



UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.

USET Resolution No. 2003:110

ELEVATION OF DIRECTOR OF INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated (USET) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-four (24) federally recognized tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member tribe, as the Board of Directors comprises delegates from the member tribes' leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** the Director of Indian Health Service (IHS) holds the highest direct federal responsibility for the health status of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) people; and
- WHEREAS,** the IHS is one of two major agencies within the United States government, whose sole focus is to serve federally-recognized American Indian tribes and Alaska Native Villages, the other being the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA); and
- WHEREAS,** the President's Management Agenda calls for no more than four layers between the highest level decision makers and the people who need their questions answered; and
- WHEREAS,** the President's Management Agenda calls for federal agencies, such as the IHS to be more responsive to Tribes, service units, regions, and to the people served; and
- WHEREAS,** the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is administratively responsible for the IHS agency operations but the Director of IHS does not report directly to the Secretary; and
- WHEREAS,** USET strongly believes the lack of direct access to the Secretary from the lead Indian health program advocate is not in the best interest of AI/AN tribes/villages; and
- WHEREAS,** the USET membership does not believe the elevation of the IHS Director to the level of Assistant Secretary will have a negative impact on tribal ability to exercise their right of self-determination under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA); and
- WHEREAS,** the USET membership has not realized a negative impact on the implementation of the ISDEAA within the BIA where the BIA top official is an Assistant Secretary who reports directly to the Secretary of the Department of the Interior (DOI); therefore, be it
- RESOLVED** that the USET Board of Directors hereby recommends and supports the passage of S 558, entitled, "Elevation of the IHS Director," which is currently being considered by Congress.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Semi-Annual Meeting, at which a quorum was present in Choctaw, MS, Thursday, June 5, 2003.

Keller George, President
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

Beverly M. Wright, Secretary
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

"Because there is strength in Unity"