

NCUIH Bills on FTCA for UIOs Advance Out of House and Senate Committees

Category: Policy Blog

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On July 29, H.R. 6535 passed the House Natural Resources Committee. “Urban Indian organizations like the ones that serve my constituents in Phoenix are already working off shoestring budgets and shouldn’t have to sacrifice patient care to shell out millions for liability coverage,” said Rep. Ruben Gallego, who introduced H.R. 6535. The bill has also been referred to the House Energy and Commerce and Judiciary Committees where it awaits further action.

On July 29, the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs advanced their companion bill S. 3650 with an amendment to extend FTCA to Native Hawaiians. The link to the hearing can be found [here](#). The bill awaits further action for consideration before the full Senate, however, due to a full calendar including COVID-19 relief funding and FY21 Appropriations, passage looks unlikely.

On July 22, Robyn Sunday-Allen, NCUIH Vice President and Chief Executive Officer of the Oklahoma City Indian Clinic, testified in front of the House Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States. Ms. Allen testified in support of H.R. 6535, the Coverage for Urban Indian Health Providers Act. H.R. 6535 would extend Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) coverage to urban Indian organizations (UIOs). Passage of H.R. 6535 would ensure that UIOs achieve parity with the rest of the IHS/tribal health providers/urban Indian organizations system (I/T/U system). Currently, UIOs are the only part of the I/T/U system that do not receive FTCA coverage. This Act, if passed, would save UIOs up to \$250,000 a year on medical malpractice insurance-money that could be used to hire additional providers, provide additional programs, and to respond to COVID-19 and future public health emergencies.