



President Obama signs Violence Against Women Act into law, helps Tribes



Courtesy photo from the National Congress of American Indians

Diane Millich (Southern Ute, second from left) and Deborah Parker (Tulalip, third from left) join President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden, members of the administration and Congress, women's rights advocates and domestic abuse survivors for the signing of the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization on March 7.

Advocates celebrate passage of protections for all women

WASHINGTON – Native women, Tribal leaders, women's rights advocates and survivors of domestic abuse joined President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden on March 7 to celebrate the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

Members of NCAI's Executive Committee joined in celebrating the Tribal provisions of the bill enacted into law, including President Jefferson Keel; First Vice President Juana Majel Dixon, also co-chair of NCAI's Task Force on Violence Against Women; Secretary Ed Thomas; and Treasurer Ron Allen.

Terri Henry, co-chair of NCAI's Task Force on Violence Against Women, was also in attendance, as were members of Congress and the Obama administration.

Diane Millich, a member of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe in Colorado, opened the event by introducing Biden and sharing her story that has been a focus of national media attention since May 2012 and most recently in a *New York Times* article.

Deborah Parker of the Tulalip Tribe of Washington, an active and prominent voice in the VAWA advocacy efforts alongside the NCAI Task Force, also stood onstage during the signing of VAWA.

"Indian Country has some of the highest rates of domestic abuse in America. And one of the reasons is that when Native American women are abused on Tribal lands by an attacker who is not Native American, the attacker is immune from prosecution by Tribal courts. Well, as soon as I sign this bill, that ends," said Obama moments before signing the bill. "Tribal governments have an inherent right to protect their people and all women deserve the right to live free from fear. And that is what today is all about."

"Today represents a historic moment in the nation-to-nation relationships between Tribes and the federal government. Now that the Tribal provisions have been enacted and protection for all women reauthorized, justice can march forward," said Keel. "Local Tribal authorities have much work to do to ensure that our citizens are protected from these violent crimes. NCAI has already begun focusing on coordinating the implementation of VAWA. Today is a great day because it marks the beginning of justice and the end to injustice that has gone unanswered for too long."

In addition to programmatic support for Native survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, the law includes constitutionally sound Tribal jurisdiction provisions authorizing Tribal governments to

New LED lighting saves electricity and money at Tribal community center and recreation center in Siletz

From the Siletz Tribal Energy Program

Have you noticed something different about the lights at the Siletz Tribal Community Center or the Siletz Rec Center, but can't quite figure out what it is?

The Siletz Tribal Energy Program (STEP) funded the change of the indoor overhead lights to LED lights at these two locations, which was completed in October 2012. Since then, the light bill for the rec center has been less than half of what it was during the same month the year before. This has saved the Tribe \$250 in just four months.

The electricity saved in these four months is 3,588 kWh, which is equivalent to 284 gallons of gasoline not being used. If the savings continue at the same rate, it will be like taking two cars off the road each year or the total amount of electricity used in two homes over an entire year.

The community center's lights are included with the rest of the electric bill, so the savings are harder to notice. The electricity use over the past four months,

Photos by
Nataasha
Kavanaugh

New LED
lights now
shine in the
Siletz Rec
Center (top
photo) and
the Siletz
Tribal
Community
Center.



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