

[House Natural Resources Committee](#)

Legislative Hearing on H.R. 411, H.R. 2916, H.R. 3620 & H.R. 3670 – Indian and Insular Affairs
Subcommittee
June 11, 2025

Overview:

- The legislative proposals pertained to themes such as Tribal sovereignty, healthcare, and federal funding cuts. The four legislations discussed were:
 - [H.R. 411](#) - "Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Land Claim Settlement Act of 2025"
 - [H.R. 2916](#) - "To authorize, ratify, and confirm the Agreement of Settlement and Compromise to Resolve the Akwesasne Mohawk Land Claim in the State of New York, and for other purposes"
 - [H.R. 3620](#) - "Southcentral Foundation Land Transfer Act of 2025"
 - [H.R. 3670](#) - "IHS Provider Expansion Act"

[Rep. Jeff Hurd](#), (Chair, R-CO)

- Supportive of bipartisan efforts to address tribal land claims and healthcare needs, while noting concerns about implementation and sustainability of new programs.

[Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez](#), (Ranking Member, D-NM)

- Expressed strong support for the four bills, looking at potential to address historical injustices, improve mental health services, and expand the Tribal healthcare workforce.
- Stressed the importance of honoring treaty obligations, ensuring stable and adequate funding for Tribal programs.

Witnesses:

Panel 1: Federal Government Witness

- [Darrell LaRoche](#) - Acting Deputy Director, Indian Health Service (IHS), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
 - Testified on:
 - H.R. 3620 – Southcentral Foundation Land Transfer Act
 - H.R. 3670 – Indian Health Service Provider Expansion Act

Panel 2: Tribal and Community Witnesses

1. [Chief Beverly Cook](#) - Elected Chief, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe (New York)
 - Testified on:
 - H.R. 2916 – Akwesasne Mohawk Land Claims Settlement
2. [President Robert Curtis, Jr.](#) - President, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (Michigan)
 - Testified on:
 - H.R. 411 – Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Land Claims Settlement Act
3. [Dr. Adriann Begay](#) - Senior Advisor, UCSF HEAL Initiative, Member of the Navajo Nation
 - Testified on:
 - H.R. 3670 – Indian Health Service Provider Expansion Act
4. [Leandra Ross](#) - Vice President of Executive and Tribal Services, Southcentral Foundation (Alaska)
 - Testified on:
 - H.R. 3620 – Southcentral Foundation Land Transfer Act

Key issues raised for each legislation:

1. H.R. 411 – Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Land Claims Settlement Act

- **Issue:** Unlawful transfer of 4,000 acres of treaty-protected reservation land in Michigan to the state under the Swamp Land Act (1850) and Canal Land Act (1852), without tribal consent or compensation.
- **Resolution:** The bill proposes a \$33.9 million settlement to the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC), extinguishing their claims and confirming land titles for current non-tribal landowners.
- **Tribal Perspective:** President Robert Curtis emphasized the bill as a long-overdue remedy for historical injustices and a means to preserve harmony with neighboring communities.

2. H.R. 2916 – Akwesasne Mohawk Land Claims Settlement

- **Issue:** Longstanding land disputes stemming from the 1796 Treaty with the Seven Nations of Canada, where New York State unlawfully took lands reserved for the Mohawk people.
- **Resolution:** The bill ratifies a negotiated settlement returning 3,500 acres to reservation status and allowing the tribe to acquire up to 14,000 more acres. It includes:
 - Tuition waivers for Mohawk students at SUNY schools.
 - Preferred electricity rates from the New York Power Authority.
 - No federal monetary contribution required.
- **Tribal Perspective:** Chief Beverly Cook highlighted the settlement's importance for tribal sovereignty, economic development, housing, and education.

3. H.R. 3620 – Southcentral Foundation Land Transfer Act

- **Issue:** Southcentral Foundation (SCF), an Alaska Native nonprofit, cannot modernize its behavioral health facility (Quyana Clubhouse) due to lack of land ownership.
- **Resolution:** The bill authorizes the transfer of federal land in Anchorage to SCF, enabling construction of a new 40,000 sq. ft. facility for integrated behavioral health services.
- **Tribal Perspective:** SCF Vice President Leandra Ross emphasized the program's success in housing and treating Alaska Native individuals with persistent mental illness and the need for culturally competent care.

4. H.R. 3670 – Indian Health Service (IHS) Provider Expansion Act

- **Issue:** Chronic understaffing in IHS facilities, with over 1,300 vacancies and a 33% average vacancy rate for key positions.
- **Resolution:** Establishes a permanent Office of Graduate Medical Education within IHS, with \$4 million annually to support residency and fellowship programs.
- **Tribal Perspective:** Dr. Adrienne Begay (Navajo Nation) testified on the importance of training Native healthcare professionals in tribal communities to improve retention and culturally appropriate care.

Other issues raised:

- **Funding Cuts:** Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-NM) criticized proposed federal budget cuts, including:
 - 60% cut to BIA social services.
 - \$84 million cut to tribal public safety and justice.
 - 87% cut to IHS sanitation facilities construction.
 - Elimination of advance appropriations for IHS.

- Proposed \$530 billion cut to Medicare, threatening Medicaid funding critical to tribal health clinics.
- **Medicaid Dependency:** Witnesses and members stressed that Medicaid is essential for the survival of tribal health systems, especially for 638 compacted facilities.
- **Trust Responsibility:** Multiple speakers reaffirmed the federal government's legal and moral obligation to uphold treaty rights and support tribal sovereignty through adequate funding and legislative action.