

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

## AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBES WILL BE SILENCED UNDER THE LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT

**HON. GEORGE MILLER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, August 7, 1995

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I am appalled at the message that the Republican Congress is sending to all of the American Indian and Alaska Native tribes of this country. It is saying that not only do we regard you as just another set of interest or lobbying groups, but we don't want to hear from you either.

First, the bill, H.R. 2127, treats Indian tribes like any other special interest or lobbying group. Mr. Istook has said, "It's only groups which ask for Federal handouts that are covered." Is this really how the Republican Congress views Indian tribes? Because the bill language, while it specifically exempts State or local governments, makes American Indian tribal governments fully subject to its speech-chilling provisions. Indian tribes are not special interest groups, or lobbyists—they are sovereign nations. And they are not asking for handouts.

Second, the bill would prohibit Indian tribes and tribal advocates from using any Federal funds to participate in a wide range of activities, including attempts to "influence legislation or agency action," participating "in any judicial litigation or proceeding," even as an amicus curiae, or lending any support to individual or organization that spent more than 15 percent of its expenditures on political advocacy in the previous year. In addition, the bill gags tribes by defining "influence" to include any communications with any Member or employee of a legislative body or agency, or with any Government official or employee who may participate in the formulation of legislation or agency action.

Tribes or tribal organizations that engaged in substantial political activity during any of the past 5 years, starting in fiscal year 1996, will lose all of their Federal funding. It is as simple as that. The threshold is 5 percent of the tribe's nongrant funds; in other words, 5 percent of the difference between the tribe's total expenditures and the amount of its Federal funding. Furthermore, any tribe or tribal orga-

nization that receives Federal funding will be required to prove by clear and convincing evidence that it has complied with all of the provisions of the bill.

How on Earth does this Congress expect Indian tribes—who depend upon Congress, the Executive, and the courts for protection, and who count upon the Federal Government to uphold its trust responsibility to them—to have any role at all in democratic process? Under this ridiculous scheme, Indian tribes and tribal organizations would be left without any say or recourse in the development of laws, the formulation of agency actions, or the decision-making of courts—unless they are named parties in a case.

For instance, tribes could not consult with the House or the Senate on matters such as the Interior budget, welfare reform, gaming, education, or self-governance. Tribes could not work with the Bureau of Indian Affairs or with the Indian Health Service to improve education, health care, to protect their resources, or otherwise safeguard their rights. Finally, the bill would discourage or prevent tribes from submitting amicus briefs on Indian cases before the Supreme Court.

If this bill had been the law, then few if any of the gains that tribes have made in Congress or the courts in the past 30 years would have occurred. We would not have a Self-Determination Act or a Self-Governance Program. We would not have an American Indian Religious Freedom Act or an Indian Child Welfare Act. There would not be a Native American Rights Fund or an Indian health board in existence.

Let's not kid ourselves. The Republican Members of this Congress knew exactly what they were going when they chose not to exempt American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments from this bill—they were trying to silence the voice of this Nation's first peoples. There simply is no excuse for this at all.

## BETHEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH: A CENTURY OF CARING CONGREGATIONS

**HON. JAMES A. BARCIA**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, August 7, 1995

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, August 13 will mark the 100th anniversary of the Bethel Unit-

ed Methodist Church of Akron, MI. This event provides another opportunity for the celebration of congregation and community that has been the hallmark of this place of faith.

I say the celebration of congregation and community because that is precisely how Bethel Church started. From a group of neighbors who met to sing Christian hymns under the leadership of William Parker and became known as the "Lend A Hand Society." With the services of a Methodist minister, Mr. and Mrs. Monroe Highley, Mr. and Mrs. Philander Shaver, Mr. and Mrs. James Irish, two Sherman brothers, and Miss Bessie Fairbanks were baptized, becoming the charter members of Bethel Church.

With the support, donations, and labor of the congregation, Bethel Church was dedicated on Sunday, August 15, 1895. Over the years it operated in different fashions, sharing a minister with the Akron Methodist Church in Saginaw, and then in 1932 becoming part of a three-point charge with Akron and Fairgrove for 4 years, then returning to its affiliation with Akron. A minister was shared with Akron and Unionville in 1969. And finally in 1972 the Detroit conference aligned Bethel Church with the Sutton-Sunshine United Methodist Church in the Port Huron district.

The building itself received many modifications over the years, again from the contributions and labors of its congregation, including some most memorable carpentry work done by Gerald Dunham, a 50-year member of the church. Today, with its 33 members, Bethel United Methodist Church remains as viable and reverent as ever. These members continue to look out for the best for their community and their neighbors. In fact, Carson and Loris Dunham joined a group of lay people that went to Guatemala earlier this year to help build a home in Guatemala City, again showing how love and devotion can manifest themselves in wonderfully simple but life-impacting ways.

As Bethel United Methodist Church looks past its centennial to its activities for its second 100 years, it welcomes its new pastor, the Rev. Don Gotham, as he replaces the interim pastor, the Rev. Douglas Lefler. Mr. Speaker, when consistency and faith can be most important guides for our lives, I believe it is very appropriate to honor those institutions and individuals who have shown us the way by their

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