

PRESS RELEASE: Senate Passes Package with Health Care Access for Urban Native Veterans Act at a Critical Time

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Health Care Access for Urban Native Veterans Act was also included in the House passed HEROES Act.

Washington, DC (June 4, 2020) – Today, the Senate passed [S. 886](#), the Indian Water Rights Settlement Extension Act with a substitute amendment offered by Senators Tom Udall, Jerry Moran and Mitt Romney. The four-bill package included [S. 2365](#), the Health Care Access for Urban Native Veterans Act of 2019 which allows the Indian Health Service and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to enter into agreements for the sharing of medical facilities and services with urban Indian organizations.

“In the middle of pandemic that is ravaging Native communities, urban Indian veterans are being left behind by the United States government. Now more than ever, Native veterans need access to life-saving health care. We are grateful for the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs including Chairman Hoeven and Ranking Member Udall for recognizing the urgency of pushing this legislation across the finish line,” said Francys Crevier, Executive Director.

Current Status

The House of Representatives companion bill (H.R. 4153) was ordered to be reported favorably by the Committee on Natural Resources on March 11, 2020. It was also included in the recent HEROES Act passed by the House on May 15, 2020.

Background on S.886

[S. 886](#), the Indian Water Rights Settlement Extension Act, as amended, includes:

- [S. 2365](#), the Health Care Access for Urban Native Veterans Act of 2019 allows the Indian Health Service within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and the U.S. Department of Defense to enter into agreements for the sharing of medical facilities and services with urban Indian organizations;
- [S. 279](#), the Tribal School Federal Insurance Parity Act
- [S. 1875](#), the Aamodt Litigation Settlement Completion Act of 2019
- [S. 1207](#), the Navajo-Utah Water Rights Settlement Act

Background on the Health Care Access for Urban Native Veterans Act

Last year, the National Congress of American Indians passed a [resolution](#) calling on Congress to “enact legislation ensuring the provision of health care to American Indian and Alaska Native veterans living in urban centers.” This important urban Indian health bill also has widespread endorsements by NCUIH’s valued partners across Indian Country along with valuable veteran organizations, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, and VoteVets.

- [HEROES Act](#)
- [Health Care Access for Urban Native Veterans Act Passes out of the House Subcommittee on Indigenous Peoples](#) (March 11, 2020)
- [NCUIH Testifies before Congress on “Native Veterans’ Access to Healthcare”](#)
- [House Subcommittee Reviews the Health Care Access for Urban Native Veterans Act](#)
- [NCUIH Press Release on SCIP Legislative 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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The National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) is the national non-profit organization devoted to the support and development of quality, accessible, and culturally-competent health and public health services for American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) living in urban areas. NCUIH is the only national representative of the 41 Title V Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) under the Indian Health Service (IHS) in the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA). NCUIH strives to improve the health of the over 70% of the AI/AN population that lives in urban areas, supported by quality, accessible health care centers.