



OSAGE NATION CONGRESS
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MEMBERS OF CONGRESS
ELI POTTS ~ BILLY KEENE ~ JOHN MAKER ~ JOE TILLMAN

Joint Statement- For Immediate Release
American Rescue Plan Funds
7/2/2021 4:30PM

The Osage Nation- The People of the Osage Nation are in need of assistance.

Since the introduction of ONCA 21-52, the Chief has called a Special Session for July 8th 2021.

“The Chief has not taken any action on creating our plan to make direct assistance cash payments to our Osage Citizens. Numerous tribes across Indian Country have already begun making payments available to their citizens because of the tremendous need. I have spoken with countless Osage citizens that are severely in need of help with a variety of issues that were created by the COVID-19 pandemic” said Congressman Tillman.

He continued, “It’s unfortunate we have not seen any action on the bill from the Executive Branch. It is not the time to argue who gets credit for this appropriation to our people. The credit goes to all our elected officials and branches of government who work together to make this happen. Let’s stop wasting time and let’s help our Osage families recover from this crippling pandemic.”

ONCA 21-52 was introduced on June 11th, 2021. The legislation calls for \$46,496,000 to be appropriated for the purpose of making direct payments to the Osage people. Other Members of Congress have introduced legislation to via for a portion of federal funds given by the American Federal Government through the American Rescue Plan. The legislation is as follows:

- ONCA 21-51 (Goodfox)- \$8,100,000- Senior Housing in Hominy.
- ONCA 21-52 (Tillman/Maker/Potts)- \$46,496,000- Direct payments to the Osage People (\$2,000 each).
- ONCA 21-53 (BigHorse)- \$5,000,000- Pawhuska Village infrastructure improvements.
- ONCA 21-54 (BigHorse)- \$17,000,000- Rail Way Remediation/Outdoor Health Complex in Pawhuska.
- ONCA 21-55 (Lemon)- \$8,000,000- Senior Housing in Fairfax.
- ONCA 21-56 (Lemon)- \$5,000,000- repairs and improvements to Grayhorse Rural Water District.
- ONCA 21-58 (Revard)- \$18,000,000- Male/Female Primary Residential Facility, an adolescent male and female PRT, transitional living facility, and a counseling center with administrative and counseling offices.
- ONCA 21-59 (Pratt)- \$5,000,000- Water and Sewer infrastructure repairs and improvements to the Hominy Indian Village and Hominy Community.

Total: \$112,596,000 (proposed thus far- more is expected to be filed)
Amount received through ARPA- \$108,375,827.59

The Chief of the Osage Nation stated in his opening remarks of the 8th special session his intention of how the ARPA funds would be spent.

“The Advisory Team has cleared only a few projects and we have been moving forward on several of these and includes the Fairfax Senior Housing Project, the new men’s, women’s, and juvenile Primary Residential Treatment facilities, and the Transitional Living Center. Also approved and newly started are the design phase for the outdoor recreational park, the Hominy Senior Housing Project, and the Richard Luttrell Memorial Park Project. Other projects which fall within ARPA and the interim rules, but which have been tentatively approved include HVAC replacements with COVID compliant systems across Osage Nation properties, continued growth of the Osage Nation Broadband internet system, water and sewer improvements in the Villages of Pawhuska, Gray Horse and Hominy, Language, Culture and Museum remote learning initiatives, continuation on existing CARES projects, and administration costs for carrying out ARPA. These approved or tentatively approved projects amount to \$115 million dollars.”

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To date, all legislation filed, with the exception of direct assistance to the payments, was explicitly an initiative of the Chief as stated on May 24th, 2021.

“It’s becoming clearer with each passing day, some have very little interest in direct assistance to the People who need it most. It wasn’t included in the plan presented by the Chief and It’s the only bill so far that isn’t a regurgitation of the Chief’s agenda” said Congressman Potts.

He continued, “People need help, and these funds were given to the Osage Nation to help ALL Osage citizens. Perhaps we should think about restoring the Health Benefit Rollover funds that were taken away in the middle of a pandemic, or securing the Medigap deductible coverage for our elders, or truly diversify our economic portfolio- as these funds were given with the expressed purpose of ‘continuing to support the public health response and [to] lay the foundation for a strong and equitable economic recovery’, according to the US Treasury Department.”

Congressman Maker voiced his opinion stating, “We talk a lot about food security, yet Hominy hasn’t had a grocery store in close to four years. Our people need help, let’s get them cash now, not six months from now.”

We were hopeful that the Chief would call a special session to address the direct assistance to the people as we have heard from many constituents who are crying out for help. As of today, that has not happened.

Therefore, we wanted to take a moment and let the Osage People know, in accordance with 15 ONC § 1-103: E, we will be requesting that the proclamation be amended to include “Consideration of ONCA 21-52” which would provide direct assistance payments to the Osage People in a timely manner.

Amending the proclamation requires an affirmative vote of two-thirds of Congress, eight Members of Congress.

We strongly encourage you to call your Members of Congress and let them know how you feel.

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