

PRESS RELEASE: House Subcommittee Passes the Health Care Access for Urban Native Veterans Act

Category: News

written by Meredith Raimondi | September 19, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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H.R. 4153 will move to the House Committee on Natural Resources.

September 19, 2019 (Washington, DC) – On Thursday, September 19, 2019, the House Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States held a Legislative Hearing on **[H.R. 4153](#)** (Rep. Ro Khanna), “*Health Care Access for Urban Native Veterans Act*” in 1324 Longworth. NCUIH Board Vice President Sonya Tetnowski (Makah) testified before the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee approved the bill by voice vote. It has now been referred to the Committee on Natural Resources.

Expert witness **[testimony](#)** was provided by Sonya Tetnowski (Makah), Chief Executive Officer of the Indian Health Center of Santa Clara Valley in California, Vice President of the National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH), President of the California Consortium for Urban Indian Health (CCUIH).

“Serving our urban Native Veterans is not a partisan issue – it is an obligation of the United States government to our veterans and American Indians and Alaska Natives. We are glad to see Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle come together to take action to help Native veterans in urban areas receive greater access to health care. Thank you to Chairman Ruben Gallego and Ranking Member Paul Cook for holding a hearing and bringing NCUIH as an expert witness. We look forward to seeing the full Committee take up this legislation soon,” said **NCUIH Executive Director Francys Crevier**.

Representative Ro Khanna and Senator Tom Udall, Vice-Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, introduced the *Health Care Access for Urban Native Veterans Act*, a bill to improve health care access for Native American Veterans by providing Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) coverage for care that Native American Veterans receive at urban Indian health centers. This legislation would include “urban Indian organizations” in the statute requiring the VA to reimburse Indian Health Service (IHS) and Tribal health facilities for services they provide to native veterans. According to the **[VA](#)**, 61% of Native American veterans do not reside in rural areas.

VA-IHS MOU Background

- View NCUIH one-pager on **[VA-IHS Memorandum of Understanding](#)**.

Bill Background

- [NCUIH Press Release on SCIP Hearing](#)
- [Udall, Khanna Press Release](#)
- [NCUIH Press Release on Introduction](#)
- [AP Story: Bill would expand health care options for Native veterans](#)
- [House bill](#) (H.R. 4153) and [Senate bill](#) (S. 2365)

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About the National Council of Urban Indian Health

The National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) is the national organization devoted to the support and development of quality, accessible, and culturally-competent health services for American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) living in urban settings. NCUIH envisions a nation where comprehensive, culturally competent personal and public health services are available.