



**U.S. Rep. Tom Udall (NM-3)
Testimony on H.R. 545
House Committee on the Judiciary
Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security
February 6, 2007**

Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Forbes:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about the methamphetamine epidemic on Native American lands, and my bill, which aims to give tribes resources to combat this ongoing situation.

The manufacturing and use of meth is one of the fastest growing drug problems in the nation. It is easy to make, with the recipe readily available on the internet and many of its ingredients being common household products. In 2005, the Drug Enforcement Administration, along with state and local law enforcement officials, counted over twelve thousand clandestine laboratory incidents in forty-eight states.

In addition to its production throughout the country, a substantial amount of meth is smuggled into the country. The amount of methamphetamine seized at or between United States and Mexico border ports of entry increased by more than seventy-five percent from 2002 to 2004. There has been a recent decline in domestic production due to increased regulation of the sale and use of the chemicals that go into the creation of meth. Drug traffickers, however, have supplanted this decrease with meth produced in other countries. In total, the DEA seized over two thousand kilograms of meth in 2005.

While the facts and statistics at a nationwide level are disturbing enough, the situation has been disproportionately worse in Native American communities. The 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health reported a "past year methamphetamine use" rate of 1.7 percent for American Indians and Alaskan Natives and 2.2 percent for Native Hawaiians. Compare this to use rates for other ethnicities - .7% for whites, .5 percent for Hispanics, .2 percent for Asians, and .1 percent for African Americans. Additionally, while conducting the National Methamphetamine Initiative Survey of Native American law enforcement agencies, the Bureau of Indian Affairs' first question was "What drug poses the greatest threat to your reservation?" Seventy-four percent of all respondents indicated that meth posed the greatest threat to their communities. Placing a very distant second to meth was marijuana, at eleven percent.

Congress has taken steps to address the growing methamphetamine epidemic. Last year Congress passed the Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act as part of the reauthorization of the USA PATRIOT Act. The legislation included provisions designed to control and regulate the availability of meth and its precursor ingredients and to expand measures related to lab cleanup. It also authorized funding for three important grant programs - the COPS Meth Hot Spots program, the Drug- Endangered Children program, and the Pregnant and Parenting Women Offenders program.

The Hot Spots program specifically provides funding for a broad range of initiatives designed to assist state and local law enforcement in undertaking anti-methamphetamine initiatives. The Drug-Endangered Children Grant Program provides comprehensive services to assist children who live in a home where meth has been used, manufactured and sold. The Pregnant and Parenting Women Offenders Grant Program is designed to facilitate cooperation between the criminal justice, child welfare, and substance abuse systems in order to reduce the use of drugs by pregnant women and those with dependant children.

These are all extremely important programs, and unfortunately, tribal governments were unintentionally left out as possible applicants for both the Hot Spots and Drug-Endangered Children programs. And while tribes were included as eligible applicants for the Pregnant and Parenting Women Offenders Grant Program, clarifying language is needed to ensure there is ample coordination with tribal service providers.

It is for these reasons, that I introduced the Native American Methamphetamine Enforcement and Treatment Act. This legislation seeks to ensure that, consistent with tribal sovereignty, tribes can apply for the Hot Spots and Drug-Endangered Children Grant Programs. It also ensures greater coordination with tribal service providers in the Pregnant and Parenting Women Offenders Grant Program.

Mr. Chairman, tribes must have access to these programs to combat the meth epidemic on their lands and in their communities. Thank you once again for holding this hearing and for allowing me to testify. I welcome any questions from the Members of the Committee, as well as any suggestions or wisdom on additional ways address this situation.

Thank you.