National Congress of American Indians, NCAI, Travel Report/Narrative
Submitted by Belinda Bardwell
June 16th – June 21st, 2012
Held in Lincoln, Nebraska

Saturday: Arrived and checked into hotel

Sunday: 9-5 pm
Attended the *Native Woman's Task Force for Violence Against Woman*.

National Task Force, along with the NCAI Task Force, is working to inform the United States Congress to create a more inclusive resolution. NCAI Task Force has a direct link to Congress but needs the National Task Force to continue to work with NCAI.

The Senate had passed a bill and sent it over to the House (S.1925) and it was a more inclusive piece of legislation. Once in the hands of the representatives, it became H.R 4970. There are three different issues with this piece of legislation as presented by the House. 1. It doesn't allow for tribal governments to have jurisdiction over non-Natives that commit a violent act on a Native woman. 2. It also excludes the prosecution of violent crimes committed on lesbian women by their partners. 3. It leaves for no protection for immigrant woman. These are the main issues that need to be addressed over the next few weeks before this goes to a vote in the House.

The two main issues are sections 904 & 905, where we need to restore Tribal jurisdiction over non-Natives who commit low level violent crimes and give the Tribes the authority to issue orders of protection. The Senate and House needs to know that this is a real situation. As it stands now, non-Natives CAN commit violent crimes without being prosecuted by either Tribes or Federal government. This leaves a window where there is no jurisdiction over them, unless the Tribe has a cross-deputization agreement.

Many strategies were discussed in the second half of the day, on the best ways to inform our Representatives and to get the needed votes to vote down OR negotiate the issues that were discussed. The first step is for Tribal Governments to pass a resolution in opposition to HR 4970 and arm our lobbyists with that resolution. Second, is to make visual contact at the local district offices and to gather woman leaders in those offices in these coming weeks. A national rally will be taking place on June 26th in Washington, DC in order to convince Congress to change their minds towards this bill.

6-9 attended the Nations pow wow

Monday: 8:30-12:15
Registered then attended the General Assembly

President Jefferson Keel
In his morning speech, he stressed the importance of Indian country registering to vote and giving Indian communities the same access to registering as non-Native communities. Natives should be able to register at their local IHS Department. We need to vote in order to protect our sovereignty by voting for candidates that understand our tribal rights. When we are there standing united they will take the time and listen to our voices.

David Hayes, Deputy Secretary, Department of Interior
He introduced Del Laverdure, a citizen of the Crow Nation, as the acting Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs. Laverdure reported that over 170 acres of land have been put into trust over the past year, settled the Cobell vs Salazar case, working on taking the BIA out of the picture when it comes to leasing issues and have made it safer on tribal land through the Tribal Law and Order Act.

Jacqueline Johnson Pata
Executive Director's Report
She gave an update on some current legislation that needs attention: Farm Bill, HEARTH Bill, and the Transportation Bill, which will see some action within the next two weeks. Again, she mentioned the urgency in getting the Native Vote's message out there. She also was asking for donations on behalf of the Native Vote Campaign so that they can continue getting all Natives registered to vote.

Lance Morgan, CEO, Ho-Chunk, Inc.
He mentioned that creating jobs is the social component of economic diversification. Tribes have a leg ahead of other companies when it comes to starting and growing businesses. We, as Tribal Councils, should be asking our lawyers HOW to do this, not CAN we do this, that we need to be more aggressive when it comes to diversification.

Jodi Gillette, Senior Policy Advisor for Native American Affairs, White House Policy Council
The current Violence Against Woman Act is at the top of her office's agenda, as Native woman rank the highest as victims of domestic/sexual violence compared to all other ethnic groups. Much reference was made to the info that was stated above. Education and health are two very important issues as well in Indian country.

1:30 - 3:00
Leveraging the Time Beyond School to Expand Opportunities for Native Youth
Panel member gave us some interesting facts about how to find what is needed in your community in regards to after-school programming. "After-School" is defined as any and all out of school hours, before, after, and into the evening. Most juvenile crimes are committed between the hours of 3-6pm. She has found that students are 50% less likely to participate in the use of drugs when they are involved in an after-school program. The use of her data sheets, which can be found online, can be used to determine where the gaps exist in a community and when it comes to outside of school care/programming. She recommended doing some research to see what is already being offered, how to collaborate with other programs in your area, and then hold focus groups to find out what the youth are in need of and what would be interesting to the youth. This will allow for more of a partnership with your council/school board.

Brian Yazzie, Director of Native American Services, Boys and Girls Club of the Greater Scottsdale area.
The Boys and Girls Club have 202 clubs in 25 states. There are 3 types of BGC: tribally operated, a 501(c)3, and stand alone. He reiterated the importance of working together with other community stakeholders in order to fill all the aforementioned gaps. It is vital that all programs servicing the youth work together. He shared some shocking statistics of how they have been able to decrease juvenile offenses while increasing grades and reading levels through after-school programming.

Lisa Kaslon, Extension Educator for the 4H Program.

Kaslon spoke about the importance for a student to have another adult besides their parent as a positive influence in their life. She has programs that show students how to learn new skills through hands-on activities and gave a report on what her community has done in the past two years.

3:00 - 4:00
Sacred Eagle Feathers and DOJ's consultation on policy
I left the last session early to be able to get some updates concerning the policy recommendations from DOJ. Representatives from DOJ and other governmental departments were there to hear concerns from the audience regarding the formulation of the policy to regulate the Morton Policy. Again there was a request for the key players to make the effort to meet with each tribe in their area. A statement was made about wanting more clarification regarding assessment of penalties. Also raised were concerns about what constitutes as proof of a Federally Recognized tribe? More concerns were mentioned about where it leaves members of state recognized tribes.

Tuesday
9am – 12:00
General Assembly meeting
Making Clean Water a Sovereign Right
Larry Kindnesses and John T. Doyle of the Water and Wastewater Authority, Crow Environment Health Steering Committee
They reported the troubles that their reservation was having at managing their waste water and the need for more funding to resolve it. They received $20 million from partnerships with local colleges but have many jurisdictional issues because they have over 6 different classifications of land. They have a 70% unemployment rate on their reservation. The Little Big Horn River has been the focal point of their clean-up efforts. With the $20 million, they have been able to replace failing sewage systems, and maintain current system. They provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding infrastructure issues. They had to begin the project by cleaning up an old and inadequate BIA system before moving forward, and then they were able to implement an Amway mini filtration system. They further reported the next steps to continue the work through phase 3&4.

Protecting Our Social Sovereignty
Fawn Sharp, President, Quinault Nation
She reported that not only do we need to prevent drug and alcohol abuse, but we need to treat the abuse. She raised several questions: how can we make more partnerships with local colleges? How do we create our own curriculum to keep and treat our citizens by using our culture and traditions to treat that abuse? She made the introduction of the next speaker to expand on her ideas.

Edward Thomas, President, Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian tribes of Alaska
It's important to have government-to-government relations in order to have proper legislation. Alaska is a breeding ground for abuse due to a void in their law enforcement agreements between the state and federal governments. They had several issues on alcohol transport, but then they were told that they had no jurisdiction. They soon realized that the state wasn't going to enforce it either. Many social issues are created by this lack of law enforcement, which breeds more abuse and addiction on their homelands. They further addressed the need to talk about caring for those citizens that live off the reservation. Suicide among Alaskan youth is the highest in the nation. They formed a task force called *One Is Too Many*, which works to help lower this fatal statistic. The water issues in Alaska and pollution is becoming a major concern. Health and fishing is being affected. They find that they do not have a

proper sewage discharge system for the growing population. It was also stated later in the meeting from a tribal citizen from Alaska, that this past year, they have had over a million salmon smolt released and also reported that their rivers were full of salmon returning to their original waters to spawn. Many Tribal Citizens in that area go hungry because of the over commercial fishing and that many do not have any fishing rights.

1:30-4:00
Financially Savvy Citizens
First Panel topic: Best Practice, from tribal leadership Second Panel topic: Governmental programs/representatives

Native youth receive less education when it comes to financial issues as compared to other youth. The Federal Trade Commission did a study and found that Natives are at a higher risk of consumer fraud at 34%. In 2007, the Commission did study another study and found the rate had significantly dropped, showing that there is not sufficient financial education within our Native communities. We have low home owner rates as well, due to the lack of access to local capital and credit.

Tribes will receive $3.4 billion from the Cobell case. The range of $1000 to $125 thousand will be paid out. With such a big payout like this, there is a need for more financial education with these tribes. Also discussed was the need for more Native CDFIs, more Native colleges, etc. In April, the President did a proclamation to increase financial education.

Wayne Ducheneaux: spoke about making Tribal Citizens more financially educated thus creates a better citizen/employee. After the start of an employee payroll deduction program that many employees used, his department created a voluntary financial education program as a part of their job and it had a bad turn out. In 2012, they began to work on it again and went to council with their program, and through their Appropriation and Finance Committee, they were able to mandate a personal finance class for all employees, as well as the new hires. They administered a pre/post-test, which showed a 50% knowledge level, the post-test showed a huge increase in scores, with just one three-hour class. They also wanted to see if this made a difference in their payroll deduction program.

Tanya Fiddler: spoke on the topic of helping tribal members to create financial stability and more citizen owned businesses. They created a credit building loan to provide people access to funds/loans. They wanted to assist citizens who were wanting loans in order to pay-off their payday loans, which most were at 1000% interest. These are micro loans, start-up business loans which are not accessible through the local banks. They have integrated financial education within their reservation schools, and created financial matching grants for citizens. Tribal citizens have on average, 100 points lower credit score than the national average. They have been able to work with other community programs to partner in this educational movement.

Larry Lasley: trying to gear his tribe away from the dependency of gaming revenue, since it is on a downward turn, and to search for more economic diversification, they purchased an existing bank. The feasibility study showed trust accounts at high level but the fees were pretty high, which was the driving force of getting into the banking business. Many economic factors went into the decision to buy and not create a new bank. They then took over the management of their trust fund through the bank. All other entities started to bank within that bank with some interest breaks, they were able to achieve a million dollars in revenue the first year alone, Also, other banks money were kept in house. Risk was mitigated by the fact that it is highly regulated by government, taking politics out of it. Employees started to

become community trainers for the youth program. The curriculum is based on *Building First Nations* and a high school senior night to educate them on financial issues. Upon graduation, they are then able to withdraw over a half a million dollars in trust funds. Education is based on trying to eliminate that withdrawal and to start life as a financially responsible adult.

4:15-5:15
Attended the Cultural Subcommittee
Discussed the resolution for a sacred built house on national park. It passed and is going to full committee. Discussed the resolution 12-031, it passed and is going to full committee.
Discussed resolution 12-036, it passed and is going to full committee.
David Gatsby, archeologist: section 12 will cover items from museums that are no longer of interest to facility and will allows for cooperation with those tribes that hold an interest on those specific items. If cultural, there is a mechanism that kicks in that will contact the tribe the item came from. There is also an appeals process, if stake holders do not agree with decision. There are 46 million items in total. Human and funerary items are excluded from this list of items.

6:00-8:00 PM
Attended the *Native Vote Campaign/Native American Idol Sing Off* event held at the conference center

Wednesday
8:30-12:00
General Assembly Meeting
Patchek decision: Carcieri fix is becoming more and more important as this time. It was suggested that tribal leaders stand up now and meet regionally on this topic. They were asked to think about it over the next week and would be asked as to who would be willing to commit to the work. They also put out a call to the tribal attorneys in the audience to work with tribal leaders. The appeals process needs to be addressed and there needs to be much flexibility to travel on a minutes notice to Washington DC. It looks like this case will be retroactive to those that were not federally recognized in 1934.
Congressional strategy: to focus on the committees of jurisdiction. Ask congress to move quickly as elections are coming up, which could create a large number of new members that would need to be educated on this topic, thus slowing up progress. Administrative strategy was as follows: continue to process applications, 6 yrs. to file an appeal, causing frivolous filing to delay the land to trust process, early meetings in June and July for tribal leaders.

Local strategies were as follows: continue to build relationships with local government to educate. Carcieri strategies were as follows: retro attacks on trust lands raise the stakes for Carcieri, potentially raking land out of current trust, creating jurisdiction and economic concerns. There is a need to renew efforts to pass legislation to amend the definition of Indian Tribe under Reorganization Act. Define "under Federal jurisdiction" in 1934. Much discussion and comments followed at the end of this topic from all in attendance.

David Noble Special Assistant to President for Energy and Environmental: how people can become candidates on some Presidential appointments to his committees. The President challenged the committees to form appointments that would be an over-all representation of the Nation. So David is trying to find interested people for some of those appointments, there are over 5000 appointed positions. Whitehouse.gov is where a person can apply for a political appointment.

Matt Wesaw addressed the group on some NCAI constitutional changes that had been brought forward by an independent Tribal group.
The proposed amendment is to disallow non-Federally recognized tribes to be members. Many other amendments were handed out in a packet form along with the committee's recommendations, and will be the first order of business at the next Annual meeting. A total of 9 amendments will be voted on at the Annual meeting being held in Sacramento, CA at the end of October.

Each Committee began giving their reports one at a time.
General Assembly held retirement of the colors and adjournment.

My attendance at this conference was to represent the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians. I believe that our Tribe's representation at these and other National organizations is a must. Some of the topics that I believe we need to be involved with is the *Violence Against Woman Act, the Morton Policy regulations, and the Patchec/Carcieri Cases*. Although our Tribe is not directly affected, it is very important to voice our concerns and to stand unified within Indian Country to the United States. We need to be a part of all these discussions and to show our brotherhood with those tribes that do fall within the pitfalls of these proposed legislations. I continue to argue that we need to be a team player in all issues across Indian Country. I would also like to thank the Council for allowing me to attend this very important National Congress of American Indians Conference again this year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Belinda Bardwell
Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians
Tribal Council