



# **Chairman Ken Calvert**

*Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations*

## **FY 2017 Budget Hearing: American Indian and Alaska Native Programs**

**March 17-18, 2016**

### **Opening Statement as Prepared**

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Welcome to this public witness hearing specifically for American Indian and Alaska Native programs under the jurisdiction of the Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee.

I especially want to welcome the distinguished tribal elders and leaders testifying today and in the audience. Most of you have traveled a long way to be here this week. I hope that you'll seize the opportunity to meet with other members of Congress outside of this subcommittee, to remind them that honoring the nation's Trust obligations is a responsibility shared by all members of Congress, regardless of our state or congressional district.

I can assure you that your voices are heard by this subcommittee. For those new to this process, today's hearings are just the start of a dialogue we've come to depend upon to help us make smart choices in the budget, and to earn the votes of our colleagues. American Indian and Alaska Native programs will continue to be a nonpartisan priority for this subcommittee, just as they have been in recent years under the chairmanships of democrats and republicans alike.

Before we begin, I have a bit of housekeeping items to share. Committee rules prohibit the use of outside cameras and audio equipment during these hearings. That is to ensure that anything anyone says here today is not unfairly reproduced out of context. An official hearing transcript will be available at GPO.gov.

I will call each panel of witnesses to the table one panel at a time. Each witness will have five minutes to present his or her oral testimony. Each witness's full written testimony will be included in the record, so please don't feel pressured to cover everything in five minutes. Finishing in less than five minutes may even earn you brownie points with the chairman. We will be using a timer to track the progress of each witness. When the light turns yellow, the witness will have one minute remaining to conclude his or her remarks. When the light blinks red, I will have to ask the witness to stop. We'll hear from every witness on each panel before members will be provided an opportunity to ask questions. Because we have a full day ahead which may be interrupted by votes, I request that we try to keep things moving in order stay on schedule and respect each other's time.

With that, I thank you all again for being here today and I'm happy to yield now to our distinguished ranking member, Betty McCollum, for any opening remarks she would like to make.