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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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June 17, 2016

Kathy Greenlee
Administration for Community Living
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 C St SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Administrator Greenlee:

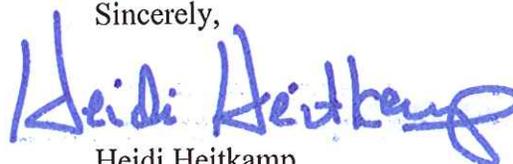
I write today to express my strong support for the National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative (NIEJI) and their application for funding through the Administration for Community Living (ACL)'s Elder Justice Innovation Grant (HHS-2016-ACL-AOA-EJIG-0168).

Elder abuse in our Native American communities remains an overwhelmingly overlooked tragedy, resulting in injury, financial decimation, and psychological trauma. Since its founding, the NIEJI provides research, education, and training for the identification and prevention of elder abuse. The initiative has established a resource center on elder abuse, increasing accessibility to existing literature and tribal codes and developing response systems for tribes, care providers, law enforcement and other stakeholders.

The Elder Justice Innovation Grant will facilitate both the data collection about elder abuse and distribution of culturally based training modules being developed by NIEJI for professionals about recognizing and intervening in elder abuse situations in Indian Country. For example, understanding the cultural use of terms such as "disrespect" to describe elder abuse and "bothering" to describe sexual abuse is important to identify when elders need help. Data collection on elder abuse illuminates the extent of the problem and the specific needs of tribes to most effectively address the issue. With this data, the training of personnel handle reports of these violations can then be modified accordingly.

The work of the National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative is valuable in assuring the health of Native communities throughout our state. The initiative depends on opportunities such as this one, and it is my hope that you will give their Elder Justice Innovation grant application every consideration. Please feel contact my office if I can provide any additional information about my support of this application.

Sincerely,



Heidi Heitkamp
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