



**INTERNATIONAL
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LONNIE R. STEPHENSON
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June 28, 2017

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
U.S. House Committee on Education
and the Workforce
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert C. Scott
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Education
and the Workforce
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Foxx and Ranking Member Scott:

On behalf of the 750,000 active members and retirees of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), I write to urge you to oppose the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act of 2017 (H.R. 986, S. 63) which would deny protection under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) to a large number of workers employed by tribal-owned and-operated enterprises located on Indian land.

In recent years, the number and type of enterprises on tribal land has grown well beyond the gaming industry, and now includes mining operations, power plants, saw mills, construction companies, ski resorts, high-tech firms, hotels, and spas. Many of these are commercial businesses that compete with non-Native American enterprises; they are not governmental entities and serve non-Native American populations. Thousands of IBEW members working on tribal land would be impacted by the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act of 2017; the NLRA provides an exemption for state and local government employees but it does not and should not exempt private sector employees performing private sector work.

The IBEW opposes any effort to exempt all tribal enterprises from the NLRA without review of the circumstances, as is currently provided by NLRB standards. In instances when enterprises are mainly comprised of Native American employees with mainly Native American customers leaving the matter to tribal governments may be appropriate. However, when the business employs non-Native American employees and caters to non-Native American customers there is no basis for depriving employees of their rights and protections under the NLRA. Therefore, I respectfully ask that you do not support H.R. 986, the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act of 2017, and that you vote against the bill in Committee this week.

Sincerely yours,

Lonnie R. Stephenson
International President

LRS:lgd

Copy to All Members of the U.S. House Committee on Education and The Workforce

