

The original documents are located in Box 39, “10/8/76 - Remarks Upon the Signing of Proclamation 4468: Native American Awareness Week, 1976” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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54
about 1 THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...
THERE ARE ~~SOME~~ MILLION INDIAN CITIZENS IN AMERICA,

AND SOME MAY SAY "THAT IS A VERY SMALL MINORITY."

I COUNT AMERICAN INDIAN PEOPLE, HOWEVER, NOT IN NUMBERS
BUT IN THE HONORED PLACE THEY HOLD IN OUR MULTI-CULTURED
SOCIETY, AND IN THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION.

THE 215 MILLION OF US ARE KEENLY CONCERNED WITH THE
1 MILLION; THE WELFARE AND PROGRESS OF NATIVE AMERICANS
IS HIGH ON THE AGENDA OF THE AMERICAN CONSCIENCE.

BEFORE I GO ANY FURTHER, I'D LIKE TO SAY A FEW WORDS

ABOUT A VERY IMPORTANT ISSUE. NO STATE IN THE UNION HAS

MORE RESIDENTS WHO ARE NATIVE AMERICANS THAN THE GREAT STATE

OF OKLAHOMA.

NO DOMESTIC MATTER HAS GIVEN ME GREATER PRIDE THAN

MY ADMINISTRATION'S RECORD OF TURNING ABOUT THE

DISCRIMINATION AND NEGLECT THAT ALL INDIANS FACED FOR

SO MANY YEARS.

IN JANUARY OF 1975 I SIGNED THE INDIAN SELF-DETERMINATION
ACT -- A MAGNA CARTA FOR AMERICAN INDIAN PEOPLE.

TODAY WE RECOGNIZE INDIAN TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS /
INCLUDING THOSE IN OKLAHOMA -- AS VITAL GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT.

JUST A WEEK AGO I SIGNED THE INDIAN HEALTH CARE
IMPROVEMENT ACT, WHICH AUTHORIZED SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER
RESOURCES FOR THE INDIAN HEALTH CARE DELIVERY SYSTEM.

I KNOW YOU ARE PROUD OF THE FINE, ACCREDITED INDIAN HOSPITAL
HERE IN LAWTON -- BUT MANY INDIAN HOSPITALS ARE NOT
ACCREDITED, ~~AND~~ WE MUST AND WILL BRING THEM UP TO STANDARD.

LATER THIS EVENING, IN JUST A FEW MINUTES, I WILL
SIGN A PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION DECLARING OCTOBER 10-16
AS NATIVE AMERICAN AWARENESS WEEK.

MY ADMINISTRATION'S SUPPORT FOR INDIAN PROGRAMS IS
NOT JUST RHETORIC. WE BACKED UP OUR WORDS WITH ACTION.

EIGHT YEARS AGO THE BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS BUDGET
WAS 262 MILLION DOLLARS; TODAY IT IS 777 MILLION DOLLARS.
THE INDIAN HEALTH BUDGET WAS 113 MILLION DOLLARS; TODAY
IT IS 425 MILLION DOLLARS.

- 11 -

OUR MANPOWER TRAINING BUDGET FOR INDIAN PEOPLE IS 4 TIMES
BIGGER THAN IT WAS ONLY FOUR YEARS AGO.

MY RECORD OF SUPPORT FOR INDIAN PROGRAMS AND FOR
THE PROTECTION OF INDIAN TRUST RIGHTS IS CLEAR AND PRECISE.

AMERICA WANTS THOSE POLICIES TO CONTINUE, AND IN THE
NEXT FOUR YEARS THEY WILL CONTINUE.

MY ADMINISTRATION IS EQUALLY DETERMINED THAT HISTORY IS GOING TO CONTINUE TO BE CHANGED -- THAT THE INDIAN SHALL NO LONGER BE LOWEST IN POVERTY AND SLIMMEST IN OPPORTUNITY, AND WE ARE MAKING THOSE CHANGES NOW.

I SIGN THIS PROCLAMATION AS A SIGNAL OF THAT DETERMINATION -- AND AS AN INVITATION TO ALL MY FELLOW CITIZENS TO REAFFIRM THAT OUR FIRST AMERICANS ARE AMONG AMERICA'S MOST RESPECTED AND HONORED CITIZENS.

END OF TEXT

54

TALKING POINTS: "NATIVE AMERICANS WEEK" PROCLAMATION

OCTOBER 8, 1976

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