

Good morning Chairman Himes, members of the committee, fellow tribal leaders

I am James Crawford, Secretary of the Forest County Potawatomi Community in Wisconsin, and I'm truly honored to be with you today.

First, I would like to say "chi migweth" to Congresswoman Moore and Congressman Steil. As two members of this body who represent Potawatomi homelands, we truly appreciate you reaching out and asking us to be a part of this important discussion.

Before I begin my brief remarks, here is a little background on my Tribe.

The Forest County Potawatomi is one of ten bands of the Potawatomi located in the United States and Canada.

Our reservation is in Forest County in northeast Wisconsin (about 2 hours northwest of Green Bay), but our homelands stretch from the tip of Door County, Wisconsin south along the shores of Lake Michigan through Milwaukee and into Chicago, Indiana and lower Michigan.

While most of our reservation lands are in Forest County, we operate many business enterprises in other areas of Wisconsin and the United States. In addition to our gaming facilities in Carter, Wisconsin and Milwaukee, we have expanded our interests to include a variety of other non-gaming businesses.

I have two topics to raise for the roundtable that I believe help address our collective desire for Native American communities to better their economic situation for their communities.

First, Competitive Grant Funding. Competitive grants to fund important Indian Country programs continue to be a hurdle in achieving tribal

economic parity with other non-tribal governments and communities. Despite the consistent concerns expressed by tribal governments regarding the effectiveness and fairness of the competitive grant funding processes, many important tribally focused programs are only funded through such methods (i.e. Department of Justice).

Often, such programs pits tribes against each other in efforts to be awarded such funding... something that certainly has a negative impact on tribal economies.

Secondly, Federal Funding Directly to Tribes. Just as is the case with competitive grant funding, nothing in this nation's treaty and trust responsibility identifies the need to run federal funds through state treasuries based on American Indian demographics.

There oftentimes is a lack of the transparency on how such funds are allocated, and Indian Country is unsure if it is realizing the full benefit of all such funding that is based largely on tribal demographics.

The Department of Education funding for American Indians that flows through state treasuries is a glaring example of this problem and concern. In almost all instances, tribes have little knowledge of the level of such funding that is based upon their presence, and usually have absolutely no input on how such funds could be efficiently spent. The best way to fix this problem is to award federal dollars directly to tribal governments, just as the federal government does for states when it comes to their student populations, and as the federal government did with the separate funding to tribes through the CARES ACT and then later through ARPA.

Thanks again for bringing us together. I'm looking forward discussion on these topics and others that will help the economic situation of tribal communities.