



National  
Congress of  
American  
Indians

# NCAI News

Legislative Update - February 9, 2000  
(Broadcast #230)



**Indian Affairs Committee Releases Hearing Schedule** - The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs has released the following hearing schedule for the second session of the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress. All hearings will be held in Room 485 Russell Senate Building at 9:30 am.

- ▶ **Indian Programs Budget Hearing** - February 23, 2000  
Fiscal 2001 budget request for Indian programs
- ▶ **BIA Management Revisions** - March 1, 2000  
Oversight hearing regarding the National Association of Public Administrator's report on BIA management revisions.
- ▶ **Choctaw Indian Land** - March 29, 2000  
Hearing on S. 1967, a bill to make technical correction to the status of lands held in trust for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.
- ▶ **Indian Funding Assessment** - April 5, 2000  
Hearing on Tribal Priority Allocations and S. 612, a bill to provide that every agency conduct an Indian needs assessments every five years.
- ▶ **Federal Tribal Recognition** - April 9, 2000  
Hearing on S. 611, legislation that would change the federal recognition process.

Questions regarding the witness list for these hearings should be addressed to SCIA at (202) 224-2251.

**Electronic Funds Transfers Available for Federal Benefits** - In April 1996, the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 was signed into law. This legislation requires the use of electronic funds transfers (EFT) for most federal benefit payments (Social Security, Veterans, etc.). Even though this legislation requires payments to be made electronically, people who would encounter a hardship receiving electronic payments due to location, disability, or language can still receive their payments by check, as they always have. If no hardship would be encountered, federal benefit recipients can choose to receive their benefits by direct deposit into their existing checking/ savings account or by electronic funds transfer. For people who do not have a checking/savings account, a new low-cost account is available to federal benefit recipients allowing recipients to receive their benefits electronically into these accounts. Banking institutions across the country are

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making these accounts available, including Indian owned banking institutions.

To assist benefit recipients, the Department of Treasury is sponsoring the EFT Campaign which offers free resources to help recipients make sound decisions as to how they receive their monthly benefit payments. The campaign also offers financial literacy training for the more than \$7 million federal benefit recipients. A community education guide and training services are available free-of-charge to interested organization. For more information please contact Beverly Lancaster-Hyde at (202) 842-3600 or BLHyde@hagerssharp.com.

**Corrections** - The House Resource Committee briefing on the President's FY 2001 budget request scheduled for tomorrow, February 10<sup>th</sup> at 3:00, has changed rooms. The briefing will now be held in Room H-137 of the U.S. Capitol.

The NCAI Tax meeting that was announced for tomorrow February 11 will actually take place on Friday, February 11 at 10:00.

For further information, contact NCAI at (202) 466-7767.

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