



## SUPPORT FOR THE NATIVE ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACT OF 2014

February 2014

On February 6, 2014, Senators Mazie Hirono (D-HI) and Jerry Moran (R-KS) introduced the bipartisan bill, S. 1998: The Native Adult Education and Literacy Act of 2014 to help address the dearth of adult basic education and GED program services for Native adults, without increasing federal spending.

**BACKGROUND:** In fiscal year 1996, all federal funding targeted to Tribal and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) adult education, literacy, and GED preparation programs was eliminated. Thousands of reservation-based American Indians were left without access to these vitally needed services, which for many were the first step to productive employment and self-sufficiency. Despite operating on shoestring budgets, with little or no funding from state administered federally financed adult basic education grant programs, TCUs have continued to offer adult basic education programs; yet, their efforts cannot begin to meet the demand. A higher percentage of American Indian students drop out of high school than any other group in the country creating a tremendous need for GED preparation and other basic skills enhancement.

### **BILL SUMMARY:**

- The Native Adult Education and Literacy Act does not increase spending, authorization levels, or create a new program. It simply reserves 2.3 percent of the funds appropriated annually for carrying out the Adult Education State Grant portion of Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (Adult Education) for competitive grants made directly to TCUs and Native Hawaiian Education Organizations (NHEOs).
- The 2.3 percent reservation is based on the latest-available U.S. Census estimate of the eligible adult population that is American Indian, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian. Census data is based on adults age 16-60, without a high school degree or equivalent, and not enrolled in school.
- Minimum three year grants would only be awarded to TCUs and NHEOs with a proven record of success, and that demonstrate a viable multi-year strategy for improving education success for Native adults.
- The bill clarifies that TCUs and NHEOs are also eligible providers for state sub-grants.

In addition to AIHEC, the bill is supported by the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and the National Indian Education Association (NIEA).

For additional questions and to co-sponsor this important piece of legislation, designed to help address the overwhelming need for adult basic education and literacy programs for Native adults, please contact:

Jonathan Elkin  
Office of Senator Mazie Hirono  
(202) 224-6361

Nathan Heiman  
Office of Senator Jerry Moran  
(202) 224-6521