

PROUDLY REPRESENTING YOU AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS

Aaron A. Payment, MPA
Tribal Chairperson
 "Representing All Members Everywhere"

Ahneen, BooZo, Negee:

A great deal has happened this last month. While some of the reports to the Members in our paper are peppered with accusations and misinformation, I chose to focus on propelling our Tribe forward. I have been on a world-wind tour of activity to do just that. First, let me recognize Cathy Abramson for being a stalwart partner in representing our Tribe at the National level. Her leadership in Indian health issues has been expert and invaluable.

While some on our Council refuse to recognize our contributions,



we have had opportunities and have acted to protect or increase our federal funding. A perfect example is the invitation I received by the US Senate Indian Affairs Committee on the issue of Contract Support Costs for the Indian Health Service. This issue surrounds an amount our Tribe contends the Federal government

owes us for our self-governance administration of our health care system. We estimate that we were shorted no less than \$4 million. Taking the time to advocate this issue has a potential real and significant value. Five tribal leaders from across the country were invited to testify. I was honored and did my best to represent our people.

The key message is that these funds are owed to us for land cessations in the 1836 and 1855 treaties. At the newspaper deadline, I am being considered for a national appointment to make recommendations to the Indian Health Service to resolving this matter. If selected, I will travel to D.C. in January to try to find solutions rather than unduly

capping the U.S. government's liability to us. While this issue is contentious, I believe I can aid in finding a diplomatic solution. I have to admit, I find these opportunities pretty cool. **Please see the links below for**

LINKS TO SENATE TESTIMONY & WHITE HOUSE TRIBAL NATIONS SUMMIT ADDRESS:

<http://www.indian.senate.gov/hearing/oversight-hearing-contract-support-costs-and-sequestration-fiscal-crisis-indian-country>

At Time Index ~ 1:51:16 & 2:13

<http://new.livestream.com/usinterior/WHtribal/videos/34741330>

At Time Index ~ 1:01

WHITE HOUSE TRIBAL NATIONS SUMMIT ~ Nov. 13, 2013

In October, I was nominated and elected to serve as the Vice President for the National Congress of American Indians for the Mid-West regional. NCAI has been around since 1944 and is the premiere National Native organization to advocate for tribes and uphold our treaty rights. We have an embassy in Washington, DC. There are eleven other regional vice-presidents from across the country and a President, 1st Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. I am honored to represent our people and other Natives from across the country. Serving on this body provides our Tribe resources, information, and opportunities that even the biggest lobbying budget cannot buy. Given we have virtually no lobbying budget, our association with NCAI and my role as regional VP will put us in the right place at the right time when opportunity knocks.



I need to thank our Board of Directors for finally approving my \$10,000 annual travel budget so I can fulfill this duty. While my predecessors had an unlimited travel budget including a private chartered plane, I am nonetheless grateful. Several of my national appointments include travel and expenses from federal agencies, so this amount should suffice. It is, nonetheless, sad that Director Pine characterized this travel as padding my resume and refused to support my travel even when all other Board Members did.

During my recent trip to DC, I attended my first day long NCAI meeting. We meet three

times a year. My committee assignments include health, education and research related sub-committees. This fits well with my appointment to the HHS Secretary's Tribal Advisory Council (STAC) and HHS Tribal Health Research Advisory Council (HRAC). While my travel is covered, there is no compensation for these. Our benefit is in the direct access to budget and policy information, and opportunities to set priorities for these federal agencies. Rather than settling over crumbs, I have the chance to fight for a larger piece of the pie.

I published my schedule for this trip last so I went go into detail. I will say that both Cathy and I worked 16 hour days while in DC. One assignment, I had was to meet with Senator Patty Murray (D-Washington) who is the Chair of the Senate Budget Committee. Our goal was to explain the basis for our funding in pre-paid treaty obligations to exempt tribes from sequestration. Another delegation met with Congressman Paul Ryan (R-Wisconsin) to make the



same arguments. I believe we had an impact, but time will tell. I also met with Congressman Tom Cole



(R-Oklahoma) who is American Indian and influential in budget talks with his Republican colleagues. He was extremely helpful in helping us to forecast the possible trajectories that the National Budget may take. At this point, my best guess is that either tribes will be exempt from sequestration or sequestration will not take affect in 2014 at all. If so, this will afford our Tribal Board the opportunity to

replace funding for some programs that have been decimated.

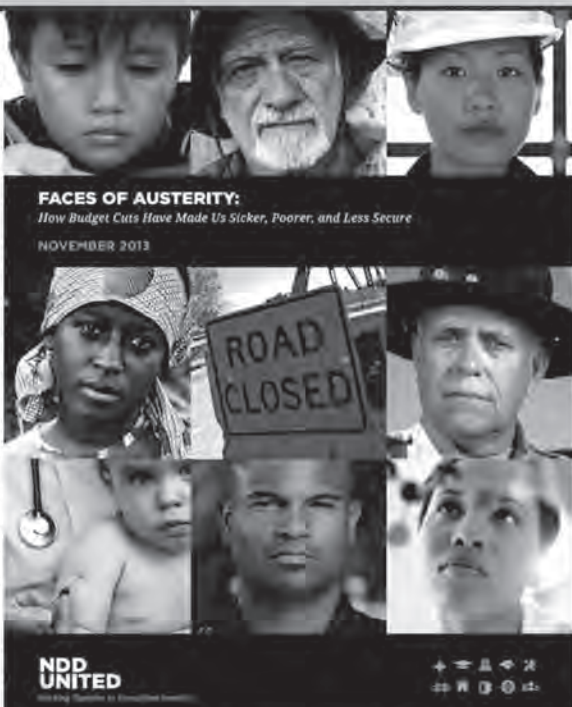
Both Cathy Abramson and I got to participate in the White House Tribal Nations Summit which was a day long event, where the President meets with us; the Presidential Cabinet (ie. Secretaries of Interior, Health and Human Services, Transportation, Commerce, Labor, Education, Domestic Policy, etc.) dialog with tribal leaders. This year, I was one of 12 tribal leaders from some 500+ tribes who were invited by the White House to address the new White House Council on Indian Affairs which is a body made up the cabinet members. I am already somewhat familiar with the Secretary of Interior Sally Jewel, as I was one of 10 tribal leaders who were invited to meet with her last year when she first accepted the post.

While I am in DC, I take every opportunity to advocate for our Tribe. One way I do this is to share a document created by our team of division and program directors, our Budget Team, Assistant Executive Director Angeline Bouley, Executive Director Christine McPherson, Legislative Director Mike McCoy, and Communications Director Jennifer Dale for preparing and revising this document which helps me to illustrate to legislators the impacts of sequestration, government shut down, and legislative decisions. We have a

Over 350 Elected Tribal Leaders from all Across "Indian Country" Packed the Lecture Hall



During my September trip to DC, I was invited by an advocacy group to provide a Native voice to a National Report of the impacts of sequestration to programs we all enjoy as citizens. Many of these services, we take for granted, like Head Start, Community Action, Meals on Wheels, Upward Bound, Workforce Investment and Job Training, Food Stamps or Commodity Foods, Woman and Infant (WIC) services, and countless State and Local programs which receive funds from the Federal government. These programs have been drastically cut due to sequestration.



I was pleased to join this effort. I will admit to a level of bias with respect to these issues as I (like many of our people) grew up in sheer poverty. Fortunately for me, I was born in 1965 when the Great Society programs were enacted. I grew up on Food Stamps and Commodity Cheese. I am not only, not ashamed of this, I want to make sure any other Tribal Member has the benefit of these services as well. This should go without saying as a Tribal leader, but the tone and tenor of some of our Board has been to get the deadbeats off the dole. A direct quote was, "we have to do something about the chronic users" and learn to, "live within our means." Certainly, there are some who remain in poverty and continually use our help, but to characterize our own people in this way to is demonize them and blame them for the conditions in which they

find themselves. I find this shocking and counter cultural to our Anishinabe Biimaadziwiin. As a high-school drop out who went on to earn several degrees, I could claim I pulled myself up by my bootstraps, but I recognize the help I had along the way and will fight to ensure others have the same opportunities. Please read the *Faces of Austerity* report by going on-line (see link to the right) and help us tell the story of how humanity benefits from these services.

Finally, this trip to DC was awe inspiring. I kept thinking of our founders Fred Hatch, Joe Lumsden, Mike Wright, Rosemary Gaskin, my Grandmother Maria (Boulley) Parr, and our ancestors who I felt with me this entire trip.

Chi McGwitch, Nege,

Aaron

FACES OF AUSTERITY REPORT

CUTS TO INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE VIOLATE TRUST

FEATURING: Aaron Payment, Chairman, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Upper Peninsula, Michigan

A 21ST CENTURY PLAGUE

Tribal communities are losing the battle in the nation's war against chronic disease. On average, 16 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives have type 2 diabetes, a key risk factor for heart disease. In some areas, such as southern Arizona, the rates are as high as one in three. More die of heart disease at younger ages than other Americans; one-third die before the age of 65.

Living on the front lines is Aaron Payment, Chairman of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians in Upper Peninsula, Michigan—a state with one of the highest death rates among Native Americans. Heart disease, diabetes, alcoholism, disability, and mental illness plague Aaron's tribe of 44,000, and have since he was a boy:

My parents and grandparents all died in their 50s and 60s. Our elders used to live to be 80. In our community, 60 now marks the end of life. We're losing the keepers of our language, culture, and wisdom.

CRITICAL, BUT NOT ENOUGH

Borne out of a centuries-old relationship between the United States and tribes, the Indian Health Service (IHS) is the principal federal health care provider for 2.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives in 566 federally recognized Tribes. IHS supports personal and public health services to improve the health status of Native Americans and honor the tribes' inherent sovereign rights.

Aaron sees IHS' value because he spent much of his youth living without it. IHS was one of the Sault Tribe's first federal programs when first federally recognized in 1974. "Without it, our chronic diseases would be much worse," said Aaron. Today, with IHS support the tribe employs 260

health care professionals who provide care to more than 11,000 people.

Still, it's not enough. As Aaron explained, only one-third of the tribe lives in the IHS service area and may access care.

Even when fully funded, we were only functioning at 50 percent of the documented need. There is and has always been significant unmet need across the tribe.

GOING BACKWARDS

The tribe's IHS funding has been flat since 1996, even as health needs and costs of care have both increased. Sequestration cut another \$220 million from IHS. The cumulative impact on the tribe is a 40 percent IHS funding decrease. "We're going backwards," he said. The tribe must now "triage" services under "Priority 1A" status, providing only catastrophic care that is costly in monetary and human terms. For example, the tribe will pay for a foot amputation necessitated by diabetes, but can no longer afford preventive services to avoid diabetes altogether. Said Aaron,

We have already cut prevention for more than 2,000 elders. There is a vaccine to prevent shingles, but because we are at Priority 1A status and the disease isn't life threatening, we can't afford to vaccinate.

Sequestration has a compounding impact within the tribe, hitting IHS as well as Head Start, public safety, natural resources, sanitation, and housing. Tribes receive a significant portion of their funding from the government—some as high as 60-70 percent.

NO GOOD WAY TO CUT

Should sequestration continue in 2014, Aaron estimates his tribe's IHS funding could be cut by \$2.5 million. With no "good way to cut," there will be a "dramatic" impact on health:

We have cut into the fat already, so we will have to cancel more services. We have 11 health clinics now. If sequestration continues, we will have to close all but one and pink slip 20 percent of our medical staff. 85 percent of tribes are rural, including my own. In the best of circumstances now, my people drive 2 hours round-trip to a health clinic. If we have to close clinics, the drive could be as much as 4 hours, one way.

There are other real consequences to the uncertainty caused by lawmakers "kicking the can" on a sequestration fix.

I'm conservative, and I always balance our budget. My 2014 budget assumes sequestration and once approved by the council, I can't spend a dollar more. When I lay off physicians next year, I can't hire them back even if Congress eventually fixes sequestration.

What troubles Aaron most—more than the cuts—is the federal government's eroding obligation to the tribes:

I just want the federal government to honor our treaties. We paid for our health, education, and wellness into perpetuity with the blood, sweat, tears, and wisdom of our ancestors. It's a trust thing. Treaties and tribes are not discretionary.

To Download the full report and learn more about how to protect services that benefit our people & our neighbors, please visit the web page below:

<http://www.nddunited.org/>



ST Children's Christmas Party in Kincheloe with volunteers Director DJ Malloy and the Rec Center Director Dee Dee Frasure.



Above: Personal Donation to Sault Tribe Children's Christmas Parties bring total raised to nearly \$9,000!

Below: Personal Donation to Hessel Elders. Each Elder Sub-committee received between \$500 and \$1,000.



2013 SAULT TRIBE Chairperson CALENDAR

DECEMBER

December 2, 2013

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
8am Signatures 10am-4pm Financial Reviews: Governmental 4pm Inland Conservation	8am Signatures 9am NCAI Budget Conference Call 11am Lunch 12pm TBOD Closed Workshop 1pm TBOD Meeting Agenda Review 2pm Membership Issues 3pm TBOD Meeting - Sault	8am Signatures 8:30am-10am Executive Team 10-11am NMU Skype Lecture 12pm-2pm Hessel Members' Meeting 2pm NCAI Conference Call 4pm-6pm St. Ignace Members' Meeting	9am BIA Budget Conf Call 10am Budgets For Mods 12-2pm Escanaba Members' Meeting Willow Creek Building 5pm-6pm Manistique Members' Meeting Manistique Tribal Center 6pm Manistique Elder's Christmas Party-Tribal Center	9:00am BIA Conference Call 12pm-2pm Marquette Member Meeting West Science Building 3:30pm-5:30pm Munising Members' Meeting Munising Tribal Center	1pm-3pm Kincheloe Children's Christmas Party Kinross Rec Center 5pm-8pm Members' Meeting Kewadin Casino (Sault)
Out of Office 12pm CORA Special Session Regarding Walleye by-catch issue Traverse City, MI 4pm Munising Elder's Christmas Party	10am Workshop: Legal/Budgets/HR 12pm Lunch 1pm TBOD Prep Session for Next Week 11am Unit 1, 2 & 3 Elder Christmas Lunch 4pm CCC Strategy Session	8am Signatures 10am Tribal Census Adhoc Committee 6-8pm Member Meeting: Traverse City Grand Traverse Resort 100 Grand Traverse Resort Blvd. Acute, MI	11am-3pm CORA at GTB Traverse City 7pm-9pm Member Meeting: Grand Rapids Ramsada Inn Plaza 3333 28th Street, SE	12pm-2pm Member Meeting: Nokomis Learning Center 5151 Marsh Rd, Okemos 2pm Meeting with MI Legislators 6pm-8pm Member Meeting Flint Holiday Inn 5353 Gateway Centre	11am-2pm Member Meeting Detroit American Indian Health & Family Services 4880 Lawdale 7pm-9pm Member Meeting Cheboygan Beaugrand Township Hall 1999 Old Mackinac Rd.
8am Key Personnel Interviews All Day 6pm Great Lakes Conservation	10am Workshop: Legal/Budgets/HR 12pm Lunch 1pm General Workshop 3pm TBOD Meeting Agenda Review 5pm Membership Issues 6pm TBOD Meeting - Sault	8am Signatures 10am-12pm Executive Team 3pm Division Directors 3:30pm Program Directors	8am Signatures 10am-12pm Team Member Appointments 3-5pm Casino & Enterprise Budgets 6-9pm Stop Bullying Now at Kewadin	12-1pm Newberry Members' Meeting Newberry Tribal Center 1-2:30pm Newberry Elders Christmas Party - American Legion 4pm Hessel Elders Christmas	11am-2pm Sault Children's Christmas Party
8am Signatures 10am-12pm Team Member Appointments 12pm Legal 1pm Legislative/Planning/Appropriations 2pm Ken Emstinger (Gaming Comm)	8am Signatures 10am-12pm Team Member Appointments 1-5pm Office Coverage	8am Signatures 10am-12pm Executive Team 3pm Division Directors 3:30pm Program Directors	8am Signatures 10am-12pm Team Member Appointments 1-5pm Members' Office Hours	8am Signatures 9am M.A.S.T. Executive Session Conference Call 1-5pm Members' Office Hours	8am Signatures 10am-12pm Team Member Appointments 1-5pm Members' Office Hours
8am Signatures 9am Member Services 10am Executive Director Monthly 11am Twenty Rights & Natural Resources Protection [Law Enforcement: Conservation, Fisheries, Inland, Environmental & Individual Issues]	CHRISTMAS EVE IHS FY2015 Budget Negotiations?? 8am-5pm Office Coverage 5pm-12:01am New Year's Eve Sobriety Pow Wow	CHRISTMAS DAY 2014	NEW YEAR'S DAY 1		