



ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS

Protecting Sovereignty ◦ Preserving Culture
Educating Youth ◦ Building Capacity
SINCE 1922

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TRUMP REMOVES NATIVE AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEE FROM CULTURAL PROPERTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 11, 2019, 2:30 p.m. E.S.T. – President Trump has expressed his intent to remove the first and only Native American representation on the Cultural Property Advisory Committee in the U.S. State Department and appoint Stefan C. Passatino in her place. Mr. Passatino works as outside legal counsel for the Trump administration, formulating its responses to Congress' various investigations. The House of Representatives Oversight Committee has been investigating Mr. Passatino for ethical misconduct. He has no known experience in protecting cultural heritage resources.

Mr. Passatino will replace Shannon Keller O'Loughlin, citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and Executive Director and Attorney for the Association on American Indian Affairs. Ms. O'Loughlin was the first and only Native American ever appointed to the Cultural Property Advisory Committee within the U.S. State Department. Ms. O'Loughlin has deep expertise regarding U.S. law that protects cultural heritage and has served on the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Review Committee as well. Other members of the Committee have been serving over many administrations and yet continue to serve. Ms. O'Loughlin, appointed by President Barack Obama in 2016, has been the only Committee member replaced during the Trump administration.

The Cultural Property Advisory Committee is a federal advisory committee administered by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs, which advises the President on appropriate U.S. action in response to requests from foreign governments for assistance in protecting their cultural heritage. This Committee was established by the 1983 Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act, which implements Article 9 of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. In the committee's 33-year existence, never had a Native American been appointed to this position.

The U.S. State Department's Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs has a significant budget that is used to protect other countries' cultural heritage, but little to nothing towards protecting Native American cultural heritage from being exported out of the U.S. or to help repatriate cultural heritage items back to Tribal Nations. The inclusion of a Native American perspective on the Committee is imperative to make sure that agreements with other countries are truly mutual and advocate to protect Native American cultural heritage. Additionally, Native American representation assures that the U.S. does not overstep its boundaries by asking other countries to do more than what the U.S. is willing to do to protect cultural heritage in the U.S.

The Association on American Indian Affairs is a 501(c)(3) organization and the oldest non-profit serving Indian Country protecting sovereignty, preserving culture, educating youth and building capacity. The Association was formed in 1922 to change the destructive path of federal policy from assimilation, termination and allotment, to sovereignty, self-determination and self-sufficiency. Throughout its 97-year history, the Association has provided national advocacy on watershed issues that support sovereignty and culture, while working at a grassroots level with Tribes to support the implementation of programs that affect real lives on the ground.