

**Testimony of Hopi Chairman Timothy Nuvangyaoma
Before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
Legislative Hearing on S. 3937, Special Diabetes Program for Indians Reauthorization Act
September 23, 2020**

Good afternoon Chairman Hoeven, Vice Chairman Udall, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. My name is Timothy Nuvangyaoma and I have the honor of serving as Chairman of the Hopi Tribe. Located in the northeast corner of Arizona, the Hopi Reservation is approximately 2.5 million square miles. Roughly half of the Tribe's population resides on the Reservation's 12 villages.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and express our strong support for S. 3937, the Special Diabetes Program for Indians Reauthorization Act of 2020. I would like to begin by thanking Senator McSally for introducing this important legislation and Senator Sinema for being an original cosponsor. We also appreciate our Representative, Tom O'Halleran, introducing similar legislation in the House of Representatives. Our Congressional delegation clearly understands the importance of the life-changing, Special Diabetes Program for Indians ("SDPI").

The Hopi Special Diabetes Program ("Program or HSDP") was awarded its first SDPI grant in 1998. The HSDP mission is to provide quality preventative services to the Hopi community in order to reduce the incidence rate of type 2 diabetes. The Program operates the Hopi Wellness Center ("HWC") and the Hopi Veteran's Memorial Center ("HVMC"). The HWS provides a free, public use fitness center; childcare services for fitness center users; and diabetes prevention education. The HVMC is a multi-purpose facility used for community and recreational events.

The HSDP utilizes effective, evidence-based intervention strategies to provide the Hopi community with a broad, community-centered public health approach to diabetes prevention. Since the Program's inception, we have implemented programs focused on reducing obesity, improving nutrition, addressing food insecurity, physical fitness, and weight management. I'm particularly proud of our efforts to incorporate Hopi culture into our programs. In 2019, the HSDP served over 17,000 people through these various programs.

Despite the ongoing health pandemic, the HSDP has been able to continue fulfilling its mission. In March 2020, the Hopi Tribe issued Executive Order #01-2020, declaring a public health state of emergency across the Hopi Reservation due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Due to the health risks posed, we made the tough decision to close the Hopi Wellness Center and the Hopi Veteran's Memorial Center. As a result, several HSDP events were cancelled or postponed.

Knowing the importance of maintaining a healthy body and mind during these trying times, the HSDP quickly adapted and began offering "virtual" health and wellness services. We are currently offering a wide array of online fitness classes from Monday through Friday, including "Native Fitness," which incorporates traditional Hopi song and dance. In addition, HSDP is hosting the "Fitness Bucks Challenge," where participants earn "fitness buck" by completing virtual fitness classes that are held on the Hopi Wellness Center's Facebook page.

The HSDP also modified two programs that celebrate the Hopi's longstanding tradition of running. The 28th annual "100 Mile Club" event just wrapped up and despite it being "virtual" there were nearly 800 participants (ages 5 and up). Participants had to log 100 miles within 14 weeks. As we speak, 750 tribal members are gearing up for the 14th annual Taawaki Trail Run, which will take place on October 2nd and October 4th. Participants in this event will be completing an 8K, 10K, or half marathon in one session.

The SDPI funding has been critical in allowing the HSDP to develop, sustain, and implement quality diabetes prevention and management programs. There is no doubt that our Program has changed the course of diabetes in the Hopi community. Reauthorizing SDPI and providing an increase in its funding level is critical as we continue our efforts to combat the high rates of diabetes in our community. Therefore, the Hopi Tribe strongly supports S. 3937, the Special Diabetes Program for Indians Reauthorization Act of 2020.

Considering many of the issues we are dealing with are interrelated, I would like to take a brief moment to express the Tribe's support for two other bills included in today's hearing: S. 3126, the Native Behavioral Health Access Improvement Act (Smith), and S. 3264, the Bridging the Tribal Digital Divide Act (Udall). Modeled after SDPI, Senator Smith's bill would provide tribes with critical resources to battle mental and behavioral health challenges in our communities. Further, Senator Udall's bill is needed now more than ever as we are relying heavily on broadband service during the ongoing pandemic.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to testify. The Hopi Tribe encourages the Committee to approve S. 3937, the Special Diabetes Program for Indians Reauthorization Act of 2020; S. 3126, the Native Behavioral Health Access Improvement Act; and S. 3264, the Bridging the Tribal Digital Divide Act. I would be happy to answer any questions.