

THE WHITE HOUSE

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Statement by the President on the Passage of the Tribal Law and Order Act

Today's passage of the Tribal Law and Order Act is an important step to help the federal government better address the unique public safety challenges that confront tribal communities. The fact is, American Indians and Alaska Natives are victimized by violent crime at far higher rates than Americans as a whole. Native communities have seen increased gang and drug activity, with some tribes experiencing violent crime rates at more than ten times the national average. And one in three Native women will be the victim of rape in her lifetime.

The federal government's relationship with tribal governments, its obligations under treaty and law, and our values as a nation require that we do more to improve public safety in tribal communities. And this Act will help us achieve that. It will strengthen the relationship between the federal government and tribal governments. It will improve our ability to work with tribal communities in the investigation and prosecution of crime, and it authorizes resources for tribes to fight crime more effectively. While many members helped pass this bill, I especially want to applaud Senators Dorgan, Barrasso and Kyl, and Representatives Herseth Sandlin, Kildee, Cole, Conyers, Scott, Rahall, Simpson and Pastor for their leadership on this issue. I look forward to signing the Act into law.