



Growing Tribal Economies  
Strengthening Tribal Finance

March 1, 2017 • 1101 30<sup>th</sup> Street, NW • Suite 500 • Washington, DC 20007 • 202-631-2003

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August 17, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: Urge Swift Passage of H.R. 6124 – the Tribal Social Security Fairness Act**

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

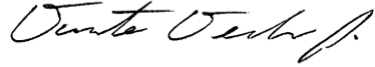
On behalf of the Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA), we greatly appreciate the bipartisan support from Senate leadership on the U.S. Senate Finance Committee regarding the non-controversial issue of tribal Social Security fairness. For several years, our organizations have supported bringing parity to Indian Country by supporting tribal councilmembers' ability to prepare for retirement on par with their state and local government official counterparts. We strongly request that the Senate swiftly considers and passes the House-passed H.R. 6124 – the Tribal Social Security Fairness Act of 2018 – which would be a significant win for Indian Country and will further Congress's support of tribal government parity.

Generally, the amount of benefits received from the Social Security program depends on how much an employee earned and paid into the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) through taxes. FICA initially did not apply to state and local governments but "legislative officials" were later given the option of participating. Consistent with the view of the Internal Revenue Service, tribal councilmembers pay taxes on income received for services to the government; however, tribal councilmembers do not have the same option as their non-tribal legislative counterparts to pay into FICA and receive benefits from the Social Security program. H.R. 6124, and its Senate companion S. 1309, correct this by allowing tribes to "opt-in" to Social Security coverage for their otherwise excluded councilmembers. Doing so recognizes the importance of public service in tribal government, just as with all governments, and creates a mechanism to provide certainty for tribal leaders' futures that will promote additional involvement in tribal government.

We urge you to quickly pass the bipartisan and non-controversial H.R. 6124 to provide Social Security parity to tribal governments. Thank you in advance for your consideration and we look

forward to working with you. Please feel free to contact us if you have questions, concerns, or need further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dante Desiderio". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "D" and a long, sweeping tail.

Dante Desiderio  
*Executive Director, NAFOA*