

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 1011

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, Calling upon the federal government to take responsibility for long-term health care on Indian reservations and to implement a pilot project in South Dakota.

WHEREAS, among all the states in the Northern Plains region, South Dakota has the highest percentage of its Native American population, sixty-seven percent, living on Indian reservations; and

WHEREAS, the State of South Dakota is experiencing a growing elderly population on its Indian reservations; and

WHEREAS, Native Americans are living significantly longer today than they did in the early 1900s: the life expectancy of Native Americans in South Dakota is currently sixty-five; and

WHEREAS, the rate of debilitating diseases such as diabetes on South Dakota Indian reservations has been increasing over the years; and

WHEREAS, the age-adjusted diabetes mellitus death rate among Native Americans in South Dakota is 62.6 per 100,000 population which is five times higher than the combined rate for all races in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Native American culture strongly embraces the extended family in which elders are considered the source of wisdom, history, and tradition; and

WHEREAS, a loss of important cultural traditions for families and tribal members occurs when elderly Native Americans must seek nursing facility placement off the reservations; and

WHEREAS, due to the high percentage of Native American families below poverty level living on Indian reservations, lack of transportation to visit family members in nonreservation nursing homes creates a hardship for the elderly and their families; and

WHEREAS, by Treaty, the federal government is responsible for providing all health care needs of Native Americans on reservations; and

WHEREAS, the Indian Health Service currently provides primary and acute health care services, such as physician and hospital care, through federal facilities located on each of the reservations; and

WHEREAS, the Indian Health Service currently does not provide long-term care services, such as assisted living and nursing home care, on any of South Dakota's Indian reservations; and

WHEREAS, the Indian Health Service has failed to take responsibility for providing long-term care services to elderly Native Americans residing on reservations in South Dakota; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress is currently considering the Indian Health Care Improvement Act Amendments of 2000 (H.R. 3397) which includes funding for long-term care on Indian reservations; and

WHEREAS, the lack of long-term care services has created an undue hardship for reservation residents and their families creating a growing need for the Indian Health Service to appropriately address the long-term care needs of South Dakota's Native American population:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-fifth Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the Senate concurring therein, that the federal government is requested to formally take responsibility for providing long-term care to Native Americans residing on Indian reservations by supporting the Indian Health Care Improvement Act Amendments of 2000, and to work cooperatively with state and tribal officials to implement a pilot project on a South Dakota Indian reservation in order to determine the feasibility of providing federally-funded, reservation-based long-term care services.

Adopted by the House of Representatives,
Concurred in by the Senate,

February 7, 2000
February 17, 2000

Roger Hunt
Speaker of the House

Karen Gerdes
Chief Clerk of the House

Carole Hillard
President of the Senate

Patricia Adam
Secretary of the Senate