



NEWS RELEASE

June 24, 2009

Contact: Wendy Helgemo 202-789-1754
whelgemo@naihc.net

SEN. JOHNSON INTRODUCES TRIBAL DRUG ELIMINATION BILL

Washington, DC – Yesterday Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD) introduced the “Public and Indian Housing Crime and Drug Elimination Program Reauthorization Act of 2009” to provide much needed resources for activities to combat crime and drugs in Native American communities.

The “Public and Indian Housing Crime and Drug Elimination Program Reauthorization Act of 2009” (PIHDEP) will reauthorize drug elimination programs under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Originally part of the *Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988*, program funds can be used for security personnel, youth sports activities, employing crime investigators, training and equipping voluntary tenant patrols and funding resident organizations to develop security and drug-abuse prevention programs. The program has not been funded since 2001.

“This bill would allow local communities to develop programs to better fight drug use and drug-related crime,” said Johnson. “I’m proud to introduce this bill and will continue to fight to provide critical funding for public and Indian housing in South Dakota and across the country.”

Sen. Johnson’s bill will reauthorize and fund the PIHDEP until 2014 and requires HUD to conduct an effectiveness study. The study will outline promising strategies that reduce and prevent violent and drug related crime in public and Indian low-income housing.

“As a tribal housing champion, Sen. Johnson has once again shown his commitment to improving the quality of life in Indian Country,” said Marty Shuravloff, Chairman of the National American Indian Housing Council. “Tribal housing and community development professionals see firsthand the ravages of drug addiction and crime on Native American communities.”

Sen. Johnson’s work on the bill was announced to tribal leaders at the Great Plains Native Housing Forum being held in Rapid City, South Dakota this week.

“Tribes benefited greatly from this program from the start,” noted Paul Iron Cloud, CEO of Oglala Sioux (Lakota) Housing on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. “This bill will restore the tools necessary to protect and improve our communities from the scourge of drugs like methamphetamine.”

Sen. Johnson, reelected to his third term in 2008, represents the State of South Dakota. He serves on the Committees on Appropriations, Indian Affairs, Energy and Natural Resources and Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs. There are nine Federally-recognized tribes in South Dakota.

###

NAIHC is the only national organization that promotes, supports, and encourages Indian tribes and tribally-designated housing entities (TDHEs) in their efforts to provide culturally-relevant, decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable housing for American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians. NAIHC has a membership of 271 tribes and TDHEs, representing nearly 463 Indian tribes, and provides its members with training, technical assistance, research, communications and advocacy.