

Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
March 4, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

Oversight Hearing

*Examining the Department of the Interior's Spending Priorities and the President's Fiscal Year
2021 Budget Proposal*

Questions from Rep. Wm. Lacy Clay for Ms. Susan Combs, Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, Department of the Interior

1. Assistant Secretary Combs, recently, there has been news articles regarding non-Native individuals acting as if they were tribes – just so they can receive federal minority contracts intended for the members of federally recognized tribes.

-How is your Department and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) handling the issue of federal contractor fraud?

-Has BIA created interagency recommendations to identify fraudulent non-Native individuals or conducted any oversight on the tribal certification process for other agencies?

2. In reading your Department's budget proposal, I noticed that you had several topics in the BIA's Law Enforcement Special Initiatives including: the Task Force on Murdered and Missing American Indians and Alaska Natives, funding to address the opioid crisis and the victim/witness assistance program. I believe that all these initiatives are important and should receive standalone programmatic funding without a special initiative. These are essential programs that allow BIA Law Enforcement the ability to actively combat bigger issues in Indian Country, with that said:

Will your Department consider expanding the BIA's Law Enforcement Special Initiatives to include combating bad actors attempting to take advantage of the federal minority contractor program meant to promote economic development for tribal members?