

**Remarks by Mr. Lujan**  
**Indian and Alaska Native Affairs Subcommittee**  
**LEGISLATIVE HEARING**  
**September 22, 2011, 2:00 P.M.**

Mr. Chairman, Tribal Leaders, Governor Chavez, Governor Garcia, President Chino,

Thank you all for being here today and for working with the Natural Resources Committee to help address the many issues impacting Indian Country and the tribes you individually represent. Before I begin, I would like to recognize Superintendent of Santa Fe Indian School and Former Governor of Kewa Pueblo, Everett Chavez and Former AIPC and NCAI President Joe Garcia for being here to testify on H.R. 1556 - a bill that would help Santa Fe Indian School and New Mexico's 19 Pueblo's achieve Educational Sovereignty for Native American Students across New Mexico.

I am proud to be able to assist Santa Fe Indian School in fixing the Omnibus Indian Advancement Act to allow Santa Fe Indian School to achieve new heights in educating Native American students. Santa Fe Indian School and the 19 Pueblo's approached my office earlier this year seeking the introduction of a technical change to the Omnibus Indian Advancement Act to allow certain lands designated to SFIS to be used to generate income to provide funding for academic and cultural programs at the Indian School. Knowing the importance of what Santa Fe Indian School provides to Native American Students in New Mexico, I was interested in their approach to create true financial independence and educational sovereignty for Santa Fe Indian School and its students. I decided to work with Superintendent Chavez and Santa Fe Indian School to draft a bill that would make a technical amendment to allow Santa Fe Indian School to explore economic opportunities so that students at the Indian School can attain the best possible education.

I want to point out the importance of sovereignty and what it means for our tribal brothers and sisters to be able to provide a quality education for their own children. Education is truly empowering; especially when Native American students are able to get an education that embraces their cultural and traditional identities – and that is the type of education Santa Fe Indian School Provides. The SFIS provides a challenging, stimulating, and nurturing learning environment that shares educational responsibility with native communities, parents, and students to develop the students' true potential to meet obligations to themselves and their tribal communities.

In this time of financial uncertainty and the limitations of the federal government to assist in federal education programs, it is important to give SFIS the tools they need to help their students receive a quality education regardless of the political and financial climate in Washington. My bill would achieve that goal. This technical amendment will help make Santa Fe Indian School more self sufficient and create greater opportunities for students attending the Indian School by ensuring Santa Fe Indian School has the financial capability to maintain and expand the level of academic and cultural education for Native American Students .

Thank you again Chairman Young for having this hearing and I look forward to asking additional questions about my bill.