



OSAGE NATION CONGRESS  
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MEMBER OF CONGRESS  
ELI POTTS  
918.949.0354  
7/11/20

To the Osage People,

After I published a letter regarding the unnecessary closure of our Head Start facilities, Congress has been contacted by numerous constituents who share similar feelings. I responded by saying that if the *People* choose to fund Head Start, the program can be saved. You elected each of us to represent you and your views, it's time to hold Congress accountable.

The Standing Bear administration claims that in “an effort to scale back costs his administration has chosen to cut the Head Start program, among others, and invest in the WahZhaZhe Early Learning Academies and Daposka Ahnkodapi”.

While I share the belief that our early learning academies and Daposka Ahnkodapi also need investment, it is inaccurate to claim that cutting the Head Start program is a cost saving measure, especially if the plan is to invest instead in fully tribally funded operations. If these two tribally funded operations absorb students as encouraged, they will incur additional costs without a federal match, further straining an already financially strapped budget.

Head Start has been operated by the Nation for over 40 years. The Nation receives \$3.72 from the federal government for every dollar we invest in Head Start. No such match is received for investment in fully tribally funded operations. We can't afford to not operate our Head Start facilities next year. Turning away federal dollars to educate children cannot be part of the solution to the financial problems we face.

Additionally, it has come to our attention that Head Start “Policy & Regulations (Part 1303.4)” state that the tribal match requirement can be waived by Health and Human Services, and that such an offer has been extended. The Osage Nation can continue to operate the Head Start program, serving over 200 families, at no cost to the Nation. Instead, it appears this administration has chosen to turn down approximately \$1.8 Million dollars that could be put directly into the Head Start classrooms.

I have attached a signature page for a Special Session to consider the appropriation of the tribal match and authorize the Nation to submit the appropriate papers necessary to continue operating our Head Start facilities. I encourage each of you to contact your Members of Congress and convey your feelings on the topic. The window of opportunity is very limited as the application for Head Start is due in early August.

The Executive Branch was established to execute the will of the People as directed by Congress. However, it appears the reverse has occurred as the Executive Branch is now mandating which programs will be a priority of this government, without input from the Peoples Branch of government. Closing educational facilities without notifying Congress was premature and I don't believe it is the right choice in our current financial circumstance, especially since these federal dollars can be leveraged to teach our Osage language to a larger number of Osage and non-Osage students alike.

I hope the Chief's position will be reversed and I look forward to an open and honest dialogue regarding how to best navigate the financial crisis as we move forward together.

Kind Regards,

Osage Nation Congress

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