

Update #58

The views, opinions and commentary in this update are those of Congressman Red Corn. They are his alone, and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the Osage Nation Congress.

Why can't the funding for the Health Benefit be approved?

I've been asked about the recent hang-up with funding for the Health Benefit. The only objections I've heard refer to a memo issued by the Health and Wellness Advisory Board that contains a list of suggestions for the smaller details of the plan.

The reason I don't share concerns about funding the plan immediately is that the bill's language provides flexibility for the Executive Branch in the implementation of the plan. This was done purposefully so that if the plan needed to be tweaked, it could be. ONCA 07-46, Part 4 (C) says:

“The health benefit plan document shall substantially conform to the format and provisions of Attachment A.”

The inclusion of the word “substantially” allows the Executive Branch to seek advice from the Health and Wellness Advisory Board and make small changes in the plan after it has passed and been funded.

If you have an opportunity to speak to members of Congress, you may wish to encourage them to pass the funding bill (ONCA 07-47) without delay. The Appropriations Committee is only one changed vote (‘no’ to ‘yes’) away from forwarding the funding bill to the floor of Congress.

A petition to discharge the funding bill is circulating this morning. “Discharge” is a word we use to describe an action where a bill is forced out of committee and sent to the floor. By rule, it takes eight signatures to discharge ONCA 07-47 (the funding bill) and get it on the floor so it can move forward. We'll see how it goes.

Election bill passes

After almost a year and a half, the Election bill (ONCA 08-27) passed by an 8-4 margin. The passage of this legislation will allow about 18 months to set up an Election Board and get regulations approved by Congress prior to the 2010 election cycle.

As always, your comments and thoughts are welcome. Please feel free to contact me at any time to share your thoughts on the issues facing the Osage Nation.

With respect,

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