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Udall Secures Major Funding for Indian Country in Interior Appropriations Bill

Bill rejects Trump administration's devastating proposed cuts to Indian programs

Increases funding for Interior's Indian Affairs Programs and Indian Health Service

WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. Senator Tom Udall, vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, released the following statement on the Appropriations Committee's passage of the Fiscal Year 2019 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, which includes important funding for Indian Country programs that Udall fought to include:

“This bill demonstrates the Senate's commitment to better fulfilling our federal trust and treaty responsibilities to Indian Country. We worked together in a bipartisan way to reject the devastating cuts proposed by the Trump administration to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Education, and Indian Health Services – cuts that would have decreased access to health care, education, and public safety resources in tribal communities.

“I am proud to have worked with Indian Country to champion the funding priorities that are critical to the health and economic well-being of Native communities. Working with Tribes and across the political aisle, I fought to secure major funding increases above the president’s requested level for Indian programs at the Department of Interior and above the president’s requested level for the Indian Health Service. The bill also includes \$10 million in new funding for a pilot tribal opioid treatment and prevention grant program at IHS and strategic investments in Indian education programs that will support Native language immersion and school construction improvements.

“As this bill and other Appropriations measures are considered, I am committed to working together to adequately fund the federal agencies and programs that provide Indian Country the vital services and protections needed to uphold our federal trust responsibilities.”

Indian Country Highlights in Udall’s Bill:

- **Indian Health Service (IHS):** The bill increases the overall budget for IHS by \$234 million above FY 2018 level (\$348 million more than the Trump Administration’s request) for a total funding level for the IHS of \$5.772 billion.

Opioids and Substance Abuse. The bill includes \$10 million in new funding for a tribal substance abuse treatment and prevention pilot program at IHS based on the successful Special Diabetes Program for Indians model. These funds will complement efforts to increase tribal opioid response funding throughout the full Appropriations process first begun in the FY2018 Omnibus. The bill also maintains \$2 million for funding critical social detox programs that serve native populations, like the Gallup Detox Center in New Mexico.

Health Professions Workforce. The bill increases funding for staffing needs at IHS facilities by \$115 million and provides an increase of \$195,000 to expand the Indians Into Medicine Grant Program (INMED) to an additional university site. INMED, which provides grants to universities that provide support to American Indian and Alaska Native students pursuing health care-related careers, currently operates at the University of Wisconsin, the University of Arizona, and the University of North Dakota.

Preventative Health Programs. The bill provides \$174.7 million for preventative health programs at IHS, 96.2% above the Administration's request. It rejects the president's request to defund health education and community health representative programs at IHS and continues funding for these vital programs at the FY2018 enacted levels.

Accreditation Emergency. The bill provides \$58 million for IHS to assist health care facilities that are experiencing challenges meeting CMS Conditions of Participation and/or maintaining accreditation. CMS accreditation allows IHS facilities to bill and collect reimbursements for services provided to Medicaid and Medicare enrollees, which accounts for approximately 88% of IHS's third party revenues. CMS identified issues at several IHS facilities in the Great Plains Service Area in 2015 and, more recently, found Conditions of Participation deficiencies at the Gallup Indian Medical Center in the IHS Navajo Service Area and the Crow-Northern Cheyenne Hospital in the IHS Billings Service Area.

- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE): The bill increases the overall budget for BIA/BIE by \$11.4 million over

FY2018 levels (\$661 million over the Trump Administration's request) for a total of \$3.075 billion.

Education Infrastructure. The bill includes \$238 million for BIE school construction and replacement activities, 227% above the Administration's request. This funding will help address the priority list of replacement schools, which includes three BIE schools in New Mexico.

Native Language Immersion. The bill continues to provide \$2 million for Native language immersion grants.

Tribal Colleges and Universities. The bill provides \$141.65 million for post-secondary programs at BIE, 53% above the President's request. This funding level will continue the full forward funding for all tribal colleges and universities first achieved through passage of the FY2018 Omnibus.

- Contract Support Costs: The bill increases contract support cost funding at IHS to \$822.2 million and at BIA to \$247 million, ensuring both accounts are fully funded and the federal government can continue to meet its contractual obligations to tribal governments.

- Indian Arts and Crafts Act Enforcement: The bill provides \$2 million in additional funding for enforcement of federal laws prohibiting the trafficking of counterfeit Native American art in New Mexico and across the country. Udall held an Oversight Field Hearing in Santa Fe on this topic in July 2017.