



# ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS

## NEWS ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

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PROTECTING SOVEREIGNTY ◦ PRESERVING CULTURE  
EDUCATING YOUTH ◦ BUILDING CAPACITY

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### THE ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS: DEFENDERS OF NATIVE LANDS, 1922 TO THE PRESENT

By Jessica Lee, Cultural Sovereignty Fellow\*

Established in 1922, the Association on American Indian Affairs has a long history defending Native land rights and sacred sites of Native American peoples; in fact, that is how AAI came into being.

In the summer of 1922, after Senator Holm O. Bursum of New Mexico introduced a bill that threatened an estimated 60,000 acres of aboriginal lands and water rights of Pueblo peoples, the founders of AAI began the first successful Native American rights campaign of the twentieth century: the battle to stop the Bursum Bill.

One of the main provisions of the Bursum Bill dictated that non-native settlers would receive title to any Pueblo lands they had squatted on before 1902. Another section of the Bill proposed transferring jurisdiction of Pueblo water rights to state courts as well as giving these courts the right to settle any land disputes. Shifting power and control of Indian affairs and land rights to the state, contrary to the U.S. Constitution and an historic body of U.S. Supreme Court case law, could have had disastrous consequences for Tribes and Native peoples.



*John Collier and All Pueblo Council.  
Photo by Cathy Porter-Maynard.*

The Association's founders were among the most vociferous opponents of the Bursum Bill. One of the original founders of AAI, John Collier, who rejected federal policies of Indian assimilation, contended that if the proposed land legislation was not favorable to the Pueblos, there was "not much hope for the spiritual and esthetic future of the planet." Another AAI leader, Herbert Spinden, an anthropologist, called the Bursum Bill "totally iniquitous" because it would take land belonging to the Pueblo peoples since time immemorial and give it to the non-native trespassers. ▶

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Collier and a prominent member of the Pueblo of Isleta, Pablo Abeita, spent September 1922 traveling to different Pueblos in New Mexico, informing them of the possible consequences and outcomes of the Bursum Bill. On November 5, 1922, a meeting was called at the Pueblo of Santo Domingo to strategize a unified Pueblo response to the Bill. Charlie Kie of the Pueblo of Laguna chaired this meeting at which Collier and 121 delegates representing 20 Pueblos in New Mexico gathered to devise a strategy to defeat the Bill. It was decided at this meeting that a smaller delegation of Pueblo representatives would travel to Washington, D.C. with Collier to lobby against the Bill. While Collier and the Pueblo delegates were successfully rallying support in D.C. – even swaying Wall Street bankers to lobby Congress following the performance of a traditional dance outside the New York Stock Exchange, other leadership of AAIA worked diligently to protest the Bill by mailing out informational pamphlets to the public, building a large network of allies, testifying before Congress and advising the All Pueblo Council (today known as the All Pueblo Council of Governors) wherever possible.

While some thought the Pueblos should be more willing to compromise with Congress (including a few of the founders of AAIA), Collier took a rigid stance against the Bill and demanded the return of Pueblo lands and water rights. The All Pueblo Council supported Collier and permitted him to speak on their behalf. The Bursum Bill died. In its place was the Pueblo Lands Act of June 1924, which involved all parties. The Act established a three-member lands board with the authority to determine which claimants should be given title to disputed tracts. Collier and the All Pueblo Council agreed to this legislation because it granted the Pueblos the right to challenge the board's decisions in court and it assured compensation for any and all land lost.

The Pueblo land rights issues propelled AAIA's growth and advocacy efforts shifting federal policy away from assimilationist policies of the past towards Tribal self-determination and sovereignty. Continuing into the 1960's, AAIA was involved



*All Pueblo Council in front of the White House after defeating the Bursum Bill in 1922  
(Palace of Governors Photo Archive)*

in a legal case that was instrumental in protecting Alaskan Native land from misappropriation by the State of Alaska and the Alaska Statehood Act. Alaska had become a state in 1959 and its Statehood Act granted it the right to select 103 million acres from the "public" domain. Although the Act stipulated that Native lands were exempt from selection, the State swiftly moved to expropriate lands clearly used and occupied by Alaskan Native villages and to claim royalties from federal oil and gas leases from those Native lands. The Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management began to process the state's selections without informing affected villages and ignored claims that Alaskan Natives already had on file. Attorneys for AAIA and the village of Nenana argued this landmark case, which resulted in the U.S. Court of Appeals reaffirming that traditional Native use and occupancy created legal rights to the disputed lands and that such Native lands are exempt from expropriation by the Statehood Act.

Another success story is the protection of the Bighorn Medicine Wheel and Medicine Mountain. Medicine Mountain is sacred for many Tribes. In 1990, AAIA helped create the Medicine Wheel Coalition which is a coalition of Plains Tribes who have a traditional history of using the Medicine Wheel and Medicine Mountain for spiritual purposes. With the assistance of AAIA, in 1996 the Coalition negotiated and

signed a Historic Preservation Plan (HPP) with the U.S. Forest Service as well as state and local government agencies, which was designed to ensure that the entire region surrounding Medicine Wheel and Medicine Mountain would be managed in a manner that protects its integrity as a sacred site.

In 1999, Wyoming Sawmills, a local logging company, filed a lawsuit seeking to overturn the HPP, claiming it violated the First Amendment of the Constitution and several other federal laws. In this effort, Wyoming Sawmills was represented by the Mountain States Legal Foundation, a right-wing legal organization consistently opposed to government efforts to protect Native American sacred sites. AAIA intervened and provided legal counsel to the Medicine Wheel Coalition for this case. The Coalition and the Forest Service ultimately prevailed, with the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals dismissing the lawsuit in 2004; a petition to the Supreme Court for further review was denied. Following that ruling, AAIA worked with the Coalition and other consulting parties to ensure that the HPP was fully implemented, including incorporation of the HPP into a new Forest Service plan. Finally, in June 2011, AAIA and the Medicine Wheel Coalition obtained permanent protection of the Medicine Wheel and Medicine Mountain when the entire Mountain was designated as a National Historic Landmark for its traditional and cultural significance.

One of the most prominent founders of AAIA, John Collier, once wrote that **“controversy is better than surrender.”** AAIA continues its work in the spirit of this idea put forth by Collier nearly a century ago. We do not surrender or compromise our beliefs at the threat of controversy. These aforementioned stories are just a few instances of the Association’s dedication to its goal of protecting Native lands and sacred sites.

Unfortunately, Native lands and Tribal sovereignty continue to be attacked by adverse interests as well as the federal government. In 2017, Indian Country saw the sacred grounds of Bears Ears National Monument in Utah reduced to 16 percent its original size and in 2018 the removal of

the Mashpee Wampanoag’s land out of trust. The Association is constantly speaking out against these abuses and working to reverse these attacks on Indian Country. On November 19, 2018, AAIA filed a joint “Friends of the Court” brief with the National Congress of American Indians to support the extensive legal opposition to the administration’s attempt to diminish most of the Bears Ears National Monument. As long as these threats to Tribal sovereignty, sacred lands, and religious freedom continue, AAIA will remain vigilant in fighting for Indian Country.

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#### \*Jessica Lee, Cultural Sovereignty Fellow.

Jessica is Wichita and Kickapoo born and raised in Oklahoma. In May 2018, she earned her bachelor’s degree in History at the University of Central Oklahoma and was honored at her Tribe’s Higher Education Banquet as “Wichita College Student of the Year.” During college, Jessica saved up enough money to take a year off of school and obtain a work visa to work in Australia to learn more about indigenous cultures in Australia and New Zealand. After graduating, Jessica joined the Association in mid-July 2018 to assist in developing its written history and work on Indian child welfare and juvenile justice issues. Jessica is in the process of applying to law schools to study Indigenous Peoples Law and Policy.



The Association on American Indian Affairs held its Fourth Annual Repatriation Conference on November 13-15, 2018 at the Forest County Potawatomi Hotel & Casino in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Sponsored by the Forest County Band of Potawatomi Indians, the event convened 160 guests representing Tribal Nations, museums, federal agencies and foreign institutions from countries including Austria, Canada, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and Switzerland.

Titled "Advocating for Our Ancestors," the 2018 Repatriation Conference was designed to share and develop best practices, strategies, and practical tools for the successful repatriation of Indigenous Ancestors, their burial belongings, and sacred and cultural patrimony. Each day, the Conference provided a diverse set of panels relevant to the day's theme, with 16 different panels total. On Day 1, the theme was "Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Implementation on the Ground," which included a panel of federal agencies and museums that discussed NAGPRA compliance and enforcement. Day 2's "Developing Strategies for Repatriation Where NAGPRA Does Not Apply" provided a special workshop session where conference participants presented active repatriation cases to a panel of experts who provided tailored counsel on navigating law and policy to repatriate cultural patrimony. And, on the final day, the theme "Advancing Advocacy for International Repatriation" produced a panel of international museums from Germany, Italy, Sweden, and Switzerland that discussed their respective Native American collections and engaged in dialogue with Tribal practitioners.



*Board President of AAIA, Frank Ettawageshik, and Forest County Potawatomi Chairman Ned Daniels, Jr. receive blankets.*



*Alvin Windy Boy, Sr. CEO, iResponse*

The Conference participants also assisted with the development of a Press Statement about how buyers and collectors should focus investment on contemporary Native artists and to stop investing in Tribal cultural and sacred patrimony and burial belongings. You can see this multi-organizational press statement at <https://www.indian-affairs.org/private-collections-and-sales.html>.

The outcomes from the Conference will feed AAIA programs for 2019 and guide the topics for the 2019 Conference. Specifically, AAIA will be utilizing the video recordings from the Conference's panel presentations, as well as substantive toolkits that were developed during the Conference, and present the material as training and technical assistance on a webpage devoted to its Repatriation efforts. As AAIA turns its sights to the Fifth Annual Repatriation Conference in November 2019, which will be held at the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation's WeKoPa Resort outside of Phoenix, Arizona, the Association is excited to build off the many successes of this year's conference and tackle new subject matters as well.

"The Association has been advocating for Indian Country for almost one hundred years," said AAIA President Frank Ettawageshik (Little Traverse Band of Odawa Indians). "Our repatriation work



*What Tribes Need from the Federal Government to Best Protect Indigenous Cultural Heritage Panel*

is of paramount importance, as we see cultural patrimony not as objects, but as living Ancestors who guide our direction as Indigenous peoples today. Claiming our Ancestors and ensuring their safe return is an assertion of our Tribal sovereignty and an investment in cultural preservation."

AAIA has previously reported to you on the Safeguard Tribal Objects of Patrimony (STOP) Act, S. 1400, and its progress through Congress. The STOP Act sets forward two main goals: (1) facilitating the repatriation of Tribal cultural heritage items that were obtained in violation of an already-existing federal statute and then exported to another country; and (2) encouraging cooperation within the federal government to enable repatriation as well as voluntary return of Tribal cultural heritage items. The STOP Act is not intended to affect Native artisans' items made for commercial purposes. AAIA has gone on the record in support of the bill on several occasions, submitting oral and written comments over the last two years and working with Tribes and other experts.

Since our last report, a number of developments have taken place. On October 19, 2018, Representative Steve Pearce (R-NM) introduced H.R. 7075, which is similar to the STOP Act. The Pearce Bill made revisions based on its discussions with a small organization that represents Tribal antiquities dealers. In that sense, it does not fully represent AAIA's progressive view. Nevertheless, the Bill remains before two House Committees, but it is not likely to move before the end of the current Congress.

Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Senator Tom Udall (D-NM), champions of the STOP Act, have considered introducing an amendment to improve the STOP Act's effectiveness, as we have previously reported to you. The amendment is derived from feedback received from various experts since the STOP Act's introduction, and AAIA has been an important source of this expertise. Portions of this feedback were generated during the drafting of H.R. 7075, and for that reason some of the language from H.R. 7075 may find its way into the STOP Act.

Senator Heinrich and Senator Udall are committed to passage of the STOP Act in the new Congress. It is likely that the Senators will re-introduce the STOP Act early next year and that it will encompass changes aimed at increasing the STOP Act's effectiveness. We will keep you updated on the STOP Act's progress and continue to seek your feedback on the language of the bill.

*Thank you Hobbs, Strauss, Dean & Walker, LLP, and Associate Attorney Katie Klass for keeping AAIA informed of these legislative activities.*

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### Focus on Eldred D. Lesansee, Cultural Sovereignty Fellow

Eldred D. Lesansee is from the Pueblo communities of Jemez, Zuni, and Hopi. In 2014, Eldred earned his Bachelor's degree in International Relations at Stanford University and graduated from Sciences Po in Paris, France with a Master's degree in International Development as a Fulbright Scholar in June 2018. Passionate about protecting and revitalizing Native American cultures, languages, and traditions, especially in the Southwest, Eldred joined the Association on American Indian Affairs as a Cultural Sovereignty Fellow in September 2018. His efforts at AAIA support the Repatriation and Sacred Site Protection program. Eldred has assisted the organization in developing strategy on how to approach auction houses who sell Native American cultural heritage, including surveying auction house catalogues, alerting both affected Tribes when auctions are scheduled, contacting auction houses and drafting public responses to the sale of Native American cultural heritage. Eldred supported the planning of the Fourth Annual Repatriation Conference and co-facilitated a panel on relationship-building between Tribes and federal agencies to better protect Native American cultural heritage, domestically and abroad. Eldred also supported the development of the panel that brought together foreign museum curators to discuss their collections with Tribal leadership. AAIA is so grateful to have a young leader like Eldred for AAIA's one-year Cultural Sovereignty Fellowship!



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100 Year Cultural Sovereignty Campaign

To better serve the changing needs of Indian Country into the next 100 years, AAIA must continue to build its own capacity. In order to tackle this goal, we created our 100 Year Cultural Sovereignty Campaign. There are two ways to participate in the Campaign:

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Commit to AAIA monthly in whatever amount you are comfortable with for the next 100 months. This will help AAIA build a sustainable source of funding that will support our efforts.

100 Year Legacy Council

AAIA is looking for 10 Special Cultural Sovereignty Advocates to help us build a \$10 million endowment to serve Indian Country for the next 100 years. Each member of the 100 Year Legacy Council will give \$250,000 every year for the next four years (or \$1 million total) to build the sustainable endowment. These 10 donors will forever be enshrined as our 100 Year Legacy Council. Please contact us at general.aaia@indian-affairs.org to become a part of our Legacy.

Become a Member, Volunteer and Provide In-Kind Services

For \$35 per year, you can become a member of AAIA and be a part of its governance and receive newsletter and other alerts. In addition, AAIA has volunteer opportunities for public affairs, legal, accounting, and project specific expertise. Be a part of advocacy in Indian Country by donating your time and effort to changing lives on the ground, preserving culture, and supporting strong Tribal governments.

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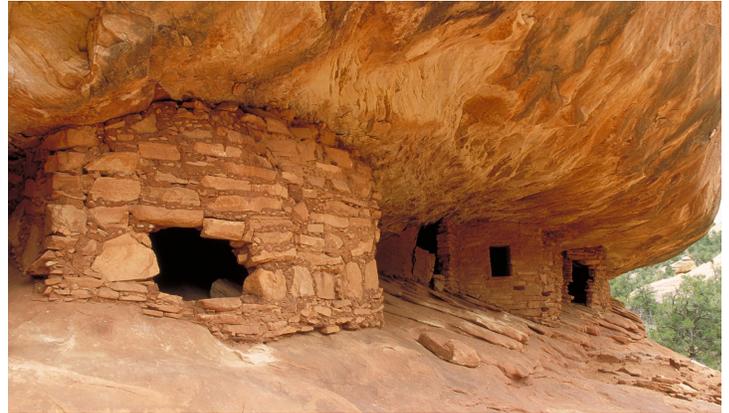
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By Sam Hirsch and Leonard Powell\*

A year ago, five Tribal Nations (and a number of non-Tribal organizations) sued the Trump Administration in federal court in Washington, D.C., challenging the President's attempt to eliminate most of Bears Ears National Monument. The Hopi Tribe, the Navajo Nation, the Ute Indian Tribe, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and the Zuni Tribe claimed that President Trump's action violated the Antiquities Act of 1906, which prior Presidents have invoked to protect many of the most historically and culturally significant Tribal landmarks, structures, and objects in the United States. The Antiquities Act, the Tribal Nations argued, empowers Presidents to *create* national monuments—as President Obama did when he established Bears Ears—but not to *reduce* their size or *abolish* them, as President Trump tried to do. The Tribal Nations also claimed that President Trump's action violated the Administrative Procedure Act, the Federal Constitution's Property Clause, and separation-of-powers principles.

AAIA has now joined the court fight to save Bears Ears. In partnership with the National Congress of American Indians, on November 19<sup>th</sup> AAIA submitted an *amicus* ("friend of the court") brief opposing the government's recent motion to dismiss the Tribal Nations' case. The brief highlights four issues. First, the brief describes Bears Ears' cultural, spiritual, and archaeological importance—particularly for Tribes including many Pueblos of New Mexico that are not plaintiffs and thus otherwise would lack a voice in the proceeding. Second, the brief explains why President Trump's decision revoking the Monument erodes progress the federal government has made toward supporting Tribal self-government by establishing a framework for the Tribal management of lands containing Tribal cultural heritage. Third, the brief explains how the Monument's revocation, if upheld, would undermine the continued viability of all other national monuments intended to protect historic tribal landmarks. Fourth and finally, the brief examines the role that other laws play in protecting Tribal landmarks, structures, and objects; and in doing so, the brief illustrates that such laws cannot replace the protections that flow from designation as a national monument.



As of this writing, the government has opposed AAIA's motion to file its *amicus* brief. This unusual move by the Department of Justice is unfortunate. But AAIA is optimistic that the court will recognize the critical importance of the unique perspective the brief adds to the case and therefore will grant AAIA's motion. In the meantime, the government is scheduled to file a reply brief supporting its motion to dismiss by December 13<sup>th</sup>. The presiding judge might decide to order oral argument, and she is expected to ultimately resolve the current motion to dismiss sometime in 2019. At that point an appeal (if the motion is granted) or summary-judgment briefing (if the motion is denied) is likely to follow.

The stakes remain high, as there is risk that, while this case is pending, Bears Ears' sacred sites and objects will suffer irreparable damage. Indeed, it is possible that such damage has already occurred. Mining, in particular, poses a substantial threat: President Trump's action left over 85% of Bears Ears open to prospecting for hard-rock minerals without any federal oversight. But if the five Tribal Nations and other plaintiffs win in the end, the court is likely to declare President Trump's action unlawful and require his administration to recognize the monument boundaries established by President Obama. For its part, AAIA hopes that Bears Ears is fully restored, and soon.

\*Hirsch and Powell are attorneys at Jenner & Block LLP who represent AAIA *pro bono* in this litigation. They can be reached at [shirsch@jenner.com](mailto:shirsch@jenner.com).

**AAIA WORKS TO SUPPORT ICWA IN COURT, BEFORE CONGRESS, AND IN THE PUBLIC**

By Sam Daughety\*

AAIA is continuing its efforts to preserve the Indian Child Welfare Act, which currently faces its greatest threat in the forty years since its passage in 1978. The States of Texas, Louisiana, and Indiana, joined by individual non-Indian plaintiffs, have challenged the constitutionality of the Act in federal court, arguing that protections for Indian children and families constitute illegal racial discrimination, and that the ICWA's federally-mandated state court standards illegally "commandeer" state courts and state agencies to carry out a federal scheme. This summer, AAIA, joined by other Native organizations and one hundred and twenty three Tribes, filed an *amicus curiae* ("friend of the court") brief in the case at the district court level.

Despite these efforts, the district court judge sided with the plaintiffs, declaring the Act unconstitutional in an unprecedented decision. Thankfully, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals has stayed the lower court decision, preventing it from going into effect during the appeal. AAIA expects to continue its participation with Native partners and Tribes at the appellate level, where it will seek to educate the court on the horrific and well-documented abuses of Native children and families that led to ICWA's passage and the continuing importance of the Act today. A decision from the Fifth Circuit is expected in the coming year. AAIA is being assisted by lawyers at the Native American Rights Fund and the Dentons law firm.

AAIA also continues its outreach and education efforts on Indian child welfare issues. In November, Executive Director and Choctaw Nation citizen Shannon Keller O'Loughlin participated on a panel of legal and policy experts at the annual Washington, D.C. Federal Bar Association Indian Law Conference to discuss these recent court challenges. Shannon highlighted AAIA's past studies supporting the passage of the Act, its ongoing work to implement ICWA, and how these efforts play a crucial role in pushing back against efforts to undermine protections for Indian children, families, and Tribes. Meanwhile, AAIA also is helping to advance a congressional resolution commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Act, affirming the views of national child welfare organizations that ICWA is the "gold standard" for child welfare practice, and calling upon federal agencies to work together with Tribes and States to uphold and implement that Act. As of this writing, nearly fifty members of the United States House and Senate on both sides of the aisle have agreed to co-sponsor the resolution.

*\*Sam Daughety is counsel at Dentons US LLP and assists AAIA on the Brakeen v. Zinke case. Sam may be reached at [samuel.daughety@dentons.com](mailto:samuel.daughety@dentons.com).*

**AAIA Recognizes PATHKEEPERS FOR INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE Summer Camp!** Located in Culpeper, Virginia, Pathkeepers for Indigenous Knowledge 6th Annual Native Youth Leadership Camp worked with Native youth summer campers to "Be Yourself, Free Your Thoughts, Live Native." Thirty-four Native American youths, ages eleven to eighteen, represented twenty-three Tribes from across Indian Country. The Camp provides Native youth with opportunities to experience traditional and cultural activities, identify healthy and sustainable food and life choices, and understand how environmental and conservation sciences are reflected in Native cultural knowledge and traditional uses of environmental resources. The camp also prioritizes explorations of campers' personal interests, educational goals, and Tribal identity.

Some activities included: identifying plants and herbs, preparing traditional foods, and making traditional medicines like salves, teas and poultices; experiencing Native physical fitness activities like lacrosse and Native horsemanship; exploring artistic expression; building educational goals through a "College Day" event; and taking a field trip to Washington, D.C. to meet with federal agencies, Congressional staff, White House officials, and visit museums and other significant sites related to Indian Affairs.



Impacts and effects of historic trauma are present today and can be seen in a myriad of social, economic, and educational statistics, such as higher rates of depression, higher incidents of risky behaviors, and suicide being the second leading cause of death for Native youth between 15 to 24 years. Because Tribal populations are composed of young people with nearly half under the age of 24, the vitality of Native youth is inextricably connected to the strength of Native Nations. The Association, understanding the importance of empowering and protecting Native youth for today and our next generations, has worked actively on issues affecting Native youth throughout its 96 years.



One such issue that the Association finds particularly troubling is the disproportionate rates of Native youth in the juvenile justice system. The rate of incarceration for Native youth is higher than any other group and is likely linked to institutional racism, as well as historic intergenerational trauma. Furthermore, studies have shown that incarceration for youth offenders does not reduce youth recidivism and often grooms youth to commit further crime. In fact, juvenile incarceration provides no overall benefit to public safety, wastes vast sums of taxpayer dollars, and exposes youth to alarming levels of violence and abuse. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to ensure Native youth, especially those who commit non-violent offenses, are not carelessly tossed into detention centers, but rather, that Tribes are involved to provide culturally appropriate services. Traditional and culturally relevant alternatives to detention help heal Native youth, whereas jails and prisons harm them.

AAIA has recently released its report “Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative: Examining How JDAI Sites Interact with Native Youth and Tribes.” The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, or JDAI, has become one of the nation’s most effective, influential, and widespread juvenile justice system reform initiatives, present in 39 states and the District of Columbia with 197 JDAI sites currently representing 300 jurisdictions.

The report identified two significant findings. First, the majority of JDAI sites who responded to the survey had not developed a reliable process for identifying and collecting data on Native youth. Many of the sites left it to the youth to self-identify or relied on the unilateral determination of a juvenile justice case worker or police officer to identify a youth as Native American. This is problematic as many Native youth do not want to alert their Tribal communities because of feelings of embarrassment or shame. Moreover, a caseworker may misunderstand that Native Americans vary widely in appearance and may mistake a Native youth for Hispanic, black or white.

Second, the study revealed that the majority of JDAI sites surveyed were not reaching out to families or Tribal communities to collect information on a youth’s status as a citizen or member of a Tribe, were not providing notice to the Tribe of the youth’s offenses, nor determining whether there were culturally appropriate services available to Native youth. Tribes are sovereign nations, often with their own culturally appropriate services, including alternatives to detention.

Moreover, the Indian Child Welfare Act applies when a youth is put in placement for a status offense (an offense that is illegal because it was committed by a youth, such as underage drinking). Though there are a few sites with emerging best practices, generally JDAI sites have not developed consistent and culturally appropriate protocols to collect robust data and connect Native youth to culturally appropriate alternatives to detention — two critical issues of JDAI. The report provides recommendations for JDAI sites including developing protocols to identify Native youth by working with families and Tribes, building relationships with Tribal juvenile justice staff and obtaining training about Tribes in their regions. You can find the report on our website at <https://www.indian-affairs.org/juvenile-justice.html>.

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### The Association on American Indian Affairs 96th Annual Membership Meeting and Event

The Association held its 96th Annual Membership Meeting on November 15, 2018 at the Forest County Potawatomi Hotel & Casino in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The Annual Membership Meeting is where members have the opportunity to vote for the Board of Directors for AAIA, adopt Bylaws and support other governance activities of the organization. The meeting also provides an opportunity to hear about the programs and financials of the organization, and to enjoy wonderful entertainment from Native artists.

This year, the membership voted in a new Board member, Joseph Daniels, Sr., who is a citizen of the Forest County Potawatomi Tribe and is serving on the Tribe's Council as Treasurer. The membership also voted to extend the terms of Frank Ettawageshik (Odawa), who serves as the Board's President; Alfred Ketzler (Athabascan), who has been involved with AAIA for more than 40 years; John Echohawk (Pawnee), who also serves as the Executive Director of NARF; Dee Ann DeRoin (Ioway), a medical doctor; Bradford Keeler (Cherokee); and Jonathan Perry (Wampanoag), a Native artist.

Brian Frejo (Pawnee/Seminole) and Nataanii Means (Oglala Lakota/Navajo/Omaha) provided beautiful traditional singing and drumming, as well as hip-hop, poetry and storytelling for the free event.



Nataanii Means performs



Brian Frejo sings an Honor Song for AAIA's Board of Directors



Shannon Keller O'Loughlin, Executive Director, talks about moving AAIA into its next century.