

Greetings from James Whitman, Region 5 [ND; SD; NE; KS] Representative, National Johnson-O'Malley Association (NJOMA) Board of Directors

NJOMA Conference at Portland, OR:

The March 29-31, 2015 Annual National Johnson-O'Malley Association (NJOMA) Conference in Portland, Oregon, was the largest ever in NJOMA 21-year history. Next January 31-February 2, 2016, NJOMA will convene in conference at the Crystal Gateway Marriott, located in Washington, DC. JOM is at the *do or die* junction, and the decision will be made in those Congressional offices. This is when we need numbers of people, examples of '*specialized and unique educational activities*', and culturally-astute students thronging their enthusiasm on the hill.

Urgent Response needed:

U.S. Senator Heidi Heitkamp is a friend of Johnson-O'Malley and NJOMA is seeking her leadership to introduce and champion passage of Johnson-O'Malley 2.0 legislation. NJOMA is requesting your JOM community support to get written responses to Senator Heitkamp's office as soon as possible. Please encourage your students, parents, grandparents, Local Indian Education Committee members, JOM Directors, Tribal Council members, and Tribal Chairperson, to document and describe the positive effects impacting your community from the Johnson-O'Malley program. These letters of support should be sent to Clint Bowers, Legislative Assistant (202-244-2043) [www.heitkamp.senate.gov].

JOM Modernization 2.0 Legislation:

The proposed Johnson-O'Malley '*Modernization*' 2.0 legislation proposes: Increase in JOM funding per student to \$125.00; Utilize 2010 U.S. Census data for certified student count; and, change funding agency from Department of Interior to Department of Education.

BIE Student Count Freeze Decision Cost Tribes \$600 Million:

For 20 years, (1994 to 2014), the Bureau of Indian Education froze the eligible JOM student count at approximately 278,000. Research of U.S. Census data indicates the real eligible student count is at least 520,000; the difference is 240,000 eligible Indian students not counted, and not served for 20 years. When the BIE freeze decision occurred, the per/student amount was \$125. 240K students X \$125 per/student X 20 years totals a \$600 million loss in funding to eligible Indian students attending public schools. In 2014 the BIE was told to get a new student count and not only failed the deadline but the numbers were a dismal representation of actual numbers found in the 2010 U.S. Census data. Further, the BIE wants to use \$2.6 million of JOM funding to conduct a new student count. NJOMA opposes this decision and recommends using 2010 U.S. Census data for determining student count.

Tribal Consultation Issue-Blood Quantum: The BIE 2015 Tribal Consultation on JOM Issues includes the topic of Blood Quantum for determining student eligibility for JOM services. Neither the Snyder Act of 1921 nor the Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1934 state any mention of ¼ degree Indian blood as a requirement for eligibility for JOM funding. The

NJOMA position is to utilize the 2010 U.S. Census data and process of 'checking a box' for ethnicity, as the most accurate and least costly option for counting JOM eligible students.

May 10, 2015 is the deadline for written responses from federally-recognized tribes regarding JOM issues. The address is: Attn: Jennifer Davis, 1951 Constitution Avenue, MS-312A-SIB, Washington, D.C. 20245; by fax: (202-208-3271); by email: [JOMcomments@bia.gov](mailto:JOMcomments@bia.gov) Call her office [202-208-4397] for a digital copy of the Tribal Consultation booklet of issues provided at the hearings.

The 2016 NJOMA Conference will be in Washington, DC, January 31-Feb 2, 2016, at the Crystal Gateway Marriott. Everyone is welcome to come and speak to your Congressional representative about the impact JOM has had on your life.

I sincerely appreciate your time to read this information.

James Whitman, NJOMA Board of Directors, Region 5 (ND; SD; NE; KS)  
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Attachments: