



UNITY announces 25 Under 25 youth leaders in Indian Country, Rilatos included in latest class

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UNITY has announced the third class of its "25 Under 25 Native Youth Leaders" national recognition program that honors American Indian and Alaska Native youth. Siletz Tribal member Savanna Rilatos is a member of this class of honorees.

The program, which launched in 2014 and is awarded every other year, recognizes and celebrates the achievements of Native youth leaders under the age of 25 who embody UNITY's core mission and exude living a balanced life developing their spiritual, mental, physical and social well-being.

"So many of our Native youth are doing amazing work in Indian Country. UNITY's 25 Under 25 program is one way of recognizing these young leaders and acknowledging the passion they have to improve their communities. There was an overwhelming amount of applications from outstanding youth leaders across the nation. We offer our congratulations to the honorees and wish all nominees the very best," said Mary Kim Titla, executive director of UNITY.

The 2018 Class of 25 Under 25 Native Youth Leaders includes:

- Katherine Carmain, 16, Rosebud Sioux, Texas
- Sapphire Carter, 24, Chippewa Cree, Montana
- Shasta Dazen, 24, White Mountain Apache Tribe, Arizona
- Nancy Deere-Turney, 23, Muscogee Creek Nation, Oklahoma
- Jay Fife, 18, Muscogee Creek Nation, Oklahoma
- Ashleigh Fixico, 21, Muscogee Creek Nation, Oklahoma
- Frederick Gipp, 24, Apache Tribe, Oklahoma
- Tristan Joe, 18, Navajo Nation, New Mexico
- Maddie Lamb, 19, Muscogee Creek Nation, Oklahoma
- Vonica LaPlante, 17, Mandan/Hidatsa/Arikara, North Dakota
- Jayden Lim, 16, Pomo, California
- Faith Long, 19, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, North Carolina
- Xavier Medina, 19, Pascua Yaqui, Arizona
- Elwood McClellan, Jr., 18, Iowa Tribe, Oklahoma
- Audri Mitchell, 19, Colorado River Indian Tribes, Arizona
- Tashoni Morales, 18, Yachi-Tokut/Te-Moak/Western Shoshone, California



File photo

Savanna Rilatos



Butler signs letter of intent to attend Southwestern Oregon Community College

Photo by Andy Taylor

Isaac Butler (center) puts on a hat from Southwestern Oregon Community College to indicate the college he has chosen to attend on a wrestling scholarship. He signed his letter of intent at an all-school assembly at Siletz Valley Early College Academy on May 9. Isaac was joined by (l to r) Bob Tom (his grandfather), Lee Butler (his father), Reggie Butler Jr. (his uncle) and Sam Tupou, school superintendent/principal. See page 10 for additional photos.

Merkley, Wyden, Walden, DeFazio announce passage of legislation to return Tribal control over private lands

WASHINGTON – Oregon's U.S. Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden, with Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR 2) and Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR 4) announced May 16 that Congress has passed the Oregon Tribal Economic Development Act, which allows certain Tribes in Oregon, including the Siletz Tribe, to lease and sell property that they own.

"It's absurd that Tribes were forced to get congressional approval before they could develop property that they privately own," Merkley said. "Several Oregon Tribes asked me for help on this issue as they encountered barriers to development projects and I could not be more pleased to see it heading to the president's desk to be signed into law. This legislation is critically important to Tribal sovereignty and economic growth, allowing Tribes to take ownership over development opportunities on their reservations."

"Tribes in Oregon should have the authority to set their own economic course and an essential piece of that decision-making must be the flexibility to develop their privately owned property," Wyden said. "I am gratified that common sense and fairness have prevailed so that Tribes throughout our state can choose to pursue development opportunities that create jobs and revenues."

"Passage of this measure will help improve the lives of Oregon Tribal members by giving them new opportunities to manage their lands without unnecessary

federal red tape," Walden said. "I look forward to President Trump signing this bipartisan measure into law."

"Throughout our nation's history, our terrible federal Indian policy has decimated Tribes not only through displacement, but through economic discrimination as well," DeFazio said. "In Southwest Oregon, the INIA made it impossible for the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians in my district to fully function as a sovereign nation, acting as a roadblock to the Tribe's economic development. I'm proud to help right a historic wrong by exempting the Coos from its unnecessary restrictions."

Currently, under the Indian Non-Intercourse Act, Tribes are required to get federal approval to purchase, sell, convey, warrant or lease lands they own privately. This makes it difficult, expensive and impractical for Tribes to seize economic development opportunities when they must get approval from Congress every time they want to obtain a commercial mortgage for their non-trust property.

The Oregon Tribal Economic Development Act allows certain Tribes in Oregon to forego that additional approval on privately held lands. The bill does not affect property that is held in trust by the United States, which means the federal government holds the legal title to the land in trust on behalf of a Tribe and the Tribal government manages the land for the communal benefit of the Tribe.

Merkley and Wyden led the act in the U.S. Senate, and Walden and DeFazio led a companion bill in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The Tribes in Oregon impacted by this bill include the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians; Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde; Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians; Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs; and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians.

"We give great thanks to Sen. Merkley, Sen. Wyden, Rep. DeFazio and Rep. Walden for their hard work to secure the passage of S 1285, the Oregon Tribal Economic Development Act," said Chief Warren Brainard of the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians. "This bill advances the potential for economic development for Tribes in Oregon by strengthening our self-sufficiency and self-determination and ensuring the equality of Tribes to buy and sell fee lands like other Americans. It is a great day for Tribes in Oregon."

"Economic development and investment is vital to improving the lives of our Tribal members," said Cheryle Kennedy, chair of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. "This bill removes a significant barrier to the Tribe leasing and developing fee land. The Tribe is grateful for Sen. Merkley's leadership on this issue and his role in passing the legislation."

The next step for the legislation is to be signed into law by the president.