

**STATEMENT OF CARL J. ARTMAN
NOMINEE FOR THE POSITION OF
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INDIAN AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

SEPTEMBER 14, 2006

Mr. Chairman, Senators, my name is Carl Artman. It is a privilege and an honor to appear before you this morning seeking your confirmation of my nomination by President Bush to the post of Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs.

I am a member of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, one of six Indian nations of the Haudenosaunee, or Iroquois Confederacy. I have served my Tribe in positions ranging from the tribal representative in Washington, DC to Chief Operating Officer in a telecommunications partnership to, most recently, Chief Counsel of the Tribe. I currently serve as the Associate Solicitor for Indian Affairs in the Office of the Solicitor within the Department of the Interior.

I am honored to have been nominated by President Bush and look forward to the challenges that lie ahead. Indian Country provides an overwhelming number of challenges: youth suicide, methamphetamine abuse, high unemployment rates on many reservations, lack of adequate health care, challenged education facilities and curriculums, crumbling infrastructures from roads to irrigation ditches, and crime outpacing law enforcement personnel and funds. Additionally, Indian country has its unique, though historically consistent, problems like the erosion of sovereignty, expanding self-governance and self-determination, ensuring adequate housing, and fighting to maintain its identity and control over its destiny and lands.

If you ask me why I want this job? My answer will be: because of all the challenges that exist. The challenges Indians and Alaska Natives face today seem insurmountable. Yet, I see the determination and the potential of Indians and Alaska Natives. Reservation populations are growing. Leaders are digging in to stem the spread of methamphetamines and the lawlessness that follows in its wake. Educators, parents, and police are learning to identify youth at-risk of committing suicide and interceding. Teachers at tribal schools provide more with less. Inch by inch tribes are reclaiming their land and the inherent rights of such ownership.

As Indians and Alaska Natives reclaim their rights lost through history or to societal plagues, the Department of the Interior must be their partner in these

battles. I hope to expedite and streamline access to Departmental programs to assist tribal and Alaska Native communities to develop their natural, political, and socio-economic infrastructure.

The trust litigation of the last decade has tested the commitment of many, especially the overarching Individual Indian Money Account litigation. Many in the Department are afraid their actions, no matter how well meaning or beneficial to the Tribes, will run afoul of the plaintiff's attorneys and the sitting judge, and that they may be held in contempt. This fear bogs down the Department, impedes the Indian-centric goals of the Department, and hurts tribes and individual Indians across the nation. Resolution to this matter is critical, whether it comes from Congress, the Administration, or the courts. From whatever quarter it hales, if confirmed, I will assist in its development and implementation. The sooner this litigation ends, the sooner we improve our relationship with tribes, and the sooner we increase for Indians and Alaska Natives the impact of the benefits of that relationship.

The Department of the Interior can and will be a positive force in Indian Country. It is impossible to eliminate immediately that which has festered for years. However, I will lay the foundation for an era that will provide a fresh start and new commitments, through action, to programmatic goals and mandated duties. This will allow tribal governments, Indians, and Alaska Natives to build bulwarks against the societal plagues. They can further reclaim their unique cultures rich in tradition, spirituality, and group-centric values, not one of despair and hopelessness.

If confirmed, I will foster an interaction born of a partnership and mutual goals, not just fiduciary requirements.

If confirmed, I will use the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs to promote communications between tribes that have realized financial success, either through gaming or other business ventures, and those that strive for a fraction of that success to move beyond provision of subsistence benefits for their membership. The success of one tribe, either in business, government administration, or cultural preservation, is the best incubator for success of other tribes. Trailblazing tribes allow those that follow to go even further.

If confirmed, I will use the Office to promote more vibrant and goal-oriented communications between tribes and their neighbors, be it a local or state government or a business that seeks to partner with the tribe for their mutual benefit.

If confirmed I hope to foster the growth of tribal governments. Tribal sovereignty is inherent, and this sovereignty is best exhibited in a vibrant tribal government – one that understands judicious exercise of its jurisdiction for the benefit of its members and the seventh generation. Tribal governments embody the power of sovereignty. The tribal government cares for the present and plans for the future.

It is what the outside examines to judge the health of the tribe. It is the face of the tribe and hope of the tribe's future.

Tribal governments can accomplish great things. The peoples and tribes of the Haudenosaunee, the Iroquois Confederacy, comprise the oldest continuous participatory democracy on earth. Authors of our, the United States, representative government, Ben Franklin and Thomas Jefferson were inspired by the Iroquois Confederacy, its inner-workings, and the Constitution of the Iroquois Nations known as the Great Binding Law, GAYANALAGOWA. Our Founding Fathers' inspirations, rooted in the Haudenosaunee, guide all of our lives today and continue to motivate people across the globe to achieve a greater freedom for themselves and their fellow countrymen.

This is the potential of tribal governments.

But before they inspire neighbors or nations, tribal governments must be able to fight the cancer within – the obstacles of drug abuse, youth suicide, joblessness, and hopelessness. Indians and Alaska Natives must reach into their great pasts to find their way and provide the impetus for change. And if confirmed, I hope to bring forth the potential of the breadth and depth of the Department of the Interior, and specifically the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, so that Indians and Alaska Natives can use these resources – their resources – to conquer the problems bearing down on their governments and people, to gain that foothold that will propel them upward, to preserve a culture and build a legacy, and to provide a future for their seventh generation that is as great as their past.

Mr. Chairman, Senators, thank you.