

NCAI Annual Conference Update: NATIVE VOTE 2008 Roll-out

Join us for the roll out of Native Vote 2008 at NCAI's annual conference in Denver, CO!!!

All Presidential candidates have been invited to come address Tribal leaders during general assembly sessions.

It's election time again! Not only is it a Presidential year, but every member of the House of Representatives is up for re-election! Tribal leaders please join us to build on the successes we saw in 2004 and 2006!

Since 2004, the Tribes have decided to combine our resources and increase our national presence to run the national NATIVE VOTE campaign. The NATIVE VOTE Campaign is a national non-partisan effort to mobilize Native voters and let elected officials feel the impact of the Native voice.

With our increased political participation, Native people have become an increasingly powerful voting block. In 2000, the Indian vote was credited with defeating Senator Slade Gorton in Washington State. In 2002, the Indian vote helped retain a Senate seat for Senator Johnson in South Dakota, who won by just over 500 votes, and the Arizona gubernatorial seat for Janet Napolitano. The Native Vote was also credited with helping keep Representative Heather Wilson in office in New Mexico.

ANNUAL MEETING NATIVE VOTE HIGHLIGHTS:

- 1. All Presidential candidates have been invited to speak**
- 2. Intensive Get-Out-The-Vote training (Pre-Meeting on Sunday November 11)**
- 3. Exclusive meeting for State Native Vote and each Tribe's designated Native Vote coordinator**

The Native Vote structure will include the appointment of a state-wide Native Vote coordinator (and Election Protection coordinator) for each state, and a Native Vote coordinator (and Election Protection coordinator) for each tribe or Native community. NCAI will help provide resources, training, experience, expertise and materials.

EACH TRIBE WE NEED YOU TO:

- 1. Designate a Native Vote Coordinator for your Tribe.**
- 2. Designate a Native Vote Election Protection Coordinator for your Tribe. *(Can be a tribal attorney or the Native Vote Coordinator can serve as both)***
- 3. Send Tribal Coordinators to the Native Vote Meeting and Get-Out-The-Vote/Election Protection Training at the NCAI Annual Convention.**

Get-Out-The-Vote. The State and individual Tribal Native Vote coordinators work on getting Native voters registered to vote, educating them about all elections and candidates, and ensuring they make it to the polls on November 2008.

Election Protection. The Election Protection portion of the Native Vote program works on the legal aspects of the election, protecting our rights to vote, providing voter information, and monitoring the polls on Election Day. An example of one of the Election Protection projects is ensuring that all states accept Tribal ID's as a valid form of identification.

If you have any questions about Native Vote, please contact the national Native Vote Coordinator Peggy Flanagan at pflanagan@ncai.org or contact the NCAI office at 202-466-7767.

Historically American Indian and Alaskan Natives have not participated in the voting process due to a sense of disenfranchisement by the local, state and federal government, remoteness of Indian reservations, language barriers, lack of information on the candidates and issues as well as the voting process itself.

However, in recent years, Native voters have begun to flex their muscle at the polls and have rocked the vote in key states like Washington,

The NCAI's Native Vote 2008 Program mission is to create a national infrastructure and network for empowering the Native Vote throughout the United States. The program has outlined several goals and objectives in meeting its mission:

1. **National Native Vote Coalition** – building partnerships with tribal, regional and national organizations to execute a comprehensive national strategy;
2. **Native Voter Engagement Schools** – providing tribal communities with the education, tools, resources and materials to engage and mobilize the Native vote;
3. **Voter Registration and National Native American Voter File** – developing voter registration field plans for tribal communities and creating a national database of Native American voters in key regions of the country;
4. **Native Vote Election Protection Project** – ensuring the fairness of voting laws, protecting the Native vote on election day, and serving as advocates for the Native voter.
5. **National Native Vote Media Campaign** – communicating the Native Vote message to local, regional, national, native and non-native media to engage the Native vote and educate the general public.

We believe that increasing civic participation among American Indian/Alaskan Native citizens and communities through the **NCAI Native Vote 2008** campaign is consistent with The Arca Foundation's principles of social equity and justice. Further, the Native Vote program is both strategic and innovative and clearly can assist in organizing and engaging our AI/AN citizens in their efforts to impact public policy by exercising the right to vote and be counted.