

**TESTIMONY OF
WELDON “BRUCE” LOUDERMILK
DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INDIAN, INSULAR AND ALASKA NATIVE AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ON
H.R. 1074, TO REPEAL THE ACT ENTITLED “AN ACT TO CONFER JURISDICTION ON
THE STATE OF IOWA OVER OFFENSES COMMITTED BY OR AGAINST INDIANS ON THE
SAC AND FOX INDIAN RESERVATION.”**

JUNE 7, 2017

Chairman LaMalfa, Ranking Member Torres, and members of the Subcommittee, my name is Bruce Loudermilk. I am the Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) at the Department of the Interior (Department). Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Committee on H.R. 1074, a bill to repeal the Act entitled “An Act to Confer Jurisdiction on the State of Iowa Over Offenses Committed By Or Against Indians On The Sac And Fox Indian Reservation” referenced as 62 Stat. 1161, Chap. 759.

Criminal Jurisdiction in Indian Country

Improving public safety in Indian Country is a bipartisan priority. In the past, Congress has enacted legislation that displaced federal criminal jurisdiction and transferred that jurisdiction to certain States. As a result of these laws, criminal justice systems in Indian Country were understaffed and underfunded when compared to reservations of similar size and population that were not subject to such laws.

Secretary Zinke is an advocate for tribal sovereignty and self-determination. Similar to other legislative bills enacted by Congress, H.R. 1074 reflects the modern federal Indian policies of self-determination and self-governance. H.R. 1074 clarifies a muddled and complex jurisdictional scheme. Accordingly, the Department supports H.R. 1074.

H.R. 1074

H.R. 1074 would repeal the Act entitled “An Act to Confer Jurisdiction on the State of Iowa Over Offenses Committed By Or Against Indians On The Sac And Fox Indian Reservation.” If enacted, criminal jurisdiction over offenses by or against Indians on the Sac and Fox Indian Reservation would be exclusive to either the Tribe or the Federal Government under the Major Crimes Act.

The Sac and Fox Nation (“Tribe”) located in Iowa currently operates their own tribal court, law enforcement, and detention facility. Enactment of H.R. 1074 would ensure that the Tribe is treated similarly to others across Indian country where either the BIA or the Tribe provides federal law enforcement services. The Department is aware that both the Tribe and the State of

Iowa seek to repeal of 62 Stat 1161 Chap. 759 and support H.R. 1074.

Conclusion

Thank you for providing the Department the opportunity to testify on H.R. 1074. I am available to answer any questions the Subcommittee may have.