

USET SPF Alert: 10/30 - USCCR Public Mtg re COVID-19 in Indian Country – October 29

Dear USET SPF Board of Directors and DC Tribal Reps,

Please see the [attached agenda](#) for information on a public meeting of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR) set to occur **TOMORROW, October 30th, beginning at 12:00 pm ET**. During the meeting, USCCR will be discussing and voting upon an updated Commission report entitled: *COVID-19 in Indian Country: The Impact of Federal Broken Promises on Native Americans*. Friday's updated report follows USCCR's [2018 Broken Promises report](#), which found that with the exception of some minor improvements, the U.S. continues to neglect to meet its "most basic" obligations to Tribal Nations. As USET SPF has consistently [advocated](#), though these chronic failures have persisted throughout changes in Administration and Congress, it is time that both the legislative and executive branches confront and correct them.

As you may recall, in July, USET SPF, represented by Board Secretary, Chief Lynn Malerba, testified before USCCR during a [virtual public briefing](#) held to explore the ways in which the federal government's chronic failure to uphold its fiduciary trust and treaty obligations to Tribal Nations has exacerbated the COVID-19 public health emergency in Indian Country. USET SPF's [testimony](#) took a two-pronged approach to addressing the disparities and governmental failures exposed by the COVID-19 emergency from the standpoint of both the legislative and executive branches. In the short-term, federal COVID relief, response, and recovery measures must be focused on rapid, equitable deployment to Tribal Nations in a manner that upholds Tribal sovereignty, while reflecting our unique circumstances and the federal trust obligation. In the long-term, the United States must address its ongoing and shameful failures to honor its sacred promises to Tribal Nations, many of which have been outlined in detail by the Commission in the Broken Promises report.

USET SPF will continue to seek bold, systemic changes in response to the federal government's chronic neglect of its obligations to Indian Country. The circumstances that Tribal Nations face during this public health emergency are directly attributable to the federal government's centuries of dishonorable action and inaction in its relationship with us. At a time when Americans are finally coming to realize the urgent need for our country to reconcile with its past, it should begin by atoning for its original sins against this land's first peoples.

Thank you,
Liz

Liz Malerba ~ *Citizen of the Mohegan Tribe*
Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs
United South and Eastern Tribes
Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF)