

## **Congressman Don Young – Statement for the Record**

Thank you for holding today's hearing on these several bills.

My bill, H.R. 438, would amend the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children Act to provide additional two years for the Commission to complete a report it is required to submit to Congress.

I would like to commend Gloria O'Neill, who is chair of the Commission, on her hard work to ensure the Commission fulfills the mission Congress charged it with.

Gloria has and continues to be a great asset, not only on issues impacting Native children but to the Cook Inlet Tribal Council.

I introduced my bill because the Commission did not secure funding it needed until the fall of 2019 and the strain the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the Commission's ability to hold hearings and gather important information.

The second bill on our agenda today, is H.R. 2930, the STOP Act. I support this legislation and am proud to be an original cosponsor.

This bill expands criminal penalties against those who attempt to sell, or export objects of Native American human remains or items of tribal cultural patrimony. In recent years these objects have appeared in foreign auction houses.

It bans the export of illegally obtained Native American cultural objects and sets penalties for violations of this ban.

To incentivize repatriation, the bill allows immunity from prosecution if an individual voluntarily surrenders to the appropriate tribe all Native American cultural objects in possession, not less than two years after enactment.

In addition, the bill would require the Government Accountability Office report on the number of Native American cultural objects illegally trafficked, and the extent to which the Department of Justice has prosecuted cases of trafficking.

The GAO must also recommend actions to eliminate trafficking and to secure the repatriation of Native American cultural objects, and the Department of the Interior is directed to convene a Tribal Working Group to enhance the GAO's report and recommendations.

The hearing on this carefully crafted and negotiated bill today is an important step in ensuring culturally significant items remain with tribes and not in the hands of foreign art dealers.

The final bill on our agenda is a discussion draft sponsored by the full committee chairman, Mr. Grijalva.

The bill would prescribe procedures for consultation between federal agencies and Indian tribes.

Virtually everyone tuned in can agree that many of the best ideas that will impact Indian country, will come from Indian country. After all, Native communities know their needs best.

All voices in each Native community have something to add to the tribal consultation process.

Meaningful consultation is extremely important and is something I fully support, however, there are some questions about the discussion draft that must be fully explored because the bill is broad and in certain respects, ambiguous.

In addition, four hearings have been held in this committee on a previous version of the bill, and the Administration testified in opposition.

In conclusion, I wish to express my hope we would receive the views of the Department of the Interior, on the bills before us today, as they were not invited to testify.

Thank you, Madam Chair, and I yield back.