The original documents are located in Box 3, folder “Jurisdiction Over Indian Lands (PL 280) - Patterson Letter” of the Bradley H. Patterson Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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August 30, 1976

Dear Mr. Warne,

Thank you for your letters to the President expressing concern about his jurisdictional statement to American Indian leaders on July 16. It has been erroneously reported that President Ford supports legislation to give tribal governments criminal and civil jurisdiction over all people living on Indian reservations. This is inaccurate. The President does not support legislation to alter the present legal status of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

In his statement to Indian leaders on July 16, President Ford indicated that he supported the concept of allowing certain Indian tribes (those which have been subject to State civil and criminal jurisdiction under provisions of Public Law 83-280 and related statutes) to decide by tribal resolution whether they wish to continue under State jurisdiction or return to Federal jurisdictional status. This resolution is subject to the approval or disapproval of the Secretary of the Interior under a clear set of reasonable guidelines.

Under this concept, a tribe by itself could initiate a request to the Secretary of the Interior for a return to Federal jurisdictional status. In reaching his decision on this request, the Secretary of the Interior would be required to consult with the U.S. Attorney General and with the governors of the appropriate States. Application would be limited to tribes in States which have exercised jurisdiction under P.L. 83-280 and related statutes.

The Departments of Justice and Interior are drafting legislation on this subject, and the Administration has asked the governors of 31 States for their views on the draft legislation. It is the President's...
intention to continue consultations on the draft and to expand these consultations to include a wide range of interested groups, including representatives of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

Sincerely,

Bradley H. Patterson, Jr.

Mr. Clark A. Wenke  
President  
Pender State Bank  
Pender, Nebraska 68047

BHP:1rc  
BHP-2
Gerald R. Ford  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.  

Dear President Ford,

This is a follow up on my letter to you of July the 19th, 1976.

I enclose a copy of my original letter of July the 19th, a letter from Congressman Charles Thone, and a series of articles by Mary Kay Quinlan, a World Herald Bureau staff writer.

Ms. Quinlan's series of articles concerning the Indian retrocession are the best and most unbiased that I have ever had the opportunity to read and study. She very fairly states the case of the Indian and the Non-Indians. If you will take the time to read these articles you will have an insight into the retrocession issue that perhaps has not been available to you. At least you will be able to view this situation with information from a source other than the American Indian Policy Review Commission.

I thank you in advance for your considerations of the Non-Indians in this very serious matter. We hope that you will represent the Non-Indian as well as the Indian.

I have lived on the Omaha-Winnebago Reservation in Thurston County, Nebraska for all of my 56 years.

Very Sincerely,

Clark A. Wenke  
President

Copies to Senator Hruska & Curtis & Congressman Thone.
July 19th, 1976

President

White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Ford,

I have just read your news release concerning a new law that you are seeking that will give Indian tribal councils criminal and civil jurisdiction over people living on Indian reservations. I enclose a clipping from the Omaha World Herald.

I happen to live in Thurston County, Nebraska which is made up entirely of the Omaha and Winnebago reservations.

The population of Thurston County is about 7,000, of which 65% are non-Indian. The non-Indians own virtually all of the business enterprises in Thurston County. They own approximately 65% of the farm lands in the county and rent and farm almost all of the Indian owned land by virtue of leases from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Currently, the tribal lands are not on the tax rolls of the county. The lands owned by the Indians and rented by the non-Indians are taxed, but the taxes are paid by the renters of the land.

On some reservations, where the population is basically all Indian your program might work and would not affect anyone but the Indian population, but in Thurston County it would disenfranchise all of the non-Indians in this county. It would be catastrophic to our communities, school districts, political subdivisions and the county government.

The Omaha tribe has had criminal retrocession for several years and has not been a success by any measure of legal and moral right.

The Nebraska legislature, in its last session, took up the subject of retrocession for the Nebraska Indian reservations and unanimously rejected it. I am sure that their ruling or decision was forwarded to Washington, D.C. If not, a copy of their ruling can be obtained from the Clerk of the Nebraska Legislature in Lincoln, Nebraska.

It is inconceivable that the rights of the majority could be taken away and given to the minority. I have always believed that the laws of the villages, counties, states and the Federal government were equally fair and just for all. If they are not, then they should be changed for all citizens of the United States.

If the Indian tribal councils were to be given criminal and civil jurisdiction over the Indians and non-Indians in Thurston County, Nebraska, it is my opinion that there would, or will be a lot of blood spilled before the non-Indians will give up their rights as American citizens.

Very Sincerely,

Clark A. Wenke
President
July 19th, 1976

Gerald R. Ford
President of the United States
White House
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Very Sincerely,

Clark A. Wenke
President
Ford Wants Indian Control
For Those on Reservation

Washington (AP) - Ford wants the Indian
reservation issue to be treated as a part
of the general Indian problem. He believes
reservation control is needed to prevent
Indian losses. Ford has offered his services
in this area.

Adams, who has been active in Indian
affairs, supports Ford's position. He feels
that the Indians need a voice in the
management of their affairs.

Some Indians understand Ford's view
advantageously. They believe that by
negotiating with the federal government,
they can achieve better control over their
reservations. Ford is in favor of this
approach, but he also recognizes the
need for reservations to be run
efficiently.

Ford's proposal would give Indian
residents the right to vote on
reservations and would
allow them to negotiate
with the government
about the terms of
the reservations.

Ford believes that
Indian control
would lead to
better
management
and
more
autonomy
for
the
Indians.

Some Indians are
unsure about
Ford's proposal,
but they
appreciate his
efforts to
improve their
situation.

Ford also
supports
Indian
education.

He believes
that
education
is key
to
Indian
progress
and
wants
to
help
prepare
Indians
for
the
future.

Ford's
proposals
are
likely to
receive
support
from
many
Indians,
but
there
are
also
critics
who
believe
that
Indian
control
would
be
harmful.

Ultimately,
Ford's
goal
is
to
help
Indians
achieve
a
better
future
through
better
management
and
education.

Ford's
proposals
are
a
step
in
the
right
direction,
but
there
is
much
work
that
needs
to
be
done
to
achieve
true
Indian
control.

Ford
believes
that
Indians
should
be
given
the
opportunities
and
resources
they
need
to
achieve
their
goals.

Ford's
approach
is
a
reflection
of
his
commitment
to
India's
future.

Ford
wants
Indian
control
for
the
benefit
of
Indians
and
the
country.

Ford
believes
that
Indian
control
is
possible
and
desirable,
and
he
will
continue
to
work
for
it.

Ford's
efforts
are
a
clear
indication
of
his
commitment
to
Indian
rights
and
welfare.

Ford
is
an
important
figure
in
Indian
affairs,
and
his
proposals
are
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to
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of
Indians
in
the
United
States.
Clark A. Wenke  
President  
Pender State Bank  
Pender, Nebraska 68047

Dear Clark:

Thanks very much for sending me a copy of your letter to the President regarding the matter of retrocession. It was good of you to share your thoughts on this with me.

As you know, Clark, I do not support S. 2010, and will oppose whatever legislation might follow that would permit the Tribes to go into retrocession without the permission of the State. Frankly, the President and I just plain disagree on this matter.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

CHARLES THONE  
U.S. Congressman

CT/v
Indian Policy Called
Two-Headed Monster

By Mary Kay Quinlan

Washington — The battlefields are courtroom, Congress and cabinetrooms of the federal bureaucracy instead of the parched plains.

But the struggle for control of Indian lands today is as keen as it was a century ago. In some ways, both Indians and non-Indians agree, are funda-
mental, constitutional, rights that each side believes the other is going to take away.

Vaccinations in the nation's Indian policy for at least a hun-
dred years have resulted in a misnomer of treaties, laws and court decisions that one non-Indi-
dian calls "a two-headed mon-
ter.

"An Indian calls it a "n-lm-
mash," "

A Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) official calls it "a can of worms." Each side, in essence, thinks the situation is insurmountable.

Portions on both sides feel the dilemma is being ignored by the people who could and should resolve it.

Both Indians and non-Indians argue about their views in phil-
osophical and legal terms, but the problems are practical.

Who, for example, has the legal right to assemble and own property on the reserva-
tions and the jurisdiction where the reservations were estab-
lished, when it comes to laws that are applicable?

But law enforcement officials are saying they are trying to find a middle ground. Some say it is real.
Land on Reservation

Not Always Indians

By Mary Kay Quinn

Washington, D.C. — Indian reservations are for Indians, right? Well, sort of.

They stand out that way, but often more as symbols, especially in the Midwest, according to a new study of reservation lands.

The land, which is under development on Indian reservations, is not sold or undeveloped by the public and often sold to the general public. But, particularly by the "city" newspaper, members of the Missouri Congress on equal rights and Indian lands.

The group is composed primarily of Indians who have lived on reservations, but that today's reservations are not for Indians. Congress believed that, the Indians would become "citizens," if they were given plots of land and taught to farm.

So far, reservations are not as they were expected to be, the city newspaper points out.

Through the eyes of reservation land hustlers, several cases go to court. Basically, non-Indian landowners entered the picture when some reservations, like the one in the middle of Kansas, were opened for homesteading. As when Indians and their allies protested to non-Indians.

Even in controversy over the agricultural issues, the land question remains with Indian lands, but the prevailing legal view is that reservations were created especially for Indians and in part to secure them in the early years.

The checkerboard pattern of land ownership in Thurston County and Indian reservations to other states and even within some states is too complicated to be fixed by Congress in the late 1880s and early 1900s.
The Struggle Now: Self-Determination

By Mary Kay Quinlan

Washington — The Indians, who are used to fighting to protect their land and their way of life, are now fighting for self-determination. The battle this time is over the right to govern their own affairs, make their own laws, run their own lives.

This is the essence, they say, of the nation’s current Indian policy of self-determination. And it has been in place since 1975, when President Richard Nixon, and endorsed recently by President Ford.

The National Congress of American Indians, two years ago proposed repealing a law that gives federal and state courts jurisdiction on Indian reservations.

The proposal, according to the Indians, is a major effort by Indians all over the country to reach consensus.

The fate of the proposal, according to the Indians, is in the hands of Congress, which has yet to take a vote.

They emphasize that the Constitution recognizes the right of the several states to治理 matters within their borders, and among the several states and with the Indian tribes.

“From the early days, the Indian leaders say, the tribes have been recognized as distinct political units of the United States. Indians fight to exercise their rights as a people and as individuals, and have been treated as a general legal entity.

The Resolution is for Constitutional recognition of

Indians’ right to self-determination. Under the Indian Self-Determination Act of 1975, the federal government promised to provide aid to Indian tribes, and to help them become self-sufficient.

The act was intended to address the widespread poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy that had characterized Indian life for decades.

Since then, the Indian Self-Determination Act has been amended several times, and has been expanded to include a variety of programs and services.

The act has been hailed as a significant step forward in Indian self-determination. However, some Indians say that the act has not gone far enough, and that more needs to be done to give Indians the power to govern themselves.

Some Indians say that the act has been used to justify the continued control of Indian affairs by the federal government. They say that the act has been used to justify the continued control of Indian affairs by the federal government.

The Indian Self-Determination Act has been a controversial issue for many years, and continues to be a source of controversy today. It is a complex and controversial issue that continues to be debated by Indian leaders, politicians, and the general public.

The Indian Self-Determination Act is a key component of Indian self-determination, and has played a significant role in the development of Indian self-governance.
By Mary Kay Quinlan

Washington — To the non-Indians involved in the land jurisdiction issue, the merits of their case are as clear as the lessons of 1776.

They talk about government with consent of the governed and no taxation without representation. The resolutions they drafted into the Declaration of Independence.

The debate has been continuing for years, but has become especially intense since Sen. Henry Jackson, D-Wash., introduced a bill last summer by request of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) that would repeal a law giving Nebraska and other states jurisdiction on Indian reservations.

The bill would allow the tribes to decide whether they want federal or state law enforcement, and whether they will exercise tribal jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters as well. States would not have a veto over tribal decisions.

Rights Upheld

A variety of court cases in recent years has upheld Indian rights to enforce rules, such as their own reservations, fishing and hunting regulations.

Jackson

"In a recent court case, a non-Indian group said the non-Indians have been frustrated because the Indian Office has been unwilling to listen to the non-Indian view."

The delegation of authority of the Dawes Act last February with emphasis on the Indian Office's decision to implement the law in the interests of Indian tribes could be a big mistake.

Curtis

The issue of the Dawes Act has now come to a head in the case of the Omaha Indian Reservation.

The reservation is the largest in the nation and it is located in northern Nebraska.

The Omaha Indians have a long history of fighting for their rights to the reservation.

In the recent court case, the non-Indians argued that the Indian Office was not fully informed about the Omaha Indians' needs. The court ruled in favor of the Indian Office.

The Omaha Indians have a strong sense of pride in their heritage and they are determined to protect their rights to the reservation.

The Omaha Indians have also been involved in a long-standing dispute with the U.S. government over the reservation boundaries.

The jurisdictional conflict is not limited to the Omaha Reservation. In recent years, the Nebraska legislature has passed laws that affect the rights of the Omaha Indians.

The Omaha Indians have filed suit to challenge these laws, but the outcome is uncertain.

The Omaha Indians have also been involved in a long-standing dispute with the U.S. government over the reservation boundaries.

The dispute has been ongoing for many years and it has led to many court cases over jurisdictional issues.

The Omaha Indians felt betrayed because of the "trust" relationship the U.S. government had with the Omaha Indians in the past.

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Land could be consolidated by purchasing it from non-Indians, which some tribes are already doing, and even by condemnation under the federal government's power of eminent domain, they said.

But executive branch officials and congressional staff members working on the problem say that's not reasonable.

"We can't move in a direction that's going to deprive people of their property," a BIA official said. "Property rights are very sacred in this country."

Two Sides

No matter how valid the Indians' legal arguments for their rights to exert authority on the reservations, the non-Indians, too, are on solid legal ground in their arguments for a right to have a voice in the governing process they live under, the government officials said.

"After all, that's what the Revolution was all about," one said.

On the other hand, he said, "there's some merit to the Indians' jurisdictional claims because of their special relationship with the federal government."

Tom Tobin, a lawyer for a group of non-Indians trying to make their views known, said the problem is one that should be solved by Congress, not by the courts, where most of the jurisdiction issues are being debated.

But congressional action may just go to tough political decisions.

Chuck Triebel, NCAI executive director, said he believes the next session of Congress will pass the organization's bill, or one like it, that would replace state jurisdiction.

Current Gerand, a Senate Interior Committee staff member, said that's a reasonable possibility if the Indian community can appeal to civil liberties groups and church groups for support.

The non-Indians are aware of the political aspect of the problem, too.

Several persons attending an organizational meeting last February of the Interstate Congress on Equal Rights and Responsibilities said that non-Indian landowners should push their congressmen and make jurisdiction matters an issue in campaigns.

"Parochial"

Indian issues don't get much attention in Congress because they are "so parochial in nature" and affect so few congressmen, said Rep. Charles Thome of Lincoln.

Hearing to Proceed

Farmland Squabble

A praeliminary hearing Aug. 4 in Sioux City will proceed a legal battle for the ownership of more than 1,000 acres of Monona County, Iowa, farmland.

Indians from the Omaha reservation in Mary, Neb., moved onto part of the land and have been farming portions since April, 1973. A Department of Interior injunction prevented an Iowa district court from moving them from the land.

The trial will be held in Sioux City federal court. Court officials indicated it would be long.

The Indians claim the land is part of an Omaha reservation created in 1864 on the desatblishment of the river. A flood in the 1930's changed the course of the Missouri and the disputed area has since been on the Iowa side.

Iowa farmers and other non-Indians holding title claim their rights stem from abstracts drawn up in the first survey in 1846.
August 30, 1976

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Huff:

Thank you for your letter to the President expressing concern about his jurisdictional statement to American Indian leaders on July 16. It has been erroneously reported that President Ford supports legislation to give tribal governments criminal and civil jurisdiction over all people living on Indian reservations. This is inaccurate. The President does not support legislation to alter the present legal status of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

In his statement to Indian leaders on July 16, President Ford indicated that he supported the concept of allowing certain Indian tribes (those which have been subject to State civil and criminal jurisdiction under provisions of Public Law 83-280 and related statutes) to decide by tribal resolution whether they wish to continue under State jurisdiction or return to Federal jurisdictional status. This resolution is subject to the approval or disapproval of the Secretary of the Interior under a clear set of reasonable guidelines.

Under this concept, a tribe by itself could initiate a request to the Secretary of the Interior for a return to Federal jurisdictional status. In reaching his decision on this request, the Secretary of the Interior would be required to consult with the U.S. Attorney General and with the governors of the appropriate States. Application would be limited to tribes in States which have exercised jurisdiction under P.L. 83-280 and related statutes.

The Departments of Justice and Interior are drafting legislation on this subject, and the Administration has asked the governors of 31 States for their views on the draft legislation. It is the President's
intention to continue consultations on the draft and to expand those consultations to include a wide range of interested groups, including representatives of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

Sincerely,

Bradley H. Patterson, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. Noel Huff
Box 385
Walthill, Nebraska 69067
BHP:1rc
BHP:2
President Gerald Ford  
Washington, D.C.  
July 26, 1976  

Walthill, Nebraska  

Honorable President:  

Our names are Noel Huff and Agnes Huff. We are writing about your proposal relative to self-determination for Indians. Our families came to Thurston County in 1910 and 1912 respectively. We were raised in this county, attended schools here, and worked the land that was bought by Non-Indians with their hard earned cash. We now own our home in Walthill on the Omaha Reservation which we purchased with our hard earned cash. We are law abiding citizens who pay taxes on our property for the upkeep of our town, school, and roads for the benefit of all including the Indians.  

Why will you propose a new law which you and the tribal leaders will "write together" that will give the Indians jurisdiction over criminal and civil cases within adequate guidelines over Non-Indians? Do you understand that they already have jurisdiction over their own arrests on this and the adjoining Winnebago Reservation? You want them to be granted jurisdiction over criminal and civil cases of Non-Indians as well? How would your "adequate guidelines" be determined?  

Are your worldly possessions a part of an Indian Reservation? If so or not, would you condone any group who wished to have the right to handle you and your possessions and eventually subdivide your state?  

We sincerely hope that you will reconsider your intent on this matter and also do all you can to abolish the Retrocession Measure-2010, which would deprive us of our rights as citizens of Walthill, of Thurston County, and of Nebraska. Thank you for reading this.  

Sincerely,  

Noel Huff  
Agnes Huff
President Gerald Ford
United States President
White House
Washington, D.C.
August 30, 1976

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Detry:

Thank you for your letter to the President expressing concern about his jurisdictional statement to American Indian leaders on July 16. It has been erroneously reported that President Ford supports legislation to give tribal governments criminal and civil jurisdiction over all people living on Indian reservations. This is inaccurate. The President does not support legislation to alter the present legal status of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

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Sincerely,

Bradley H. Patterson, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. Norman L. Deiry
Route 5
Hayward, Wisconsin 54843

BHP: Lvc
BHP-2
Mr. & Mrs. Norman L. Detrey
R. F., Hayward,
Wisconsin 54443

The President, Gerald Ford
The White House,
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.,
Washington, D.C. 20013
New Tribal Power Asked

Washington, D.C. — AP — President Ford told Indian leaders Friday that he soon would seek a law that would give tribal governments criminal and civil jurisdiction over persons living on Indian reservations.

Addressing about 200 American Indian leaders in the East Room, Ford said the legislation now being drafted would let the tribes determine whether they wanted to share jurisdiction with state or federal authorities or handle such matters themselves.

Some Indian leaders said in advance of the session that they suspected the president might be trying to use them for political purposes, since the White House had invited them to wear traditional native costumes to the affair. Few of the Indians wore native garb, but Ford's speech seemed well-received.

Mr. President:

And I can safely say, the above news print has cost you AD, 8000 votes in Somerset County, alone, and believe me, this is such Republican country, a Democrat does not even bother to waste any office in this County.

But when a President, who is supposed to represent All Of The People, can come out for one Group and be so biased, then I really don't care who gets in, as long as it is not this President.

I only hope this News reached every paper in the United States, because there are so many States that are affected by it. And believe me, this News item Will Sure Affect You!!!!

I do believe, it is time Our Government takes a long hard look at it's Tax Payers, and how our rights are being violated.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Mr. & Mrs. Norman L. Detay
Dear Miss McCleary:

Thank you for your letter to the President expressing concern about his jurisdictional statement to American Indian leaders on July 16. It has been erroneously reported that President Ford supports legislation to give tribal governments criminal and civil jurisdiction over all people living on Indian reservations. This is inaccurate. The President does not support legislation to alter the present legal status of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

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The Departments of Justice and Interior are drafting legislation on this subject, and the Administration has asked the governors of 31 States for their views on the draft legislation. It is the President's
intention to continue consultations on the draft and
to expand those consultations to include a wide range
of interested groups, including representatives of
non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

Sincerely,

Bradley H. Patterson, Jr.

Miss Edythe T. McCleary
Vice Chairman
Big Horn County Republican
Central Committee
Box 317
Hardin, Montana 59034

BHP-1
BHP-2
Dear President Ford:

How would you react, I wonder, if the Blacks in Washington, D.C., were told that they could be solely responsible for law and order within that area, and that any other citizen of the U.S. or elsewhere when living there or passing through would be strictly under their jurisdiction, could be tried and sentenced accordingly, without any recourse?

Do you have any idea what your statement to the American Indians whom you invited to visit the Capitol (at taxpayer expense, I am sure), that they should have full control over law and order within their reservations, could mean to the other citizens of this country?

It would mean that anyone driving across the reservation on county or state or federal roads would be at the complete mercy of the Tribe involved. It would mean that even a person who owns deeded land on the reservation, which person might be of any race, would not be safe in their own home on that land.

Do you have any idea what such an arrangement would do to the already-touchy relationship between the races in the areas involved?

And don't ask our Senators and Representatives from Montana what the situation is like or what they think of your promise to the Indians. They are much too anxious to please the Indian voter to even look at the situation, let alone see it.

I invite you to visit Hardin, Montana, to see first-hand what kind of position a rancher on the reservation would be in if your promise is carried out. Or a citizen who has to drive through the reservation to get somewhere else. But since you probably do not have time to pay such a visit, perhaps you will at least read my letter and give it some thought.

Sincerely yours,

Edith F. McCleary, Vice Chairman
Big Horn Co. Republican Central Com.

CC: Congressman John Melcher
Senator Mike Mansfield
Senator Lee Metcalf
President Jerry Ford
White House
Washington, D.C.
August 30, 1976

Dear Mr. Frazzy:

Thank you for your letter to the President expressing concern about his jurisdictional statement to American Indian leaders on July 16. It has been erroneously reported that President Ford supports legislation to give tribal governments criminal and civil jurisdiction over all people living on Indian reservations. This is inaccurate. The President does NOT support legislation to alter the present legal status of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

In his statement to Indian leaders on July 16, President Ford indicated that he supported the concept of allowing certain Indian tribes (those which have been subject to State civil and criminal jurisdiction under provisions of Public Law 83-280 and related statutes) to decide by tribal resolution whether they wish to continue under State jurisdiction or return to Federal jurisdictional status. This resolution is subject to the approval or disapproval of the Secretary of the Interior under a clear set of reasonable guidelines.

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intention to continue consultations on the draft and to expand those consultations to include a wide range of interested groups, including representatives of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

Sincerely,

Bradley H. Patterson, Jr.

Mr. Cloyd Frasey
Rural Route 1
Walthill, Nebraska 68067

BHP:1rc
BHP-2
Dear Sir,

I am terribly disturbed about the report in the Acme City Journal dated July 28, 1976, (quote) President Ford told Indian leaders he soon will seek a new law that could give tribal governments criminal and civil jurisdiction over people living on Indian reservations. (end quote)

I am disturbed because when there is about one third of the people in the county or reservation that are Indian, no one living here or away from here knows what will happen to our government.

If these people want
the responsibility of criminal
and civil jurisdiction on the
Winnebago reservation in
Platte County of Nebraska or
any other reservation in any
other state, they should get it
through the same channel of
government that we all live
under, and that is through
state and county government.
This is the only way it would
be right and just and fair
for every body and by our
Constitution of U.S.A.

This is certainly not the
time to be segregating, when
we should be digesting. It
isn't the Indians alone that
are causing this problem, we
know, because we have lived
on the reservation since World
War I. Amicably yours,

LloydPEG
Clayt Frazey
Natchez, Miss. 68067

President Gerald Ford
White House
Washington, D.C.
20000
Dear Mr. Dodge:

Thank you for your letter to the President expressing concern about his jurisdictional statement to American Indian leaders on July 16. It has been erroneously reported that President Ford supports legislation to give tribal governments criminal and civil jurisdiction over all people living on Indian reservations. This is inaccurate. The President does not support legislation to alter the present legal status of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

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intention to continue consultations on the draft and to expand those consultations to include a wide range of interested groups, including representatives of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

Sincerely,

Bradley H. Patterson, Jr.

Mr. Robert S. Dodge
Apartment 202
2319 South Goebbert Road
Arlington Heights, Illinois 60005
BHP:1rc
BHP-2
Dear Mr. President,

The enclosed news clipping raises some questions I am certain you can answer.

With the ethnic group known as American Indians being given an option to exercise criminal and civil jurisdiction free of State and federal laws, I suspect that their exercise of this jurisdiction will stop the use of State and federal tax dollars from the remaining U.S. citizens in their support. Will this escape from the laws that we all suffer under be offered to other ethnic groups such as Europeans, Africans, South Americans, etc.?

Quite frankly, the more announcements you make about giving American possessions and jurisdiction away, possessions and jurisdictions that our forefathers fought and died for, the more attractive the candidacy of Governor Reagan becomes.

In fact, all my many relatives and friends are looking forward to a new occupant in the White House come January 1977. An occupant who will fight to preserve this Union as our forefathers did under President Lincoln.

Very truly yours,

Robert S. Dodge
Indians to get new rights

WASHINGTON—President Ford told Indian leaders he soon will seek a law to give tribal governments criminal and civil jurisdiction over people living on Indian reservations. Addressing about 200 American Indian leaders in the East Room of the White House, Ford said the legislation being drafted would let the tribes determine whether they wanted to share jurisdiction with state or federal authorities or handle such matters themselves "effectively and within adequate guidelines."
President R. Ford
White House
Washington, D.C.
August 30, 1976

Dear Miss Cochrane:

Thank you for your letter to the President expressing concern about his jurisdictional statement to American Indian leaders on July 16. It has been erroneously reported that President Ford supports legislation to give tribal governments criminal and civil jurisdiction over all people living on Indian reservations. This is inaccurate. The President does not support legislation to alter the present legal status of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

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Intention to continue consultations on the draft and to expand those consultations to include a wide range of interested groups, including representatives of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

Sincerely,

Bradley H. Patterson, Jr.

Miss Lucy Cochrane
Post Office Box 447
Big Arm, Montana 59910

BHP:1RC
BHP-2
President Ford  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Ford,

My statement to the 200 Indians that they would lose legislation giving them jurisdiction over people living on reservations is turning off voters who really wanted to support you—like myself—and will affect far more voters than there are Indians.

Here, on the Flathead Indian Reservation where 85% of the population is non-Indian, such action will cause more polarization and could lead to outright trouble.

I have family relatives on the tribal rolls here and they, like some 75% of this tribe, have less than 30% Indian blood. I call them “blank-faced, two-drop Indians” as they have more Dutch blood than I do, whose great-grandmother’s name was Bright Kelly. Yet they have all the rights of the full-blooded.

And we didn’t take this land from the Indians. Congress invited us here to buy the village site and to homestead and develop irrigation for the arid land so Indians could enjoy the fruits of our forefathers’ labor.

Please put some common sense into this great federal Indian policy before our life savings are all gone in supporting these Indians, few of whom need any help now.

Sincerely,

Lucy Cochrane
Lucy Costner
Box 447
Big Arm, Mont. 59910

President Ford
The White House
Washington, D.C.
Dear Mrs. Sievers:

Thank you for your letter to the President expressing concern about his jurisdictional statement to American Indian leaders on July 16. It has been erroneously reported that President Ford supports legislation to give tribal governments criminal and civil jurisdiction over all people living on Indian reservations. This is inaccurate. The President does not support legislation to alter the present legal status of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

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The Department of Justice and Interior are drafting legislation on this subject, and the Administration has asked the governors of 31 States for their views on the draft legislation. It is the President's
intention to continue consultations on the draft and to expand those consultations to include a wide range of interested groups, including representatives of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

Sincerely,

Bradley H. Patterson, Jr.

Mrs. E. R. Sievers
Skidoo Lane
East Shore
Polson, Montana 59860

BHP:1rc
BHP-2
Hon. Gerald Ford,
President of the United States,
Washington, D.C.

Mr. President:

A news item in the Seattle Times” of July 22, 1976 stated, “The national news service last week reported that President Ford told Indian leaders Friday he would soon seek a law that would give tribal government criminal and civil jurisdiction over people living on Indian reservations.

In our understanding that about 85% of the population residing within the Seattle area, are non-Indians. In our opinion it is unjust that 15% of the population should have jurisdiction over the other 85%. Many here, including the writers, are retired people of moderate means, who have a substantial portion of their savings invested in their homes.

We, as well as most of the other non-Indians of this area, are very concerned regarding the possibility of the decline of tribal referred to above, and home was.
purchased in good faith over 25 years ago.

If the Indians are given criminal and civil jurisdiction over this area it would adversely affect living conditions. That would in turn cause a decline in property values. Probably many of us would find it necessary to dispose of our property here and move to another location.

We and many of our neighbors have been supporters of your policies. If the action contemplated respecting Indian jurisdiction in this area is implemented we will feel it necessary to reasse our future political support.

Sincerely,
C. R. Evans
Mrs. C. R. Evans
Honorable Gerald Ford,
President of the United States.
Washington, D.C.
August 30, 1976

Dear Miss Brasch:

Thank you for your letter to the President expressing concern about his jurisdictional statement to American Indian leaders on July 16. It has been erroneously reported that President Ford supports legislation to give tribal governments criminal and civil jurisdiction over all people living on Indian reservations. This is inaccurate. The President does not support legislation to alter the present legal status of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

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intention to continue consultations on the draft and to expand those consultations to include a wide range of interested groups, including representatives of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

Sincerely,

Bradley B. Patterson, Jr.

Miss Shirley Brasch
Box 206
Chico, Nebraska  68004

BHP:1rc
BHP-2
Dear President Ford:

I am a Non-Indian living on what is considered the Omaha reservation in Thurston County, Nebr. The land I live on once belonged to the Indians which was allotted to them in 1882. They died and it went into Estate and was sold off to Non-Indians in 1909 by the heirs after going through court & all legal channels according to Federal Regulations. Some of this reservation was also opened up for Homesteading by the Federal Government.

Now the people of this area are faced with the threat hanging over their heads of losing everything including their voice in the government that governs them through legislation. You owe me the right to vote on who governs me to or have you forgotten. The Majority, working, tax paying people seem to be the forgotten. I object to having State subdivided without it's consent and all the other ramifications this type of legislation will do to me and our people.

If you really want to know how upset the Non-Indian (majority people) living here are about this I would like to request that you come to Thurston County and have an Audience with our people and hear the other side of the story. All you have to do is let me know when you want to meet with the people and I will arrange for facilities to accommodate the people of this county. Waiting you reply. My phone No. is 402-863-2281 or my address is... Shirley Brack

Box 6206

Lancaster, Nebr. 68047
President Ford
WHITE HOUSE
Washington D.C. 20510
August 30, 1976

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds:

Thank you for your letter to the President expressing concern about his jurisdictional statement to American Indian leaders on July 16. It has been erroneously reported that President Ford supports legislation to give tribal governments criminal and civil jurisdiction over all people living on Indian reservations. This is inaccurate. The President does not support legislation to alter the present legal status of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

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intention to continue consultations on the draft and to expand those consultations to include a wide range of interested groups, including representatives of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

Sincerely,

Bradley H. Patterson, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. James B. Reynolds
Box 123
Walthill, Nebraska 68067

BHP:arc
BHP-2
Walthill, Nebraska
July 22, 1976

The Honorable Gerald R. Ford
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

My Dear President Ford:

Our names are James B. & Kathryn F. Reynolds of Walthill, Nebraska. I am the Manager of the Iowa Electric Light & Power Company (Gas Division) in Walthill, Nebraska, and my wife works for USDA - Soil Conservation Service in Walthill, Nebraska.

We are land and home owners in Thurston County and we are very concerned about the situation in Thurston county with the Omaha and Winnebago Tribes. We have been born and reared in this community and have lived with the members of these tribes since our birth, and have some very good working relations with them.

Regret that you had to issue such a statement on Friday, 7/16/76 to the group of Indian leaders that you met with on said date. This will have a great affect on your election year and you have not gained any votes in this area by such an issue.

Watch your new chapters you propose to write on the issue with the Indian and the Federal Government. We are tax paying citizens. Our land was purchased from the Pilcher Family in 1916 and paid for in cash. We have a fee patent on said abstract to prove such. Now, how do you propose to give the reservation back to the Indians in Thurston County. They have been paid for every acre of land, supported by the U.S. Government on our tax monies, and protected by the Supreme Courts in every ruling and used lawyers that our also paid for with our money.

We strongly protest any of your "self-determination" actions on the grounds that you have forgotten your obligations to us. Our state can't be sub-divided without the consent of the State. You owe us the right as to who governs us, and we abide by the laws of our county, state and country. We pay TAXES FOR THE PRIVILEGES WE RECEIVE, and can you say that for the Tribes in Thurston County. They are free of sales tax, State Income tax and others, but enjoy all the same rights that we pay so dearly for.

Mr. President - give this situation some thought - listen to our Senators and Representatives that have been in Thurston County, and hear our Governor from Nebraska when he tells you like it is with the Indians and the problems of retrocession and your free programs on Minority and employment in Nebraska.

Thank you for reading this and trust that you will hear our side of the situation and act accordingly.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

CC: To Senators and Representatives -1st Dist.
Dear Mr. Rockwell:

Thank you for your letter to the President expressing concern about his jurisdictional statement to American Indian leaders on July 16. It has been inaccurately reported that President Ford supports legislation to give tribal governments criminal and civil jurisdiction over all people living on Indian reservations. This is inaccurate. The President does not support legislation to alter the present legal status of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

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intention to continue consultations on the draft and to expand those consultations to include a wide range of interested groups, including representatives of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

Sincerely,

Bradley B. Patterson, Jr.

Mr. F. Wayne Rockwell
President
Montanan's Opposing Discrimination
Post Office Box 673
Polson, Montana 59860

BHP:1rc
BHP-2
Montanans Opposing Discrimination

20 July 1976

President Gerald Ford
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Ford:

The undersigned has been directed to write you on behalf of Montanans Opposing Discrimination protesting your decision to seek a law giving Tribal Governments civil and criminal jurisdiction over people living on Indian Reservations.

Briefly, Montanans Opposing Discrimination was organized two years ago to protect the increasing encroachments of their constitutional rights by implementation of the present Federal Indian Policy. It consists of some 2,500 members living on or near the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana. It has recently affiliated with the Interstate Congress for Equal Rights and Responsibilities. The latter is a regional coalition of similar organizations situated in 14 other Western States.

While the provisions of your proposed legislation may be extremely beneficial and necessary on some Reservations, its effect on the Flathead Reservation spell disaster. Therefore, we believe that laws pertaining to Indian policy should be enacted on a case by case basis to fit the particular Reservation affected.

As it relates to the Flathead Reservation, the present Federal Indian policy has done precisely what law is usually intended to prevent.

It has resulted in the polarization of the Reservation population. It has arbitrarily created two distinct classes of citizenship with distinct and opposing governments, (and, in most instances, opposing goals and philosophies), each competing for dominance within the identical territorial area. It has pitted neighbor against neighbor, alienating lifetime friendships. Indeed, even families are being torn apart by their members' allegiances to the respective competing governments.

Montanans Opposing Discrimination is dedicated to the end that no federal, state or local government shall make any distinction in civil or political rights on account of race, color or national origin
The Reservation is scarred by unsolved legal matters. American citizens, Tribal members and non-members alike, are being flagrantly denied basic constitutional rights. Discrimination, once almost eliminated is again running rampant.

Non-members are not alien intruders or trespassers. On the contrary, they are the disposable pawns of their Federal Government; now being sacrificed despite the fact that they were invited, indeed urged, to settle, improve and make productive the idle lands of the Reservation. They appear to be the victims of what now seem to be their Federal congressional, administrative and judicial departments of government fraudulent representations that the lands they were settling and migrating to were within the "former" Flathead Indian Reservation.

The number of the victims of this patent fraud is demonstrated by the non-member resident population of approximately 14,000 compared with the some 2,500 Tribal member population.

Some sixty years ago these settlers in reliance upon Federal representations and under the direct authority and direction of Congress chartered and organized cities, towns, school districts and counties in conformance with Montana law. These governments, through the assessment of taxes provided all the amenities and benefits of a civilized society. Nor did the non-member citizens ignore the rights of the Tribal member citizen neighbors. Indeed, they elected them to their governments’ important elective posts and appointed them to offices in these governments despite the anomaly that Tribal members are not now responsible or answerable to those civil laws which they were enacting, administering and adjudicating.

Conversely, emerging Tribal government elective and appointive offices, including the judiciary are strictly limited to those having Tribal membership. More important, only Tribal members can be electors of those holding these offices.

In this atmosphere you have seen fit to lend the tremendous prestige of your office in proposing and encouraging the setting aside of long established local laws and have paved the way for the Tribal government to assume, by usurpation of State law, a new and entirely non-representative government over the beleaguered non-member.

Retrocession of P.L. 280 and implementation of legislation as recently proposed can only result in widespread civil disobedience coupled with a further deterioration of the citizens respect for law and order.
Accordingly, on behalf of all freedom loving, law abiding and loyal citizens, I respectfully request that you reconsider your decision.

Respectfully yours,

F. Wayne Rockwell
President, Montanan's Opposing Discrimination

FWR:whm
President Gerald Ford
The White House
Washington D.C.
August 30, 1976

Dear Mr. Wells:

Thank you for your letter to the President expressing concern about his jurisdictional statement to American Indian leaders on July 16. It has been erroneously reported that President Ford supports legislation to give tribal governments criminal and civil jurisdiction over all people living on Indian reservations. This is inaccurate. The President does not support legislation to alter the present legal status of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

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intention to continue consultations on the draft and to expand those consultations to include a wide range of interested groups, including representatives of non-Indians residing within reservation boundaries.

Sincerely,

Bradley N. Patterson, Jr.

Mr. George W. Wells
Commissioner
Sanders County
Thompson Falls, Montana 59873

BHP:lrc
BHP-2
The Honorable President of the U. S.
Capitol Bldg.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir;

Read you promise to the Indians Tribe control or jurisdiction over law and civil on Reservations.

You sure have no idea what you are opening up, are you trying to start another war with indians and whites?

We the white people have gave them everything now.

If anything is done you should either buy the white man out on the reservations and put them on there own. The government has done them a great injustice by not making them responsible, you have give them everything there rights & my rights, this can not go on. So lets quit giving them anything except what the rest of us have, do away with this reservation nonsense, my god there has been 200 years gone by, let them face up to reality I imagine there is probably 99 per cent on Welfare now you want to give them jurisdiction over the whites, must be out of your pea picking mind. Did you ever live on a Reservation?

If you are looking for Votes, your sure going the wrong way most Indians don't vote and we are sure not going to if this happens.

Very truly yours,

George W. Wells, Commissioner
Sanders County

August 13, 1976
After Five Days Return To
SANDERS COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS
THOMPSON FALLS, MONTANA 59873

The Honorable President of the U. S.
Capitol Bldg.
Washington, D. C.