

NCUIH Executive Director to Testify at Hearing on COVID-19 in Indian Country: The Impact of Federal Broken Promises on Native Americans

Category: News

written by NCUIH | July 16, 2020

The hearing on the “Impact of Federal Broken Promises on Native Americans” will be livestreamed on Friday at 10 AM ET.

WASHINGTON, DC (July 17, 2020) – On Friday, July 17 at 10:00AM ET, NCUIH Executive Director Francys Crevier will testify before of the United States Commission on Civil Rights regarding COVID-19 and its impact on American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/ANs). The Commission will hear testimony from experts, including Executive Director Crevier, on how Federal Broken Promises with regard to COVID-19 have impacted AI/AN healthcare, infrastructure, access to water, and broadband access. The briefing will be streamed [here](#).

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“I am honored to join this esteemed panel today. As the *Broken Promises Report* found, the failure of the government to address the wellbeing of Indian Country for the past two centuries has created a system where we are bound to fail – and that has proven no different during this pandemic. It is imperative to officially recognize *systemic racism* as the central factor of health inequities – NOT race. Our country is reeling from the recent killings of George Floyd and countless others at the hands of police, reckoning with the legacy of racial injustice that their deaths have laid bare, while simultaneously confronting the unequal impact of COVID-19 on people of color. This moment in time is both dangerous and full of great promise,” said Francys Crevier, Executive Director.

In 2018, the Commission issued the [Broken Promises: Continuing Federal Funding Shortfall for Native Americans](#) report, which addressed the inadequacy of federal funding for Native American programs despite the United States’ trust responsibility to promote tribal self government, support the general well being of Native American people, tribes and villages, and to protect their land and resources.

Agenda

Friday, July 17, 2020 | 10:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. EDT

- Introductory Remarks: 10:00 a.m. – 10:10 a.m. EDT
 - [Catherine E. Lhamon](#), Chair, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
- Panel: 10:10 a.m. – 11:40 a.m. EDT
 - Geoffrey Blackwell, Chief Strategy Officer, AMERIND Risk Management Corporation
 - Chief William Smith, Chairman, National Indian Health Board
 - Chief Lynn Malerba, Secretary, USET Sovereignty Protection Fund
 - Jonathan Nez, President, Navajo Nation
 - Fawn Sharp, President, National Congress of American Indians
 - Francys Crevier, Executive Director, National Council of Urban Indian Health
- Closing Remarks: 11:40 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. EDT
 - Catherine E. Lhamon, Chair, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

[All Testimony](#)

Call for Comments

The U.S. The Commission on Civil Rights is requesting comments related to COVID-19 and the Broken Promises Report. Comments can be submitted until Friday, July 24, 2020 to BrokenPromises@usccr.gov or OCRE/Public Comments, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1331 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 1150, Washington, DC 20425. The Commission seeks comments on the following questions:

- Broken Promises found that Native Americans experience distinct health disparities as compared to other Americans which are compounded by Native American healthcare programs being chronically underfunded. How has the outbreak of COVID-19 impacted these health disparities?
- Broken Promises found that there is a severe lack of affordable housing and adequate physical infrastructure in Indian Country. Due to a lack of federal investment in affordable housing and infrastructure such as roads, water, sewer, and electricity, Native Americans often find themselves living in overcrowded housing without basic utilities and infrastructure. What have been the consequences of these disparities in housing conditions and access to infrastructure during the outbreak of COVID-19?
- Broken Promises found that telecommunications infrastructure, especially wireless and broadband internet services, is often inaccessible to many Native Americans in Indian Country. These services are necessary to keep the community connected to telehealth services, remote education, economic development, and public safety. Has this lack of telecommunications created additional barriers for Native Americans in coping with and reacting to the pandemic?
- Have the congressional responses to the pandemic – especially the passage of the CARES Act and other stimulus packages – done enough to help Native people with the challenges posed by COVID-19?
- Has the Executive Branch’s responses to the pandemic – including its statutory interpretation and administrative implementation of laws passed by Congress – done enough to help Native peoples cope with the challenges passed by Congress?
- What recommendations should the Commission make to Congress and the federal government to ensure that Native American communities can address the coronavirus pandemic?