



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

March 13, 2013

United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

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## NCAI HEADQUARTERS

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## Re: School Construction Funding in the Senate Continuing Resolution

Dear Senator:

On March 11, 2013, the Senate Committee on Appropriations released their FY 2013 Continuing Resolution (CR), which seeks to fund the federal government for the remaining months of this fiscal year. On behalf of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the oldest, largest, and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization serving the broad interests of tribal governments and communities, we respectfully request your immediate attention to ensure our Native students have the opportunity to learn in a safe environment. We urge you to strike Section 1401(g) from the CR, and replace it with the FY2012 funding level of \$123,630,000.

Section 1401(g), as currently written, effectively eliminates the Bureau of Indian Affairs Replacement School Construction funding of \$17,720,000, the FY2012 level. This is unacceptable as a matter of parity, fairness, and principle. It appears that the CR adopted the Department of Interior's FY2013 Budget Request, in which the Department of the Interior terminates Replacement School Construction.

Our Native children should not be forced to learn in dangerous environments. Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools are in horrific conditions across the United States and often require total facility replacement. Rodent infestations, buckling walls, water leaks near electrical outlets, and exposed asbestos, lead paint, and mold are abundant in facilities that serve America's most vulnerable students.

Without replacement, these schools risk harming the children who have no choice but to attend such facilities. These schools are a direct federal responsibility under federal law and treaties. NCAI urges you to support an amendment to the CR for BIE school construction. Thank you for standing with Native students.

Sincerely,

Jefferson Keel  
President  
National Congress of American Indians