



# Department of Justice

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STATEMENT

OF

THOMAS J. PERRELLI  
ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY GENERAL

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING ENTITLED

"OVERSIGHT TO EXAMINE TRIBAL PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES PROPOSED  
IN THE PRESIDENT'S FISCAL YEAR 2012 BUDGET"

PRESENTED ON

MARCH 15, 2011

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Chairman Akaka, Vice-Chairman Barrasso, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for inviting me to testify today regarding the substantial support that the President’s FY 2012 Budget provides to the Department of Justice for public-safety initiatives in tribal communities. I regret that I am unable to testify in person; but as public safety in Indian Country is of grave concern to both the Department and me, I am submitting the following statement regarding the Department’s FY 2012 Budget request.

The Department of Justice is deeply committed to working with tribal governments to improve public safety in Indian Country. And while we will continue to seek efficiencies and implement changes outside of the budget process, the reality is that resources make a difference. To achieve lasting results, funding for public safety must be broad and comprehensive.

We are working to put resources in place quickly and efficiently to help American Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages help themselves. In total, the President’s FY 2012 Budget includes \$424 million in Department of Justice resources to address public safety in Indian Country. It includes \$9 million for 24 new FBI agents and related support positions to augment law-enforcement efforts in Indian Country, and increases grant funding in Indian Country by 47% over the FY 2010 enacted level. The President’s FY 2012 Budget provides for a 7% set-aside – \$42 million – from the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Program

to support the hiring of tribal law-enforcement personnel, an additional 7% set-aside – \$113.9 million – from our Office of Justice Programs (OJP) for Indian Country efforts, and statutory set-asides totaling \$44.4 million for certain Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) programs. These set-asides, combined with numerous Department of Justice programs designed exclusively for tribal communities, such as OJP’s Comprehensive Tribal Grants Program, result in a total request of \$244.3 million for Department of Justice grant programs in Indian Country.

While the amount of requested funding is significant, so are the needs it would address. At the Department’s listening session in October 2009, at the White House’s Tribal Nations Conferences in November 2009 and December 2010, during the inaugural meeting of the Attorney General’s Tribal Nations Leadership Council in December 2010, and in subsequent meetings and discussions with tribal leaders, we have consistently heard a strong desire for more flexible grant programs to meet tribal communities’ needs more effectively. We have streamlined our grant-making process through the Comprehensive Tribal Assistance Solicitation (CTAS). Under CTAS, the Department has asked each tribe to submit a single application for all available DOJ tribal-government-specific grant programs, according to the tribe’s particularized needs. The grant-making components then coordinate in making award decisions to address these needs on a more comprehensive basis. To take this concept a significant step further, the President’s FY 2012 Budget will enable the Department to implement a large, flexible program that directly addresses the concerns that many tribal leaders have expressed.

While these are obviously very challenging budget times, we must invest today to improve public safety in tribal communities. As this Committee knows, the problems in tribal communities are severe: American Indians and Alaska Natives experience violent crime at far higher rates than other Americans. Some tribes have experienced rates of violent crime two,

four, and in some cases more than ten times the national average. And violence against Native American women and children is a particularly severe and widespread problem.

These problems will not be solved overnight, and resources alone will not solve them. But additional resources will enable the FBI and other law-enforcement agencies to investigate more crimes on reservations. Increased resources will help train prosecutors of violent crimes perpetrated against Indian women. Resources also will help us collect and analyze the data that will inform better public-safety policies. And more resources will help build capacity in tribal law-enforcement and criminal-justice systems, so that tribes can work with their Federal partners to improve public safety.

In closing, I want to provide a few examples of how Department of Justice programs have made a very real difference in tribal communities across the Nation:

- Because of the funding and technical assistance provided by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), from 2008 to 2010, the number of tribes reporting to the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) system increased from 25 to 144. Better UCR data not only allow better analysis of crime trends on tribal lands, but also increase the number of tribes eligible for Justice Assistance Grant funding and compliance with the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act.
- BJA also worked with the Navajo Nation in planning the first “Community Court” in Indian Country, a specialized court that addresses low-level crime and other local problems through intensive community input and collaboration with community-based service providers and stakeholders.
- With Indian Alcohol and Substance Abuse Program (IASAP) funding, the Native Village of Afognak in Alaska implemented an on-line tip program that resulted in seven meth-

related arrests; these suspected meth manufacturers and distributors are currently awaiting trial. The village also held six community forums on Methamphetamine (two times), Harmful Legal Products, Underage Alcohol Consumption, Prescription Drug Abuse, and Suicide and Substance Abuse.

- The OVW Grants to Indian Tribal Governments Program (Tribal Governments Program) empowers tribal governments to develop effective governmental strategies to address violence against women in their communities. In an average six-month period, OVW Tribal Governments Program grantees provide services to over 3,200 victims/survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and/or stalking to help them become and remain safe from violence.
- After passage of the Tribal Law and Order Act, the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office funded National Crime Information Center (NCIC) access for tribes in states that previously did not have access, providing tribes this essential law enforcement tool used by law enforcement officers throughout the country.

In short, DOJ resources are helping to improve public safety in Indian Country. I thank the Committee for its interest in these critical issues and its support.