren't receiving the type of salary that they would like. Our teachers deserve to receive increases in their salaries. So we need more money for education.

We also need money for programs, Indian education programs like Title VII, Title I, Impact Aid. We need your support. We are facing budget cuts, as you know. Our school is in dire straits right now. We have to cut programs. And as a result, our children suffer.

So we need your support in all of those areas. Thank you.

Senator TESTER. Absolutely. Thank you.

You brought up No Child Left Behind and how it has resulted in a lot of cutting of the arts. Being a music teacher myself in a former life, I can appreciate that comment. NCLB has had a lot of things wrong with it.

We are going to reauthorize or authorize The Elementary Secondary Education Act some time in the next Congress, that will take the place of a Race to the Top, which took the place of NCLB, you get the idea. What would you like, from a Native American perspective, what do you think is important? What do you think should be in that Act? You can relate it to NCLB if you like. What

do you think is important and should be addressed that would help Native American kids be successful?

Ms. TITLA. Consultation would be good, meaningful consultation. We need to be at the table. We have decisions that are being made about our children, about our schools. And we would like to have a say in that. So the fact that you say you are going to do it and don't do it doesn't sit well with us. So it would be nice to have meaningful consultation take place, and actually sit at the table.

Senator TESTER. Okay, that is very good.

And I only have time for one more. Andrew, you talked about building bridges of understanding. How can we encourage people, Native Americans in particular, to do what you did to build bridges with folks who may not be supporters of Native Americans?

Mr. LEE. There are two things, Senator. The first is that we need more leadership in Tribal government. So my point about public service is that we need our best and brightest from Indian Country to serve their own governments. That is the first task.

The second task that I mentioned was to put more Indians in positions of influence outside of Indian Country or beyond Indian Country. Some may say that that is a zero sum game. I disagree. I think the real challenge for Tribal leadership and elected leaders, for that matter, is to increase the pool of available Native talent. That goes to everything from providing safe home structures for the youth to making sure that we have safe reservations and off-reservation communities. It means we set high bars for education, that we incorporate Tribal civics, as I had mentioned.

And I think once you start to do those things, you will see a whole new cadre of young Native professionals who are increasingly fluent both on the reservations and able to work outside of that.

One of the hopes and dreams that I have is to see a growing number of U.S. ambassadors who are Native American. That is another area where I think this body could make a big difference. We need to encourage more Native professionals and our esteemed leaders to take on service like that. That would make a huge difference, and again, help restore Indian nations to their position of honor.

Senator TESTER. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Tester.

Senator Franken.

Senator FRANKEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Like Senator Tester said, there is so much here to talk about. And I don't know where to start. But I will start with Mr. Lee. You are half Seneca Indian and half white. Okay. That's not uncommon. I think part of the education of Americans is to understand that. This man on Wall Street who you built a bridge to, he didn't understand that you were part Indian, obviously, when he made that comment.

How long over the conversation was it until you brought up the fact that you were half Indian?

Mr. LEE. I would say it was about six months before I even started to build that bridge. It took a long time.

Senator FRANKEN. So this ignorance is, this is a smart man, this is a wise man otherwise in other ways, right?

Mr. LEE. He is a highly, or was, a highly-educated and well-respected individual, yes.

Senator FRANKEN. So we don't have, we have in our Country, Ms. Titla, you were talking about the very high percentage of Native children who don't know their Tribal history, the history of Indians in America. And you kind of wonder. Here we are, this is Indian Heritage Month. It is funny, I remember when we finally had Black History Month, I don't know, this might have been 20, 30 years ago, I would see PSAs all the time about Black History.

I am wondering if any of you have any thoughts about how valuable it might be to have public service announcements during the month of November on television talking about the history of Native peoples in this Country.

Ms. TITLA. It is very important. In our State of Arizona, with 22 Tribes, we have PSAs about Hispanic month, we have PSAs about Black Heritage Month. I don't see PSAs about —

Senator FRANKEN. Well, obviously we need education for Indian kids and for Native Americans. We also need this education for Americans. This is so interesting, when you talk about both wanting to have Tribal leaders and nurturing Tribal leaders. And you talk about in your written testimony some great success stories that have come from sovereignty. You talk about Red Lake Reservation where they restored the walleye, which is the greatest tasting fish in the world, to Red Lake. That was a success. You talk about other successes, and you talk about best practices. Buck Jourdain is the chairman there, he is a friend of mine, and he is a great leader.

And you also talk about creating leaders in, well, you went to Wall Street. And in all spheres of life. I was in Pine Ridge a couple of years ago and met a group of kids. There was one kid who was like 14, 15 years old who was kind of the ringleader of this group. They had me on, asking them what they wanted to do. He said, I want to be a drug dealer. He didn't, he was pulling my leg. Then I started talking to him, and I noticed that he was really funny. I used to be in that business, and I recognize talent. This kid was funny.

I must have spent a half an hour trying to convince him that he could do that, that he could be a comedian, that he could go to Chicago. I said, go to Chicago, get trained at Second City, you would be great. There is 85 percent unemployment on Pine Ridge. This kid could not conceive of the idea that that pathway was open to him.

Believe me, there are a lot of people who have succeeded in comedy who are a lot less funny than this kid.

[Laughter.]

Senator FRANKEN. I just know that this is a problem about the pride of your heritage, where that ties in to having self-esteem and confidence and knowing that possibilities are open to you. And that is something that we just have to grapple with in so many different ways. I thank you for your testimony. I wanted to be here for all of this and continue this conversation. Because you talk about sovereignty and how important that is. And I know it is, I know it is. Then I want to know what we can do, what we can do from this Committee, what we can do from this Senate, what we can do from

this Congress. I just wonder if you have any thoughts on that, what our role is.

Mr. LEE. I do. You touched on something that is vitally important. It is how non-Native kids are taught. If you go into virtually any textbook today and read the chapter on American Indians, it is all in the past, the far, far past. I would argue that while it is true that Indians have always been innovators and pioneered on countless innovations, there are so many present day success stories that we do not do a good enough job celebrating and highlighting. I think when we start to do that, we paint a very real picture for today's Native youth of what is possible, from the Red Lake Band that you mentioned to White Earth, to some of the work being done by Tribes in Montana, and all across Indian Country. There are so many, I mean, I was in this business for many years of celebrating success stories. I can tell you, every day I loved getting up in the morning, because I would find another example of Tribal success.

We don't do a good enough job of highlighting that. And I am certain that non-Indian kids don't ever get exposed to some of the great things that are happening here today.

The other comment I would make, Senator, is that this hearing is a great start, but it can't be the end.

Ms. TITLA. Can I add to that? I would like to say that something that your Committee is doing is with the Facebook page. I applaud you for that. You highlight role models around the Country, in Indian Country, Native Hawaiians. And I post that on my school's Facebook page. As communications officer, I want them to be exposed to the role models that are out there.

It is getting a lot of visits. I don't know if you know that, but people are looking at that. Our children are hungry to see what is out there, they want to know who their role models are.

But I also wanted to mention a couple of other things. That is, there is a lot more work that we need to do to educate the ignorant and erase racism. The two stories that I mentioned about what happened in my childhood, how many children today still feel embarrassed about their homes, Native children? How many are still hearing those racist comments? It is still happening today. So we have a lot of work to do.

And the last thing I want to add is that we have State benchmarks that we have to meet. Our Native schools are not meeting those benchmarks. Many in Arizona are failing schools, including our school, unfortunately. The failing label needs to be applied to a system that knew the challenges and the struggles in these communities but did little to intervene in a meaningful way. So there is more that we can do there to help our schools so that they are meeting these benchmarks and are succeeding. And our kids are taking ownership of that, they produced a video this year about AIMS, encouraging their peers to do their best and pass AIMS. We showed that to the community, to the Tribal council, and it went a long way.

They want to pass these benchmarks. They want to take pride in their school. They don't want to be labeled as a failing school. So there is more work to be done there.

Senator FRANKEN. AIMS is the NCLB test?

Ms. TITLA. Yes.

Senator FRANKEN. Okay. Well, thank you all. This is a continuing conversation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Franken.

Let me call on Senator Jon Tester for another question.

Senator TESTER. I just have one real quick one. It came at the end of my last round. Andrew, you talked about getting more Native Americans involved in Tribal governments, and then expanding that out into other government areas outside the Reservation. I think it is a great idea. It makes me think back to when I was graduating from college, my father said, I want you to come back and start farming, because if you go out into the real world and start making some money, you will never get back.

Knowing that there are members from the Obama Administration that are watching this on their stations at home, and knowing, not knowing, but assuming that you probably make a pretty good chunk of dough where you are, would you be willing to take a cut in salary and come back and serve in the public service sector? Because that is probably what it would take?

Mr. LEE. I have always viewed my career in many ways as being similar to a triathlon: business, civil society and public service. Now, my graduate school training was in public policy, so I have always had a passion actually for all three of those sectors. And over the years, I have been able to weave in parts of different sectors at each step of the way.

So right now, you are right, I work for a corporation. But I give back significantly through board service. And while I can't predict what my career trajectory will ultimately be, I am absolutely open to going through the triathlon of serving in the private sector, in business and in government.

Senator TESTER. That is good, I applaud that. Because so many of the folks that want to come back and become public employees will take a significant cut in pay. Some of them are up here today, as a matter of fact, that were successful in the private sector, making money and decided to come back in. That is what it takes. And that is what it takes for everybody, not only Native Americans, but for everybody. I agree, if we can get more Native Americans out there in positions of importance, and there are a lot of them in government, I think it helps everybody.

Thanks you all. Thanks again, Mr. Chairman, for the flexibility.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Tester.

Ms. Valbuena, in your testimony you state that history demands that we define ourselves to the non-Native world. And I was interested, of course you mentioned about the book and the two worlds. What lessons can you share from your experiences and your family's experiences in confronting historical as well as modern stereotypes?

Ms. VALBUENA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it all has to do with educating the general public on Tribes, how we are structured and what we do. As I had mentioned about the California League of Cities that our organization belongs to, we are there educating the elected officials. They were asking why we were there. So the way we explained it to them, and they had a better understanding was, you are an elected mayor and you serve your con-

stituents and you have a city council. We have an elected Tribal chair or chief or president of our Tribes, and they do as the same, looking out for the best interests of those who got you elected.

So they kind of had a better understanding. But again, I know that there are many people out there that I have talked to from different organizations that are non-Tribal that think, for example, that Indian casinos can only employ Indian people. When I tell them at San Manuel we have 98 percent of our almost 4,000 employees are non-Indian people from the local community, they look at me like, you are kidding, we thought Indian casinos, you have to be Native American. And I said no, that is not so.

So there are a lot of things out there, misconceptions, again, about paying taxes. We are always educating, always educating. I know we are running out of time here, but just real quickly I wanted to share another story. When I mentioned about Schwarzenegger having the ad on TV, ironically during that time that ad came out, I had two men in our home working on our TV when that ad came out. And I am in the kitchen watching dishes and they are in there downgrading the Indians saying this and that and those Indians and they get away with not paying taxes. So I had to set them straight and kick them out of my house.

But they walked out saying, thank you very much, why aren't the Tribes more vocal? Why don't we see anything in the media or the paper about this? We didn't know. You educated us.

So there are always ways out there to educate people on different issues from whether it is the language to the education to our culture and what we do out there in our Tribal governments. It is just a big job. I also understand that those Tribal leaders who are out there, you really, really have to have a passion for what you do to get it done.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

This question is for the entire panel. It is asking you whether you have any final recommendations on how we can best reclaim our image and identity. And also ensure that our vibrant cultures will continue on into future generations. May I say now, we have a few minutes to go until another vote call. So we will conclude this panel with this question. Feel free to discuss it. We will go right, starting with Ms. Valbuena. Any final recommendations on how we can best reclaim our image and identity?

Ms. VALBUENA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As was said earlier by two of my other colleagues here, we are glad we are holding this hearing. We of course do not want this to be the last. I think initially we need to talk about setting up a meeting and kind of understanding where we are going with all this as far as recommendations and talk about what Congress can do or what the Indian Affairs Committee can do, and then get some recommendations down and suggestions and then go from there. But have that dialogue of communication and hold some more meetings.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Lee?

Mr. LEE. Mr. Chairman, I am not going to give you a specific recommendation. But my recommendation is very specific. That is that we cannot retrench at all from the policy of self-determination and self-governance. It is only when Tribes have the ability to define their own futures and run their own affairs that we see suc-

cess. Any student of history will tell you that the waxing and waning of Federal policy over the years has been tremendously harmful to Indian Country. For the past nearly 40 years, we have been on this path of self-determination, and it is the only policy approach that has resulted in any meaningful improvement in the material wealth and health and future promise of Indian Country.

So if there is one thing that I would impress it is that we need to stay the course on self-determination and self-governance.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Lee. Ms. Titla?

Ms. TITLA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to add to that last statement, in order to develop a world-class culturally-based education, we need to make sure that all key stakeholders are at the table, that there is meaningful consultation and that Indian education programs are highly considered in terms of funding and support.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

I really appreciate this panel and your recommendations. This is so important, that we continue to try to move this and work on it with your recommendations as well. We are going to hear from another panel on future generations, too.

So again, I thank you. This is just the first step in moving out. But we need to make the rest of the Nation and even the world aware of our cultures and also to be in a sense an example for other people. And so the examples comes from knowing our culture and heritage and practicing it and celebrating it.

Thank you so much for what you have shared with us. It will really be helpful.

At this time I would like to call a recess. I will have to go and vote, and I will be right back. Thank you very much.

We stand in recess.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. The hearing will come to order.

I would like to invite the second panel to the witness table. Serving on our second panel is Mr. Sam McCracken, General Manager, Nike N7 Program and Chairman of the N7 Fund; Ms. Tonantzin Carmelo, Screen Actors Guild Award Nominated Actor; and Ms. Marjorie Tahbone, Miss Indian World 2011–12.

I want to welcome you to this hearing and thank you so much for being a part of this, as we take another step in making the rest of the Country aware of our indigenous peoples, as well as to try to structure something to get our people together in our future generations. At this time I would like to call on Mr. McCracken to please proceed with your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF SAM McCracken, GENERAL MANAGER, NIKE N7; CHAIRMAN, N7 FUND**

Mr. McCracken. Good afternoon, Chairman Akaka, Ranking Member Barrasso and distinguished members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as we celebrate Native American Heritage Month.

[Greeting in Native tongue.] My given name is Sam McCracken. I am an enrolled member of the Assiniboine Sioux Tribe on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Montana.

At Nike, I am the General Manager of Nike N7. I also serve as the founder and chairman of the N7 Fund. N7 is inspired by Native wisdom of seven generations. It reads in every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the seventh generation.

Nike N7 is committed to programming and products that will empower Native American communities through the power of sport. In 2007, Nike unveiled the Air Native, a performance athletic shoe designed specifically for American Indians. The shoe was designed with the distinct foot shape for American Indians. It is only available today through Tribal health promotion disease prevention programs. Proceeds from the sale of the shoe, as well as our N7 collection, fund access to sport programs for Native youth.

As members of this Committee know, the challenges our youth are facing today are daunting: high suicide rates, high obesity and type 2 diabetes rates and low graduation rates. At N7, we believe that sport is an antidote for change. What if sport could reduce the rates of diabetes? What if sport could reduce the rates of suicide with our youth? And what if sport could convince a kid to stay in school?

There is ample evidence of the power of physical activity to enhance the physical, mental and spiritual health and academic performance. That is why N7 funds community programs designated to get our youth to achieve and move.

I would like to take a moment to highlight a few of our grantees within our programs. The NB3 Foundation was founded by Notah Begay III, the only full-blooded Native American to play on the PGA Tour. In New Mexico, NB3 uses sport for social change to fight the epidemic of type 2 diabetes. They have an innovative soccer program that is getting great and amazing results.

In South Dakota, N7 Fund works closely with the Boys and Girls Clubs and serves on several reservations, promoting healthy lifestyles. In Minnesota, we partner with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Recreation Division to assure youth have access to sport.

These are just a few of our community partners. Since 2009, the N7 Fund has awarded more than \$2 million in grants. Today we have served 125,000 youth. Our goal is that the N7 Fund will serve 2 million Native youth by 2016.

But programs are only effective if our youth choose to participate. We are fortunate to have several Native athletes who join us in this work to inspire and motivate our youth. N7 Ambassadors lead by example: Jacoby Ellsbury, center fielder of the Boston Red Sox, an enrolled member of the Colorado River Indian community; Tahnee Robinson, professional basketball player, playing in Bulgaria presently, grew up on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming; Sam Bradford, Heisman Trophy winner, quarterback for the St. Louis Rams, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma; Chris Wondolowski, MLS soccer standout, and currently, as we sit here today, is being named the most valuable player of the major league soccer league, and is an enrolled member of the Kiowa Nation in Oklahoma.

These athletes devoted their time and attention to the vision of advocating for greater access to sport for our Native youth. They

know that sport can transform a person, and they believe that sport can transform a people.

We all have a role to play in improving our future. At Nike, we have three MOUs with Federal agencies, the Indian Health Services, the Bureau of Indian Education and the Corporation for National and Community Service. Our goal is to work together to educate our Native communities about living healthy lifestyles.

Federal and Tribal governments also play a key role. I urge the Committee to continue to support the Special Diabetes Program for American Indians. This program provides critical funding for diabetes treatment and prevention across Indian Country. I also want to encourage Tribal leaders to participate as well.

In conclusion, I would like to invite each of you on the Committee to join us to come see first-hand what our community groups are doing to serve your constituents. Come watch a kid kick a ball, play, run, with children who benefit from the N7 program. You will walk away inspired. Together, we can secure a future for Native American youth that has them running, jumping, kicking and reaching to fulfill their full human potential.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McCracken follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SAM MCCRACKEN, GENERAL MANAGER, NIKE N7;  
CHAIRMAN, N7 FUND

Good afternoon. Chairman Akaka, Ranking Member Barrasso, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today in celebration of Native American Heritage Month. It's an honor to share with you the work of NIKE N7, and join with you in efforts to improve the lives of our Native American youth.

My name is Sam McCracken and I am a member of the Fort Peck Tribe. At NIKE, I am the General Manager for NIKE N7, and serve as Chairman of the N7 Fund. In this role, I have had the opportunity to work closely with government officials and community elders to endow programs that serve our community.

N7 is inspired by the Native American wisdom of the seven generations: In every deliberation we must consider the impact of our decisions on the seventh generation. The ultimate goal of the N7 Fund is to consider this footprint and to help Native American youth recognize their proud history and build on it for a triumphant future.

**What is N7 and the N7 Fund?**

NIKE N7 is a community program and product collection within NIKE that empowers Native American and Aboriginal communities through the power of sport and physical activity. The mission of the N7 Fund is to unleash the power of sport and all its benefits in these communities. The N7 Fund consists of contributions from donors and sales profits from the innovative Air Native N7 shoe and N7 Collection. The Air Native was unveiled in 2007, a new performance athletic shoe designed specifically for American Indians. The shoe was the product of more than two years of scientific analysis and work and not only has a larger fit for the distinct foot shape of American Indians, but also the culturally specific look for our community. One hundred percent of the N7 funds are provided in grants to non-profit community groups working to promote physical activity for youth. NIKE bears all administrative costs for the N7 Fund.

**Challenges Facing Native American Youth**

The issues facing Native American youth are daunting. As Members of this Committee know, Native American and Aboriginal children face challenges to their success and wellbeing that call for immediate action. They experience the highest rate of poverty of any racial or ethnic group in North America, and by nearly all measurable standards—dropout rates, college attendance and completion rates, test scores, even literacy rates—Native American and Aboriginal children are well behind their peers. Suicide rates for Native American youth are 127 percent higher than the national average.

Native communities also suffer disproportionately from the negative effects of diabetes and obesity. Diabetes inflicts Native Americans at a rate of 2.2 times higher the national average. One antidote for change is sport. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, regular physical activity reduces the risk of developing diabetes, colon cancer and high blood pressure. An active lifestyle helps people develop and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints, especially if begun at an early age. Fitness also promotes psychological well-being, reducing feelings of depression and anxiety. And, the research now shows, regular physical activity can improve academic performance.

That is why N7 funds community programs designed to get youth active and moving. I'd like to take a moment to highlight a few of our grant recipients:

- NB3 Foundation: In 2005, 4-time PGA TOUR winner Notah Begay III, the only full-blooded Native American on the PGA TOUR, founded the Notah Begay III (NB3) Foundation. Notah, throughout his career, has been a passionate and committed advocate for the health and well-being of Native American youth and their communities. He formed the NB3 Foundation to use sports and wellness as a means for social change and to fight the epidemic of type 2 diabetes.

Based at the Santa Ana Pueblo in New Mexico, the NB3 Foundation operates soccer, golf, health and youth leadership programs at San Felipe Pueblo, in the greater Albuquerque area and other tribal communities in New Mexico. NB3 now serves tribal communities across the country and is a trusted partner of N7.

- In Hawaii, the N7 Fund supports the Makawalu Foundation in Honolulu and Kanalu in Kane'ohe. Both groups operate youth programs that focus on the history and culture of the Native communities.
- In South Dakota, the N7 Fund works closely with the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Three Districts and of Rosebud to support programs supporting a healthy lifestyle.
- In Minnesota, we partner with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Recreation Division to ensure youth programs are available and accessible to kids.

These are just a few of our community partners. Since 2009, the N7 Fund has awarded more than \$2 million in grants. Today, the N7 Fund supports programs serving 125,000 kids. Our goal is to grow the N7 Fund to serve 2 million kids by 2016.

Programs are only effective if our youth choose to participate. We are very fortunate to have a number of leading Native American athletes join us in the work to inspire and motivate our youth. Our N7 Ambassadors lead by example.

- Jacoby Ellsbury is a proud member of the Colorado River Indian Tribe and the first Native American of Navajo descent to play Major League Baseball.
- Tahnee Robinson led her Lander Valley High School basketball team to a Wyoming state championship and went on to star at the University of Nevada. She is only the second American Indian woman to play professional basketball. Tahnee is a member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe in Montana.
- Sam Bradford became the first Native American Player to win a Heisman Trophy. Today, Sam leads the St. Louis Rams, and has worked with N7 and Let's Move in Indian Country to advocate for health achievement for Native youth. Sam is a citizen of the Cherokee Indian nation.
- Chris Wondolowski, a member of the Kiowa tribe, is a leading scorer in the MLS, playing for the San Jose Earthquakes. Chris was in Washington yesterday and had the chance to share his story directly with many of you.

These athletes devote time and attention to N7 to advocate for greater access to sport for Native American children. They know that sport can transform a person, and believe also that sport can transform a people.

#### **Importance of Public-Private Partnerships**

At NIKE, we believe in public-private partnerships. We currently have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Bureau of Indian Education at the U.S. Department of the Interior, and with the Indian Health Service. Both are designed to encourage cooperation and collaboration between NIKE and the agencies to work together to educate American Indian and Alaska Native individuals and communities about healthy lifestyles. N7 also has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Corporation for National and Community Service. N7 recently funded 5 VISTA volunteers to serve in Native American community organizations. We are very excited to continue this unique partnership.

Beyond N7, NIKE also is working in communities across the country, seeking partners in the public and private sectors to join us in the fight against the physical inactivity epidemic in America and around the globe not just focused on the Native American community. The centerpiece of this effort is a recently released blueprint and call to action. I encourage you to visit [Designedtomove.org](http://Designedtomove.org) for more details.

Federal and tribal governments can and must engage aggressively to tackle the problem. I would urge the Committee's continued support for one vital program in particular that is improving the lives of Native American Youth—the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI). This program provides vital funding for diabetes treatment and prevention to 404 Indian Health Service tribal and urban Indian health programs across the United States. I hope the Reauthorization and full funding for this program will be high on the agenda of the Committee in the 113th Congress.

In conclusion, I also urge each of you to join us. Come see first-hand the work your community groups are doing to serve your constituents. Come play catch, kick a ball or go for a run with a child who benefits from an N7 partnership grant. You will not walk away unaffected or uninspired.

NIKE's CEO, Mark Parker often says that we at NIKE are in the business of helping people achieve their fullest potential, with sport being our vehicle to do so.

Together we can secure a future for Native American and Aboriginal youth that has future generations running, jumping and kicking to reach their full potential.

Thank you for your time and attention.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. McCracken, for your testimony.

Ms. CARMELO. will you please proceed with your testimony?

**STATEMENT OF TONANTZIN CARMELO, SCREEN ACTORS  
GUILD AWARD (SAG) NOMINATED ACTOR**

Ms. CARMELO. Meeyeha, Awishconeha. Greetings to Chairman Akaka and the esteemed Committee.

It is an honor to be asked on the basis of my work to contribute insight and inspiration on reclaiming our identity as Indian people for the next seven generations. I am a descendant of the Mission Indians of Southern California on my mother's side.

When reflecting on the theme of this hearing, I had to look back on my own family to appreciate what it is that brought me here to this moment. Seven generations ago, many of my ancestors were experiencing the ongoing extreme hardships of first contact. On one side of my family tree, my grandfather, Juyunat, was presenting his son for baptism to the Spanish friars at the San Gabriel Mission. On another branch of that same tree, down at the San Diego Mission, another grandfather's name was changed from Ulliu to Clemente. His son Francisco acquired the surname of Carmelo, most likely from the renaming of a mountain near his original village. I am honored to still carry that name.

From that generation to mine, there has been numerous challenges to our Indian identity and perseverance to reclaim and retain it. After the Spanish followed the Mexican period, which began the parceling and sale of longstanding Tribal lands and villages. There were revolts, there was resistance.

Then came statehood. In particular, this body's decision to place an injunction of secrecy upon the 18 treaties negotiated between the United States and the various Indian Nations whose ancestral lands later became the State of California. These treaties were never ratified, affecting the identification of many of the Tribes in California who are today no longer federally-recognized, among them one of my Tribes, the Gabreilino, or Tongva.

The government did identify Indians on the California State Census of 1852, and the BIA attempted to remediate with the California Indian judgment rolls of 1928, 1952 and 1972. My direct ancestors appear on all of these documents. Rancherias and reservations were established, and educational institutions, such as the Sherman Indian School. Two generations of my family resided on the Soboba Reservation, and at least three generations of my family were educated at Sherman.

Four generations go, my great-grandfather left the reservation in search of opportunity, moving back to the heart of ancestral lands, the Los Angeles Basin. My family became urban Indians. Today, Los Angeles hosts one of the largest populations of urban Indians in the United States, identity and culture persisting. My mother, being one of them, is an avid cultural activist and leader, tirelessly working to preserve Indian songs and dances, and reviving our language. She also is an active member of the pan urban Indian community.

In my own work as an actor, I have had the good fortune to play notable roles in historical pieces. My portrayal of these roles has been inspired by my own grandmothers and from a sincere understanding of my culture and a respect for that of other Tribes. Most importantly, there is a true connection to the beautiful strength of the Indian woman.

I also have had the good fortune of performing modern roles that include a Lakota prosecutor, a Navajo botanist and an Apache physician and several non-Native and ethnically ambiguous roles, of which I am equally proud. Obviously, great strides have been made to allow a person of my color and background to have a far greater amount of creative control, input and opportunity in this industry.

However, what is most important to realize is that artistic expression in film and television is a collaborative process. It takes talented people and diverse approaches that can help make a more compelling product. What matters most is that those involved sincerely relate, understand and honestly portray the story at hand.

As an artist, I seek opportunities to express myself outside of my race and my American/Native American/Mestiza and Latina cultures. In other words, to do what actors do, to tell stories and entertain. It is important that we strive for this and equally important that we be embraced for our talents, craftsmanship and ability to contribute.

This is our current challenge: to transcend the stigma of our color and our history by continuing to develop talent as playwrights, screenwriters, directors and actors into the larger art form of film and television, a very powerful medium. As Native artists, our current plea is to simply have the same opportunity to harmonize our truths, our ideas, our stories and our talents into the song that is modern American society, all the while being able to maintain those qualities about us that make us who we are, the first Americans.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Carmelo follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TONANTZIN CARMELO, SCREEN ACTORS GUILD AWARD  
(SAG) NOMINATED ACTOR

**Intro/History**

Meeyeha, Awishconeha, Greetings to Chairman Akaka and the esteemed members of this committee. It is an honor to be asked on the basis of my work to contribute insight and inspirations on reclaiming our Identity as Indian people for the next seven generations.

I'm a descendent of the Mission Indians of Southern California on my mother's side. When reflecting on the theme of this hearing I had to look back on my own family to appreciate what it is that brought me here to this moment. Seven generations ago, many of my ancestors were experiencing the ongoing extreme hardships of first contact. On one side of my family tree, my grandfather Juyunat was presenting his son for baptism to the Spanish friars at the San Gabriel Mission. On another branch of that same tree, down at the San Diego Mission, another grandfather's name was changed from Ulliu to Clemente. His son Francisco acquired the surname of Carmelo, most likely from the renaming of a mountain near his original village. I'm honored to still carry that name.

From that generation to mine there have been numerous challenges to our Indian identity, and perseverance to reclaim and retain it. After the Spanish, followed the Mexican period, which began the parceling and sale of long standing tribal lands and villages. There were revolts, there was resistance.

Then came statehood. In particular, this body's decision to place an injunction of secrecy upon the 18 treaties negotiated between the United States and the various Indian Nations whose ancestral lands became the state of California. These treaties were never ratified, affecting the identification of many of the tribes in California who are today no longer federally recognized, among them one of my tribes—the Gabreilino or Tongva.

The Government did identify Indians on the California State Census of 1852, and the BIA attempted to remediate with the California Indian judgment rolls of 1928, 1952, and 1972. My direct ancestors appear on all of these documents. Rancherias and Reservations were established, and educational institutions, such as Sherman Indian School. Two generations of my family resided on the Soboba Reservation, and at least three generations of my family were educated at Sherman.

Four generations ago, my Great Grandfather left the reservation in search of opportunity, moving back to the heart of ancestral lands, the Los Angeles Basin. My family became "urban Indians". Los Angeles now hosts one of the largest populations of Urban Indians in the United States . . . identity and culture persisting.

My Grandfather and Grandmother spent weekends with family on the reservation and his generation was part of the Mission Indian Federation, a political and social group organized to address the issues affecting similarly situated Indian people. Today, my mother is an avid cultural activist and leader, tirelessly working to preserve Indian songs and dances, and reviving our language. She is also an active member of the pan urban Indian community, both north and south of the border.

The most vexing issue affecting our tribe is repatriation. If ever there was an indignity that screams for redress it is this one. Our ancestral lands are today a sprawling urban area where scores of un-repatriated bodies of our ancestors lie in museums, archeological archives, university storage rooms, and private collections. This is not an issue affecting only recent generations. My own Great-Grandmother faced these issues more than eighty years ago. (I am attaching to this testimony both a newspaper article from the time and a letter written by her in response to an inquiry created by the story for review by the Committee.) Unfortunately, however, repatriation of the remains of our ancestors requires petition by a federally recognized tribe. This hits at the very core of our identity. The name Tongva literally means People of the Earth, a name that encapsulates the core beliefs of our people. These ancestors must be honored, by acknowledging their humanity and returning them to the earth.

**My Work and My Attempt to Portray Positive Images**

In my work own as an actor, I have had the good fortune to play notable roles in historical pieces. My portrayal of these roles has been inspired by own Grandmothers and from a sincere understanding of my culture, and a respect for that of other tribes. Most important, there is a true connection to the beautiful strength of the Indian women.

I am indebted to the kindred spirits who have provided me with opportunities to hone my craft and develop as an artist. People such as Randy Reinholz and Jeanne Bruce Scott with Native Voices at the Autry, the country's only Equity theatre company dedicated exclusively to producing new works by Native American, Alaska Na-

tive, and First Nations playwrights. Similarly, the opportunity to work with Chris Eyre in the only movie to date featuring a modern, professional Indian female lead character has been rewarding as well.

In addition to playing a Lakota prosecutor, I've also played other modern, professional Native roles including a Navaho botanist and, more recently, an Apache physician, as well as several non-native and ethnically ambiguous roles, of which I am equally proud. Obviously, great strides have been made to allow a person of my color and background to have a far greater amount of creative control, input and opportunity in this industry.

However, what is most important to realize is that artistic expression in film and television is a collaborative process. It takes talented people and diverse approaches can help make a more compelling product. What matters most is that those involved sincerely relate, understand, and honestly portray the story at hand.

As an artist, I seek opportunities to express myself outside of my race and my American/Native American/Mestiza and Latina cultures. In other words, to do what actors do—to tell stories and entertain. Just like any other artist, I should not be limited to playing Native roles. It is important that we strive for this, and equally important that we be embraced for our talents, craftsmanship and ability to contribute.

This is our current challenge: To transcend the stigma of our color and our history by continuing to develop talent as playwrights, screenwriters, directors, and actors into the larger art form of film and television. As Native artists, our current plea is to simply have the same opportunity to harmonize our truths, our ideas, our stories and our talents into the song that is modern American society—all the while being able to maintain those qualities about us that make us what we are, the first Americans.

#### **Attachments**

Riverside Museum Sl. Evans Collection

LONG BEACH PRESS-TELEGRAM, SATURDAY, AUGUST 1,

## Indian Burial Ground Excavation Protested by Member of Tribe

SANTA ANA, Aug. 1.—Further excavation of the old Indian burial ground near Wintersburg today was protested by an elderly Indian woman who wants to prevent further "desecration" of her ancestors' graves.

Hearing that further excavations in the old burial plot would be undertaken after the current beet and bean harvest, Mrs. Virginia Carmelo, 60, of Orange, appealed for official protection for the bones of the Juanitos, laid away in the peat bog centuries ago.

Mrs. Carmelo, a Jbanito, and the wife of a Diegueno, came to the courthouse in Santa Ana to ask the authorities to refuse to permit any one to remove the skeletons.

"They want them to sell," she said, "and we do not want the bodies of our fathers disturbed."

The Wintersburg burial ground, on land now known as the Sherman Buck ranch, received the dead of the Juanitos tribe from time immemorial centuries before the padres came, the Indian said. Its use terminated soon after the mission was established, and no tribesman has been buried there in probably 150 years.

For a century and a half the city of the dead slumbered in peace, until last Winter the thrust of a shovel shattered its repose.

KLEINER MUSEUM, S.C. EXHIB COLLECTION

<p>like to talk with me Yours very truly Mrs. Virginia Carmelo 729 E. Chapman Ave. Orange, Calif.</p>	<p>Orange Calif. Sept 25<sup>th</sup> 1931 Mr. S.C. Evans. Riverside Calif. Dear Sir, Your letter dated Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> at hand, contains my glad am the lady that protected the dignity of the old quavers of our people and in regard to the history of the Indians will give all the knowledge I can if you would like to talk with me please let me know when you would</p>
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The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Ms. Carmelo.  
And now we will hear from Ms. Tahbone. Please proceed with  
your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF MARJORIE LINNE TUNGWENUK TAHBONE,  
FORMER MISS INDIAN WORLD 2011-2012**

Ms. TAHBONE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recognize all of the people from my home town of Nome, I am from Alaska. I would also like to recognize the Kuwarek, Inc., who funded my trip here.

Good afternoon, Chairman Akaka and all the Senators that could not make it here. I am here to talk to you today about the issues that we face today as a youth. I am the youth that you all talk about and speak of for this generation and the next generation, and the future generations that will come after me.

Let's talk about the issues that are surrounding my community and my current surroundings. I hear all too often of the statistics, the negative statistics about poverty, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, high school dropout rates. But first I would like to mention that these statistics are said too often, way too often. Let's share some positive statistics, maybe of the ever-growing statistics of Native American and Inuit people graduating from college, more and more high school students are staying in school, more and more are learning about their traditional culture and want to learn about their language.

But I understand that we have a certain amount of time here, so I want to say, let's get straight to the point. I grew up in a very

fast-paced community, very fast, let's go, let's go. I have an iPhone that can do anything in about five minutes. So let's get right down to business.

What we see here is children struggling to know their identity. We see them trying to reclaim it. There are so many barriers in their way that we may not understand, such as technology, that barrier that some people may not be technology-savvy, some elders that I may know, they say, I don't understand your technology. But it is a barrier to us because we don't utilize it the way we should, the way we should take advantage of this technology.

There are other barriers that I see that portray negative stereotypes of Native Americans and Inuit on TV, movies and books, history books. I see that our school system is still teaching kid about things that are not relevant to their well-being. I grew up in a community where we did not have trees, skyscrapers or sidewalks, even street lights. And yet we were learning about them in school and we had to recognize them in our standardized testing.

Now, I am not just talking to the Senators of the Committee but also the people that sit behind me and the people that are listening on webcast. It is us that can do these things together, build allies, build a strong foundation for our children and the next generation. We need to teach our children how to be responsible, respectful and have strong identities.

It is interesting to think about that we need to say this now when our ancestors had already taught their children these cultural values of respect, responsibility, cooperation, understanding. We have lost that some how along the way. Now we need to regain it.

I understand that in some of the communities where I come from some barriers that I may challenge is there is less law restricting the sale of alcohol. To me, I understand that there is a lot of alcoholism and things going on. But I see that as a barrier. How can we expect our children to be responsible drinkers when they are sheltered from it, when we babysit them and say, no, no, no, you can't even see it, can't even touch it. The solution to alcoholism is not to restrict it from us but it is to teach us the respect and responsibility that comes with taking that drink.

In my Inupiaq culture, values, it is important to teach responsibility and to have respect for one's self. So why are we not teaching these strong cultural values in school every day? Some of my classmates, it is the truth, when I ask them, what does drinking mean to you, what does alcohol mean to you? And they said to me that alcohol means to get drunk. And I was appalled.

When I was in New Zealand as Miss Indian World, I traveled there, and I was amazed, just amazed to see how they teach their children the responsibilities of drinking alcohol, that it was not a means to get drunk, but rather a mean to enjoy a simple meal, a glass of wine to enhance flavors. This is something that we need to teach our children, that responsibility.

I am sure my mom was really shaking her head when that Senator said that we need to start putting out some PSAs. She said, yes, I could just see her saying, yes, yes, we need to campaign, we need to really campaign, because it is not only that the people of America do not know about our cultures, Native American cultures,

even Inuit cultures up in the north and Alaska, but it is also the Native American children that don't know as well. There is a lot of these negative stereotypes that we have already talked about so many times that is portrayed in the movies that we need to change.

Another issue is the diabetes that we have up in Nome. And all of these issues are related to issues that I am familiar with, that I grew up around in Alaska. And in the rural communities of Alaska, where you cannot drive in or out of the villages, and we only have one store that only has pop and chips, it is hard to live a healthy lifestyle. But one way we could do that, one way the people behind me, the people on the webcast can do to change that is learn your traditional values of subsistence, culture and hunting. Teach our children to eat healthy caribou, fish, berries and seal instead of chips, candy and pop. I often hear that our traditional diet is one of the healthiest diets.

And in Alaska, we have so much opportunity, we just need the guidance from our leadership. We need the guidance from you. I know that if our leadership will show respect for our people that our people will show respect for themselves and that other people will show respect for each other. We must adapt in this ever-changing world and society. We have so many cultures that are represented here today.

And we need to adapt so that we are represented properly. That is what our ancestors did, they adapted. The modern education needs to adapt to its curriculum to benefit the children who receive them. The mainstream media needs to adapt its portrayal of indigenous people to a more accurate and positive one. And our leadership needs to adapt to create a positive environment so that we can work together on these important issues.

And we need to adapt together so that our children can look upon us as role models and positive figures in our lives. I would just like to say thank you for your time and I welcome the opportunity for any questions. Quyanaqpak.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Tahbone follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARJORIE LINNE TUNGWENUK TAHBONE, FORMER MISS INDIAN WORLD 2011-2012

### **Introduction**

Good Afternoon. Chairman Akaka, Vice Chairman Barrasso and distinguished members of the Committee. I am honored to speak on behalf of my family, community, and people before you today. My name is Marjorie Linne Tungwenuk Tahbone from Nome, Alaska; my Inupiaq name is Kunaq. I was raised just outside of Nome at our family camp and was taught a subsistence lifestyle by my parents Sandy and Carleton Tahbone. My lineage is both Inupiaq Eskimo and Kiowa Indian. Last year I was given the honor of representing all the Indigenous Nations of North America as Miss Indian World 2011-2012. I am currently attending the University of Alaska Fairbanks and am graduating this December with a bachelor's degree in Alaska Native Studies and Inupiaq language.

### **Reclaiming my Identity**

Growing up in a rural isolated community I had no connection to the outside world, but that is how I liked it. All that seemed relevant was how to live in my environment; where tundra grew, the ocean roared, and the wildlife roamed. I had no troubles growing up, only the troubles of a young child learning from their mistakes. And this is how I lived; when I was old enough for school my family would leave camp so that I could attend during the winter. I loved going to school, I could

never wait until it started once again. I remember the day before school I would stay up all night because I was so excited that I could not sleep.

One day while I was in school there was an assembly and all the children were brought to the gym, as I walked in the gym I was shocked and amazed to see a real Indian all dressed up. Upon closer examination I realized that this real Indian was my dad, I had never seen him in these clothes before. I was in 2nd grade and it was the first time we had Indigenous Cultures day. It was this day that I realized I was Indian. Before I always knew I was Inupiaq, and Nome is a diverse community so people saying I was Indian just did not happen.

When I was 12 years old, along with my younger sister were sent down to Oklahoma for the summer where my Kiowa side of the family lived. It was my first time leaving Alaska and meeting any family from down south. My loving grandparents dressed me in Kiowa regalia and taught my sister and I how to dance and sing, even how to say a few phrases in Kiowa. And they told us that we were Kiowa and to be proud of it and we were. When school started the following fall I was the "expert" on Indians because where I was from there are no Indians. But I knew nothing of my tribe, I did not know the creation story, the meaning of songs, or anything relating to Kiowa traditions, I was not raised Kiowa, I was raised as an Inupiaq.

My identity was split between Inupiaq and Kiowa, both cultures on extremely different parts of the globe. Who was I suppose to be? Could I be both? I had Inupiaq mentors but no Kiowa mentors, so to compensate I started to rely on media and books to teach me how to be an Indian. I had seen Pocahontas, Dances with Wolves, Bugs Bunny with Indians, and I took those as accurate portrayals of Indian people. I had unknowingly created a false identity of myself.

On top of my confusion in school I was taught about trees, street lights, and skyscrapers, and yet we had none of those in Nome. We were taught to memorize all of the United State Presidents but not of our ancestral leaders and prophets. I started to wonder how knowing of trees, street lights, and skyscrapers was going to help me survive in the cold Alaskan Arctic. Why was I not taught about the dangers of sea ice? Or how to read weather patterns in my area? Or learn about my cultural history? I was learning things that were simply not relevant to me or the Inupiaq children at my school. At a young age our identities were taken away in exchange for a western foreign one.

Of course we did not have it as bad as the generation that came before us where they were sent to boarding schools and were punished for speaking their language. Now we face a completely different issue with false identity and negative stereotypes. We as youth are torn between our traditional culture and modern culture. We learn at school what we need to know to pass standardized test even though the questions do not relate to our well-being. We struggle to find our identities alone because our parents were punished for knowing their culture and language and do not want the same punishment for their children. But that does not deter us youth into finding a way to make it all work. We adapt to the ever changing ways of modern society and incorporate our traditional values and lifestyle into it.

All throughout high school I had a false identity of who I was. It was not until college when I really started to ask the question of who I really was. I knew in my heart I was full Inupiaq, but on paper I was only  $\frac{1}{4}$  Inupiaq and  $\frac{1}{2}$  Kiowa. The paper said I was more Kiowa than Inupiaq but that was not what I knew in my heart. I looked Indian but I ate, dressed, spoke like an Inupiaq. Modern society says I am acculturated and need to focus on living in this new time, the elders say I am Inupiaq and Kiowa, so who was I suppose to be? But I found my identity, I reclaimed it, it was mine. I recognize and acknowledge my Kiowa side and have great respect for the tribe, but I say I am Inupiaq because that is who I identify myself as. It took me all too long to come to this realization and I am sure there are children and teenagers even adults who are going through the same thing. But we have the power to change that, with one word, adaptability. The modern education needs to adapt its curriculum to benefit the children who receive them. The mainstream media needs to adapt its portrayal of Indigenous people to a more accurate and positive one. And our leadership needs to adapt to create a positive environment so that we can work together on these important issues.

### **Conclusion**

I am the youth that you all speak of, and I know you are working hard for us and the next seven generations. But the youth is resilient, we learn and make mistakes by trying to understand how we can bridge the gap between traditional and modern culture, we just need to be guided down the right path by our leaders and community. Once again I thank you for allowing me to speak. Quyanapqak.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for your testimony.

Mr. McCracken, we are delighted to have you here, with your background and your working with many great athletes. You have done an amazing job of partnering up with some of those great world athletes.

My question to you is, how has N7 changed or benefitted the corporate culture at Nike?

Mr. MCCRACKEN. Thank you for the question. I think we have helped change the corporate culture, because they have learned a little bit about the seven generation philosophy. I can only portray the definition of how my family defined it for me. And I share that with our corporate leadership in saying that when my grandfather explained to me, when I was going to leave the reservation, that I was going to work in the white man's world, and I needed to understand where I came from.

And he explained to me the seven generations as something that will be a core value of who I am. He explained it to me in a way that, I look back three generations for guidance, direction and focus. I look forward three generations to hopefully make a difference or create an impact or create change for those people who come after me. Because as the Creator looks down on me in the middle, they are going to identify me and who I am and what I do and what I stand for, for my family.

And I explain that to the corporate leaders, and we do that, from a Nike perspective, they look back to former athletes and former people who have inspired this company to grow to where it is today and look forward to provide inspiration and innovation to athletes who come after them.

So I think N7 has had a tremendous impact on the understanding of the values of seven generations.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Ms. Carmelo, in your testimony you mentioned that your people were a subject of treaties and attended Indian schools but currently lack the authority to protect your ancestors. My question is, how does this lack of Federal recognition impact the ability to maintain your people's culture and identity?

Ms. CARMELO. Most immediately, it impacts us in many, many ways, our identity. But the most immediate thing that is impacting, the Los Angeles Basin has many Tribal burial grounds that are continuously being unearthed, all the time. Three times a year we find more and more burials. And Tongva means people of the earth. That is our belief, that we are people of the earth, we have to go back to the earth when we are done in this life.

So these burial grounds get unearthed, and there is nobody to be able to receive these remains. We can get some of the outside federally-recognized Tribes to do that, and they have done that. But it is not the same. We need to have our ancestors and repatriate our ancestors back to the ground. That is one of the most immediate issues to me, is one of the deep hurts of not having Federal recognition. There are many others. But that is one of them.

As far as our identity, it is a very strange thing to be on my ancestral lands and not be federally-recognized. Because there is a big urban Indian community there, there are many federally-recognized Tribes that are in the area. We organize, and it is a strange thing, because we are in our own ancestral lands, but yet we are

not federally-recognized. I think that there is much discrimination against us, actually.

The CHAIRMAN. One of the questions that is asked is, in your work as an actress, are there any other indigenous people as actresses or actors that you know of?

Ms. CARMELO. It is a small community, yes. And we mostly all know each other and work with each other over and over again. I think I have one actor who has played my brother and my love interest several times over and over again. It just recycles.

So yes, we all know each other very well. And it is a pretty small community.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Tahbone, you have the title of Miss Indian World. Last year, you won the prestigious title. Can you please talk about the criteria used to judge the contestants? Are these types of competitions effective in promoting cultural preservation?

Ms. TAHBONE. Yes. Miss Indian World, just a quick brief on it, if you think about the Miss America pageant, and think about that, but reverse it for, it is not a beauty pageant, it is more of a cultural knowledge pageant. So it is a type of pageant where the women have to show poise and grace and knowledge on their culture. The criteria that we do in the Miss Indian World pageant is we have to present an essay where we have to be judged on our talent, so we decide to do a talent, and then we are also judged on a specific type of dance style, usually from where you are from, and then we also do a panel of judges are interviewing us, and then of course impromptu questions.

And it does a lot, I think it is a great thing to do, especially for the young Native children, especially the young girls, have someone to look up to, someone to be. When I went and competed, I decided to do traditional Native games, which is really important in Alaska. I was talking to Sam about, we need to start working together so we can start building allies and get some funding up there for us, so that the children could start getting into traditional Native games. We have about 100 traditional Native games up north that we use that we created on our own, so that we can develop our bodies, prepare our bodies to hunt out on the ice and develop skills that we may need to survive. That is what our ancestors did to create those games. We still carry on that tradition.

This pageant really helped me to open my eyes to be able to talk to people about these types of things that are going on in our communities. I met a lot of great people, and I think these type of pageants are key to getting a lot of the young girls interested in learning our culture, because they can wear a beautiful crown, they want to be that princess, you know that. Because when I saw those girls, I said, a princess. And it is always the best when they really look up to you. All I had was a beaded crown. I was not a princess, but to them I was. And that was the best thing.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. McCracken, again I want to commend you on the great vision you brought to Nike. That vision has stood with the seven generations philosophy. Can and should other businesses seek to replicate the N7 model?

Mr. MCCRACKEN. Thank you for the question. It would be an honor to have other companies want to give back in a community

where I grew up. I would encourage all companies to look at this community through the same lens that we have looked at it from a Nike perspective. Nike gave me the opportunity to do this work. I am forever grateful for this opportunity, because I know that eventually we will make a difference in our communities. We know what sport means to our kids and our communities.

If you go to any large Indian gathering, you will find guys like Ernie Stephens telling war stories about how he played basketball against Tex Hall. So the stories will go on forever. Those stories happen because we have sport. I would encourage other companies to join along and be part of what we call our celebration of sport in our communities. Because it will create a healthier lifestyle for our communities for years to come.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for that.

Ms. Carmelo, you have had the opportunity to act in both historical and modern roles. Can you talk about the importance of more Natives having the opportunity to transition to and from both types of roles?

Ms. CARMELO. Yes, I think it is very important to have both non-Native and Native roles. Whatever role we can possibly be conceived in. Because it is a really beautiful thing as an artist, number one, to be able to have that freedom. And that is what every artist strives for, I believe.

Also as far as being role models, people to look up to, Ms. Tahbone is a role model for her community. People see her, the younger girls see her, and I think that is the same thing that happens on a larger scale when you see somebody on film and television who is like you in some way. You see something.

One of the Senators was talking about that some of the children on reservations can't even conceive, and I have seen that myself, I have actually visited a lot of Indian world, I started off as a cultural dancer, presenting throughout the United States. So I have seen a lot of Indian Country myself, stayed on reservations quite a bit. And I have seen that, where the children you see something really funny in them or really beautiful, some talent in them. You tell them, you know what, you could do this, you could go on. And they can't even conceive of it sometimes.

And I think that it is so important to have that inspiration for the children. Even for the population at large to see people of any color on film and television, other colors, of color, period.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Tahbone, as a young Native woman, what do you believe are some of the greatest challenges that lie ahead for your community? What steps can be taken to address these challenges?

Ms. TAHBONE. In my generation, I think one of the biggest challenges that I went through and a lot of my peers are going through is that we are being labeled with that blood quantum. I wrote in my testimony that I am more Kiowa than I am Inupiaq, but in my heart, I am full Inupiaq, because that is how I was raised.

When we play these traditional Native games, I am an avid player, athlete in these traditional Native games. In our criteria, you have to be a quarter Native to play. It is interesting, because a lot of the athletes that are in these events are, they grew up in rural communities but they are only an eighth or they are only a sixteenth

Native and they cannot participate in something that should let everyone participate.

I think that is one of the struggles that I see happening in the near generation, is that my kids may only be an eighth. You never know what is going to happen in the future, a lot of things could happen. But one thing for sure is that I know I am definitely going to teach my children how to be Inupiaq. That is just the way that I grew up. I want them to know that.

But when someone says, no, you cannot play because your blood says otherwise, I think that is one of the biggest challenges that I see for the future generations, is that restriction because of the blood. It is interesting to think about, because my grandfather, he is full-blooded Kiowa. But he says, they just counted me full-blooded, but really I am half Irish, too. They didn't catch me in time.

And I think that is so funny, because we pride ourselves on yes, I am full, four fourth blood quantum. But what are we really at heart? I think that is one of the biggest challenges, is that identity with blood quantum.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for that. I have a final question to the panel. Any final recommendations on how we can best reclaim our image and identity and also ensure that our vibrant cultures will continue on into future generations? Now, this is looking ahead, this is visionary. You have provided and shared experiences that we hope the generations that are here now can pick up and move on here.

We would like to, as we have here, we want to look at seven generations, to plan for it. But time passes quickly and we need to get our young people, our future generations to know our culture and heritage and identity better than some of them do now, and to continue to develop that for the future.

So I am going to call on Sam McCracken first, for any final recommendations on how we can best reclaim our image and identity.

Mr. MCCRACKEN. Thank you again for the opportunity. I think my final recommendation would be that we need support from Tribal leadership, government and policy makers, as well as additional foundations, to really support, from our perspective, the vision of providing access to sport for our Native youth. We have seen that physical activity has increased education in the classroom, clearer minds.

One of the roles that I play for our community is I sit on the National Advisory Committee on Indian Education for the President. And I continually remind those policy makers, when I go to that meeting, because we talk a lot about math and reading and science in education and the educational structure. But I always continue to encourage them that we can't forget about the physical activity piece, because that is what makes our kids whole.

I think as we are going to set the foundation for future generations, I would encourage policy makers to look at programs that will encourage physical activity for the next seven generations. So I thank you for the opportunity.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Ms. Carmelo?

Ms. CARMELO. As for reclaiming our identity, I think that obviously most of the people that you invited here today are very in-

vested in that. It definitely takes the leaders, the Tribal leaders of all our nations to lead the way in that way.

I believe one of the main sources of reclaiming our identity is our language. Another way, of course, for our particular Tribe, well, for one of my Tribes, is Federal recognition. I think it helps a lot to bind the Tribe together in a manner that is not available for non-federally-recognized Tribes.

I also believe what Ms. Tahbone said, the blood quantum issue is a big issue. Because many people want to teach their children their Tribal traditions. The truth is, we don't need the Federal Government to recognize us and to tell us that we are Indian. We are Indian. We know our heritage and our background.

But it does help for those future generations, if we can't marry within our own Tribes, for those future generations, if I want to bring my children up or my children's children up that way, it helps them to have their identity also. It substantiates it. It doesn't hinge on it, but it helps it quite a bit.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Ms. Tahbone.

Ms. TAHBONE. My recommendation, I think Sam just took my recommendation. Strong foundation, that is what I was going to post mine on. But yes, building strong foundations for our children is one of the biggest things that we need to do. My recommendation for you guys is to just kind of put more information out there for them, PSAs and campaigns about Native Americans, something that is positive for them to look up to.

When I was in Nome, I was reading a book to the kids, then we asked them, what did you want to be when you grow up, because it was about careers. They all said, oh, a janitor, a teacher. But it was because that is who they were always around all day at school, their teachers and the janitors. And a thought came to me that, these children, they look up to us so much that they don't really care what we do, they just want to do what we do.

So when we give that positive vibe, when we do something that is important, those kids will want to do the same thing. I think that is what we should do, what you guys can do, to promote that for the children and the next seven generations. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for that.

I want to extend a special mahalo, thank you to our witnesses for participating in today's hearing. I commend the tremendous work you all are doing and wish you well in your future endeavors.

Though I am retiring soon, I know Indian Country is in good hands. And we are talking about leadership, it is there, it is coming, it is building. It is in good hands because of leaders here today. What Sam McCracken mentioned, we need to of course work with Tribal leaders as we move on here.

The hundreds that have participated in the Committee's events over the last two years, and many more that are doing tireless work in their communities, I want to tell you, the years that I have been here working with this Committee, I have met great leaders of the Indian communities nationally. To build on their foundations is something that we need to continue to do. We need to let the Nation know about who you are, what you are, what you have accomplished as well, and build the pride of our Native peoples.

Throughout my time in Congress, I have had the opportunity to witness the beauty of the traditional Native dances, hear the uniqueness of our Native languages coming from you, and see the capabilities of Tribal governments. As was mentioned by Mr. Lee, that foundation of having a good, strong capable unit to work with in the Tribe is very important.

So it has been a pleasure that I will forever cherish.

Before we adjourn, I want to take a minute today to recognize the Committee's chief Clerk, Marilyn Kauakea Bruce, who sits there and keeps the technical equipment straight and proper. I am commending her for her 35 years of public service here, and 25 of which were in this Committee. Marilyn comes from Hawaii, and she comes from a place that is called Hana, on the island of Maui. To get there, when you drive, it takes two hours, because the roads are winding. And for some reason, the Hana people don't want to repair them.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. They like it that way. But it is a beautiful community. That is her home. So I want to add my thanks to Marilyn for her capable service here, for the Committee, for the Senate and for this Country. She not only has worked for five different members of Hawaii's Congressional delegation, but also has served under Chairmen Inouye, Campbell, McCain, Dorgan and myself. So we are going to miss her, but she has served real well.

So I just want to say mahalo nui loa to Marilyn, and again note her contributions to this Committee and our Native communities over her many years of service.

Although they have not sat as long as Marilyn, I want to acknowledge the outstanding contributions and dedication of all of the staff of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. I should tell you they have really worked hard, and I know that, during my chairmanship. I should say my feeling was, we are having a hearing every week. And it is not only hearings, but because we wanted to keep the Tribes in touch with us and to learn directly from the Tribes about their concerns.

We had other meetings that we held casually. And of course, we made it a point that these meetings would not be documented, so that they can be free to speak their minds, which they did. But as a result of that, we are able to put the concerns together, and if it needed legislation, we worked on that legislation. But we tried to do as many things as we can to do it administratively, so that it can be done more quickly to help the Tribes.

So this Committee has been really busy doing that. And we have accomplished much in the 112th Congress. I know they will do much also in the future.

In closing, Native Hawaiians don't say goodbye. We say hui ho'u, and it means, until we meet again, rather than that is it. We will see you again, so that is hui ho'u. So to everyone here today, I extend my heartfelt blessings to you and your Tribes, your families, and to the United States of America. It is with much aloha that I say to you now, a hui ho'u, and we will see you again. We have much to do and we will try to do it together and bring about changes that will help the indigenous peoples of this Country be

productive and to become part of this Country and what it produces.

This Country needs you, it needs us, because we are the indigenous peoples here. We need to keep up that culture and identity that we are talking about. So thank you again, mahalo and a hui ho'u. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:07 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

