

REN-19-033: Support for the Department of Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory Committee Act
Sponsor: NCAI's Veterans Committee

Summary:

- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) should be able to provide medical attention and other services American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) veterans need, yet too often AI/AN veterans report difficulty accessing the benefits they have earned through their military service.
- A Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory Committee (VATAC) would provide vital opportunities for collaboration, communication, and coordination between the VA and tribal nations.
- Resolution REN-19-033 calls upon Congress to pass the Department of Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory Committee Act of 2019 or similar legislation.

Issue:

Per capita, AI/ANs serve in the Armed Forces at a higher rate than any other group of Americans. Increased engagement with AI/AN veterans, tribal leaders, tribal organizations, and Tribal Veterans Representatives/Tribal Veterans Service Officers (TVRs/TVSOs), would help improve access to VA medical and other services. A Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory Committee (VATAC) would provide vital opportunities for collaboration, communication, and coordination between the VA and tribal nations.

The Department of Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory Committee Act, introduced in the Senate as S. 524 and in the House as H.R. 2791 would create a VATAC. A VATAC would ensure officials at the VA understand and work to address the unique issues affecting AI/AN veterans in tribal communities.

S. 524 was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs where it awaits further action. H.R. 2791 was referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs where it awaits further action.

Action:

Resolution REN-19-033 calls upon Congress to pass the Department of Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory Committee Act of 2019 or similar legislation.

For additional information, please contact Jacob Schellinger at jschellinger@ncai.org or Nicholas Courtney at ncourtney@ncai.org.

Resolution Action Plan: REN-19-033

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Action Plan:

- 30 Days:
 - Contact resolution sponsor to coordinate requested assistance.
 - Assess opportunities for cross-coordination with other tribal nations, organizations, and representatives.
- 60 Days:
 - Draft materials for NCAI Impact Days.
 - Produce advocacy materials for Hill staff, congressional members, and congressional committees.
 - Schedule Hill visits to follow-up on support letter.
 - Prepare activities update for NCAI Annual Convention.
- 90 Days:
 - Meet with VA regarding support for a VATAC.
 - Provide a template statement of support for interested tribal nations and organizations.
- 120 Days:
 - Continue Hill visits and track discussions, hearings, and Hill activity pertaining to VATAC legislation.