

-Legislative Hearing-

OPENING STATEMENT

September 25, 2019

Good afternoon and thank you, Chairman Gallego.

As you mentioned, the subcommittee will be receiving testimony today on two pieces of legislation.

In recent years, Congress has struggled to pass appropriations bills before the end of the fiscal year. The possibility of government shutdowns has increased each year.

This can cause uncertainty for Tribal communities that rely on services and programs managed by the Interior Department and the Indian Health Service. If there is a delay in federal funding, Indian Country can be disproportionately impacted.

I appreciate that my colleague, Mr. Young introduced H.R. 1135, the Indian Health Service Advance Appropriations Act of 2019. I am a cosponsor of this important legislation.

This bill would authorize appropriations on a two-year cycle for certain Indian Health Service budget accounts that provide the basic funding for Indian Health hospitals and funding for the construction of Indian Health Service facilities.

This will help Indian tribes, Alaska Natives and others properly plan ahead and manage budgets more efficiently.

The second bill on our agenda, H.R. 1128, provides a two-year authorization of appropriations for certain Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Indian Education accounts.

The legislation also includes advanced appropriations for the Indian Health Service, but unlike Mr. Youngs bill, it includes contract support costs.

I want to thank our witnesses for being here today and I am looking forward to hearing their testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.