

a living wage that allows them to raise their families and pay for basic needs such as food, transportation, and housing — things so many people take for granted.

- **Housing:** The federal government has a moral and legal responsibility to assist tribes in providing housing. Yet, Native Americans suffer from some of the worst housing conditions in the nation. Some 14 percent of all reservation homes have no electricity, and on some reservations, as many as 20 individuals are forced to live in a single-family home. Barack Obama supports increased funding for the Indian Housing Block Grant and other Indian housing programs as well as improving the effectiveness of these programs.
- **Gaming:** The Supreme Court has upheld the right of tribes, as sovereign entities, to operate gaming operations on Indian reservations. A total of 225 of the 558 federally recognized Indian tribes operate gaming facilities, creating 670,000 jobs nationwide and paying \$11 billion to the federal and state governments through taxes and other revenue. The vast majority of Indian gaming operations are small enterprises providing jobs to tribal members. Because most tribes continue to suffer from high rates of poverty and unemployment, Barack Obama believes that gaming revenues are important tribal resources for funding education, healthcare, law enforcement, and other essential government functions.
- **Energy:** Tribal nations have joined in America's quest for alternative, renewable energy. Because of their rural land bases and access to natural resources, many tribes have made great strides in economic development in the energy sector. Tribes have successful operations producing gas, solar, and wind energy. In addition to harnessing and producing energy, tribes have an interest in energy rights-of-way. Barack Obama encourages energy companies and Indian tribes to negotiate in good faith to ensure tribes receive just compensation and in furtherance of carrying sustainable energy to all communities.

Women's Health

Indians are often subject to unusually harsh conditions when it comes to women's health. A recent study by Amnesty International details the alarming rates at which Native women are subject to violence. The report states that one in three American Indian women will be raped in their lifetime and they are more than three times as likely to be raped or sexually assaulted than other women in America.

- **Reproductive Health:** In the past, IHS has been criticized for performing forced sterilizations of In-

dian women. More recently, many Native women have been pushed to receive one type of contraception instead of more suitable alternatives. Although these women often have no alternative to IHS, the program often does not provide them with adequate reproductive health care, and many women are often denied equal access to birth control and prenatal care. Barack Obama supports the reproductive health rights of American Indian women and supports ensuring that they receive equal opportunities to make healthy reproductive choices.

- **Violence against Women:** Violence in Indian country is committed at alarmingly high rates and all too often Indian women are the victims. Medical facilities are few and far between and are often not adequately prepared to deal with assault victims. Also, because of the unique jurisdictional scheme on reservations, law enforcement can be slow and difficult to come by. If the perpetrator is non-Indian, then the tribe does not have jurisdiction over the crime. This is alarming when more than 86 percent of assaults against Indian women are committed by non-Indians. State and federal law enforcement officials are often far removed from the situation and the tribes are left without the authority to protect their people. Barack Obama will re-examine the legal framework that allows such injustices and supports empowering tribes to combat violence against Native women irrespective of whether the perpetrators are Indian or non-Indian.
- **Law Enforcement:** Barack Obama also supports fully funding the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program that many tribal law enforcement agencies have come to rely upon. He also recognizes the important role tribal courts play on the reservation. Obama will continue to support additional resources to strengthen tribal courts as well as correction by statute of the jurisdictional gaps that currently inhibit tribes' ability to protect their communities.
- **Detention Centers:** There is a demonstrable need for facility improvements and expansions of detention centers in Indian Country. Barack Obama understands that federal funding of such improvements is essential to enable tribes to effectively protect their communities.

Methamphetamines

In a 2006 survey, 74 percent of tribal law enforcement officials reported methamphetamine to be the leading threat to their tribes' livelihood. The same survey reported dramatic increases in cases of domestic violence, child neglect, sex crimes, and weapons charges.

- **Combat Meth Act of 2005:** Barack Obama supported the Combat Meth Act of 2005, major parts of which became law in 2006. The act puts federal funds into the fight against methamphetamine, provides assistance to children affected by meth abuse and places restrictions on the sale of the ingredients used to make the drug.
- **Tribal empowerment:** Barack Obama believes that funding tribal police programs and tribal courts and resolving longstanding jurisdiction issues will enable tribal authorities to deal more effectively with the causes and effects of this and other crime problems on Indian land.

Veterans' Affairs

Native Americans serve in the armed forces at a higher rate than any other group in America. Native Americans have served in every war and their special place in American military history is widely recognized. The first woman to die in combat in the Iraq war was a young Native American woman. World War II's Codetalkers are the most celebrated examples of how Indians have been critical to the success of American efforts overseas. As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, Obama supports several Veteran measures, including the sheltering and rehabilitation of homeless veterans, securing veterans' benefits and easing service members' transition back into society.

Hunting and Fishing

Hunting and fishing are important to many tribes' diet, culture, and spirituality. Protecting hunting and fishing rights ensures that tribes are able to carry on those aspects of their traditional way of life

- **Fishing Rights:** The fishing rights of Indian tribes are guaranteed not only by 150-year-old treaties, but by the Supreme Court's affirmation of the Boldt decision as well. It is our shared duty to uphold these obligations and protect fisheries in such a manner that allows tribal and non-tribal fishing to continue into the future. The path to equitable fishery management is paved with good science. Barack Obama supports initiatives to improve the science and our understanding of our nation's fish stocks. Through improved science, we can better guide decisions about how to protect the health of fish stocks and, in turn, ensure a better, more secure and predictable future for our nation's fishermen.

Welcome

This information can be found at www.johnmccain.com; click on Coalitions; click on American Indians for McCain. This statement is on the home page of <http://americanindians.johnmccain.com>.

Political self-determination and economic self-sufficiency are the foundations of John McCain's American Indian policy. John McCain will work to strengthen the government-to-government relationship through consultation and respect for the unique trust relationship with the tribes that arises out of the treaties and innumerable court decisions and Acts of Congress.

John McCain has a clear record of working for the betterment of American Indian communities throughout his career. He began his work with Indian tribes shortly after he was elected to Congress. He became a member of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, and was selected by his colleagues to head the Republican Task Force on Indian Policy. In that role, he worked closely with the Committee Chairman and fellow Arizonan, Morris K. Udall. McCain and Udall became close friends and worked together on Indian legislation, both while McCain was in the House and later when he went to the Senate.

John McCain has twice proudly served as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs (1995-1997 and 2005-2007) and continues to be a member of the Committee. John McCain has been a leader in Congress by sponsoring legislation and enacting laws that help improve conditions on Indian reservations and strengthen the ability of tribal governments to provide essential programs and services.

With a 25-year record of accomplishments that address American Indian policy, we know that John McCain is the best choice in this election. We hope you will join us to help elect John McCain to be our next president!