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# United States Senate

February 26, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

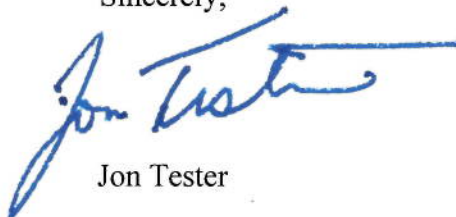
Dear President Trump:

I write with deep concern that the post for Indian Health Service Director remains unfilled and that the Indian Health Service (IHS) will now have been without a permanent director for over three years and counting. Without permanent leadership in place, it makes it extremely difficult for the agency to carry out its mission of delivering quality health care to Native Americans—a trust and treaty obligation of the federal government. It is critical that this position be filled to provide the much needed stability and leadership to the agency that so many people depend on.

The IHS is the primary entity responsible for fulfilling the government's trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribes for healthcare and as such provides care to more than 2 million American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people across the United States. It is especially vital to rural communities, like many in Montana, that depend on these services—both in resources and as a physical access point. IHS has an obligation to provide services directly, through Tribally contracted and operated health programs and facilities, and through services purchased from private providers.

I urge the administration to engage with Tribes on filling this important position and making sure the nominee is qualified, effective, innovative, and experienced to take on this role. People's lives depend on this agency and its success. It is important whomever is nominated to be IHS Director understands this responsibility and engages with Tribes based on this government-to-government relationship to raise the standard of care for Native peoples.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester

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