

**Jaime A. Pinkham, Vice President
Bush Foundation
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Committee on Appropriations
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This testimony addresses the Bush Foundation’s support to advance self-determination for the 23 sovereign Native nations (tribes) that share the same geography as Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota¹. These tribes have a unique trust relationship with the United States administered, in part, by the Department of Interior as well as other federal agencies under the jurisdiction of the full Committee on Appropriations.

Background

In 1953, Archibald Granville Bush, former chairman of the executive committee for Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing (3M Company), and his wife Edyth established the Bush Foundation using their personal assets. For the past 60 years, the Foundation has provided more than \$800 million in grants and fellowships to improve the well-being of people in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations.

Under the Foundation’s efforts to support community innovation and leadership, a new Native Nations program was created in 2009. This program was developed to support the 23 tribes as “they exercise self-determination to actively rebuild the infrastructure of nationhood”—a process referred to as “Native nation building.”

Basis for the Foundation’s Approach to Native Nations

The design of the Native Nations program relied on tribal leaders’ input and an examination of research conducted by the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (HPAIED) and the Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management and Policy (NNI). Their research provided evidence that progress overcoming core challenges was greater as tribes relied on self-determination to develop the governing foundations and institutions necessary for community social and economic wellbeing. This process is referred to as “nation-building”

¹ These nations are: Bois Forte Band of Chippewa; Cheyenne River Sioux; Crow Creek Sioux Tribe; Flandreau Santee Sioux; Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa; Grand Portage Band of Chippewa; Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe; Lower Brule Sioux; Lower Sioux Community; Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara Nation; Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe; Oglala Sioux; Prairie Island Indian Community; Red Lake Band of Ojibwe; Rosebud Sioux; Shakopee-Mdewakanton Sioux Community; Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux; Spirit Lake Nation; Standing Rock Sioux Tribe; Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa; Upper Sioux Community; White Earth Band of Ojibwe; and Yankton Sioux.

and their research identified five important components: 1) Sovereignty in practice (true self-rule, the tribe calls the shots), 2) Capable institutions (back up authority with competent systems, policies and laws), 3) Cultural Match (legitimacy in governments that match their community's values and expectations), 4) Strategic Orientation (focus on long term priorities), and 5) Public-spirited Leadership (represent the nation's vision and interests).

Key Partnership: Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management and Policy (NNI)²

NNI is uniquely equipped to be the Foundation's primary resource partner to support the Native nations work at both the Foundation and tribal level. NNI provides decision makers with research and policy analysis of tribal governance and development and comprehensive training to meet the needs of tribal leaders and management. Much of NNI's training materials and tools have been developed collaboratively with the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development's (HPAIED) relying on their "Honoring Nations Program", research capabilities and governance expertise.³

In 2009, the Foundation entered into a 10-year Memorandum of Understanding with NNI. Under the MOU, NNI provides nation building training, leadership development, technical support, web based curriculum, governance assessments, and maintains a governance database useful for both the tribes and Foundation.

Tribal and Bush Foundation Partnerships

This work requires a Foundation strategy consistent with self-determination including respect for each tribe as distinct political institutions. As such, the Foundation collaborates with the elected leaders to create partnerships specific to an individual tribe's needs and conditions.

The Foundation's fiscal relationship with tribes varies in how resources are delivered. It includes direct grants to tribes, the Foundation contracting directly with consultants to provide services to tribes, and NNI support for tribes under the MOU at no cost to the tribes.

The Foundation's work can be framed in four key areas:

1. *Supporting Tribal Leaders and Tribal Foundations of Governance*
2. *Investing in the Capacity of Others to Support Tribes*
3. *Native Nations Rebuilder Program*
4. *Intergovernmental Relationships*

² The Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, and Policy (NNI) was founded in 2001 by The University of Arizona and the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation as a self-determination, self-governance, and development resource for Native nations. It is housed at the university's Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy. NNI's mission is to "assist in building capable Native nations that can effectively pursue and ultimately realize their own political, economic, and community development objectives."

³ The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development aims to understand and foster the conditions under which sustained, self-determined social and economic development is achieved among American Indian nations through applied research and service. HPAIED is housed within the Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. The Harvard Project's core activities include research, education and the administration of "Honoring Nations", a tribal governance awards program.

1) Supporting Tribal Leaders and Tribal Foundations of Governance

The Foundation's support for Native nation building efforts begins at that intersection of leadership and self-determination. The work is dependent on the collaboration and willpower of tribal leaders and their citizens.

A valuable step for many tribes was Foundation support to provide nation building training and starting a "new conversation" among the tribes. This began with training for elected leaders and, at their request, could be delivered within the communities to engage citizens in the nation building conversations about tribal government's role in serving citizens' needs. One way the Foundation supports these conversations is through NNI's Governance Analysis for Native Nations (GANN) forums. The GANN is a self-administered tool to help tribes assess their current strategic direction, self-determination strategies, foundational institutions, and governing tools such as administration, human capital and financial management. At the end of these forums tribes develop a plan of "Priorities and Action." To date, over half of the 23 tribes have participated in a GANN forum.

The Foundation is available to support tribes in recreating governing practices, constitutions, laws, and codes as well as executive, legislative and judicial processes. Since 2009, the Foundation has supported tribal constitutional reform, revision of election procedures, updates to tribal codes and laws, nation building training, and GANN forums.

2) Investing in the Capacity of Others to Support Tribes

The nation building effort requires access to resource partners who can support the tribes and Foundation with expertise, tools and training. The Foundation is investing in the capacity of NNI and HPAIED, both highly credible organizations in Indian Country. Support to NNI has included revisions to the GANN, developing new and refining existing curricula, designing a series of on-line courses (nation building, constitutional reform, intergovernmental affairs, leadership, and justice systems) and the development of a governance data base. These resources are also available to all tribes in the U.S.

The Foundation's recent partnership with HPAIED is designed to continue their "Honoring Nations" program, an innovative approach to discovering and celebrating best practices in tribal governance across the U.S. Best practice case studies are a valuable source of educational content and sharing of innovative practices for use by others. The HPAIED partnership also includes an apprentice program to expand the number of nation building best practice "investigators" who can in turn use the experience and skills to provide direct services to tribes.

3) Native Nations Rebuilder Program

The Foundation sought the advice of tribal leaders to design a Native nation building leadership program. Tribal leaders suggested that designing and implementing a nation building strategy should not be the sole responsibility of elected leaders. They suggested a cohort of community leaders was necessary to get communities engaged. In response, the Foundation designed the Native Nations Rebuilder Program. Launched in 2010, the program supports the development

of current and emerging leaders. Participants are exposed to nation building principles, community engagement strategies, leadership skills and a network of leaders with similar aspirations. To date, four cohorts have entered the program consisting of 61 “Rebuilders” from 18 of the 23 tribes. Several Rebuilders also hold key positions in tribal and state government including elected and appointed positions.

4) Intergovernmental Relationships

Tribal and nontribal government collaboration as well as governmental relations between tribes is a nation building technique. The Foundation wants to support intergovernmental relations to overcome conflict, capitalize on common interests, collectively solve mutual problems, and develop joint opportunities. One tribal-state tax agreement and two multi-tribe efforts have already been supported.

The Work Ahead

The Foundation’s approach is relatively unique in Indian Country and since 2009 the Foundation continues to learn and adjust. An important question is what short and long term indicators of success should the Foundation use to measure progress under a nation building approach? Consistent with self-determination, indicators will be identified in collaboration with tribal leaders and their tribes and may vary by tribe.

Interest in reforming and amending tribal constitutions is growing. The Foundation is currently supporting three tribes with a significant commitment of resources. Additional tribes are laying the ground work to begin a constitutional reform effort. The Foundation will be searching for additional partners with a willingness to share new financial resources. The Foundation has been able leverage portions of the work through financial and technical support provided through the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other private and tribal foundations.

As nation building conversations and projects expand nationally, the demand is increasing for nation building expertise, coordination, research and technical assistance. The Foundation will be evaluating the best strategic approach to increase the development of supporting resources primarily within the region while also exploring additional funding partners.

The Bush Foundation is one of many foundations investing in Indian Country and the approach being taken should not be interpreted as the only foundation-tribal approach that works. There are many needs and strategies foundations use to respond to the important needs of tribes and their communities. However, a nation building approach can enhance and complement the outcomes of other public and private entities who invest in tribes.

Finally, a lesson worth sharing is that public and private entities have much to gain from understanding Native nation building principles. Learning the principles and developing tribal relations with these principles in mind will help those entities find common interests and better align their strategies with Native nations to achieve mutual goals.