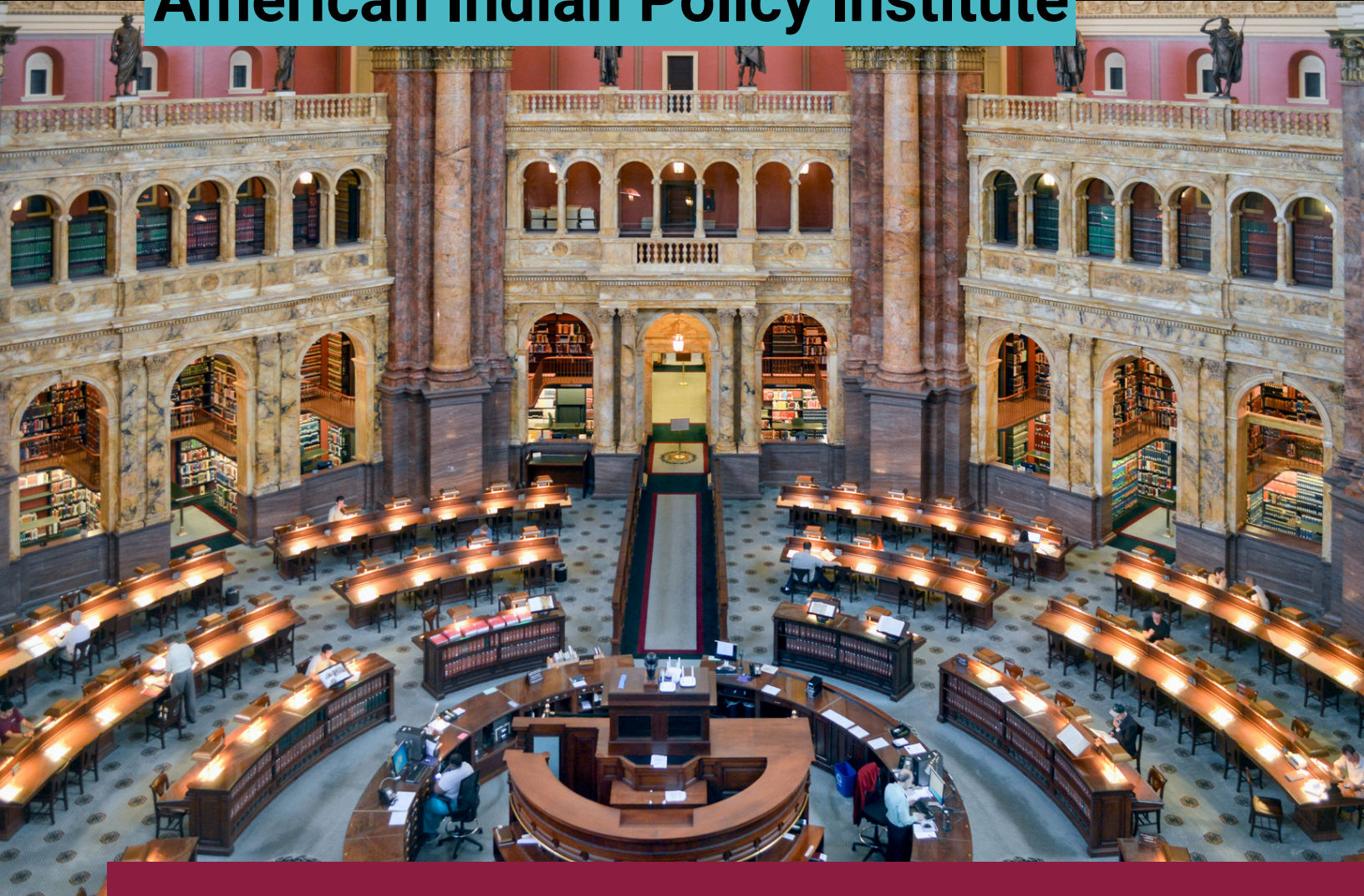


Legislative

Updates Q1 2025

American Indian Policy Institute



About This Update

Thank You For Staying Connected

AIPI's Legislative Update provides a curated overview of publicly available information from federal and state government sources. We focus on federal legislation, congressional hearings, and Federal Register notices that impact Tribal Nations, and we include key highlights from the Arizona State Legislature when applicable.

If you're reading this digitally, embedded hyperlinks throughout the document will take you directly to source materials for deeper exploration. While this quarterly update is comprehensive, the fast-moving nature of government activity means some developments may not be included.

To ensure you stay informed in real time, we invite you to explore our new [live legislative dashboard](#). It offers up-to-date access to critical legislation and notices—all in one place, whenever you need it. Please note that the word “null” within the dashboards simply indicates that no information is currently available in that section, not that the dashboard is malfunctioning. This is due to delays or gaps in updates from the government websites we rely on for information, which have become inconsistent following the recent change in administration. Thank you for your understanding. With that said, we strongly encourage you to follow AIPI's blog and social media channels for the latest developments between quarterly editions.

Additionally, AIPI would like to highlight a shared [Coalition Resource Hub](#) that centralizes materials related to the Trump Administration's early actions, including executive orders, memos, news, surveys, and coalition-produced content. The site also features a wide range of tribal responses and resources specifically relevant to tribal communities.

Thank you for staying connected with AIPI as we continue to provide information and context to support the understanding of policy developments across Indian Country.

Get real-time updates on the [Legislative Dashboard](#)

Summary

Welcome to the AIPI Quarterly Legislative Update for Q1 2025. This edition covers federal and state policy developments from January 1 to March 31, including analysis of 78 congressional bills and 221 Federal Register notices. This quarter is the first quarter in a new presidential administration, and a new Congress, the 119th, marked a notable rise in executive actions, congressional hearings, and legislation with implications for Tribal Nations.

Federal legislative efforts continued from the 118th Congress to advance Tribal self-determination, with measures such as S.723 (Tribal Trust Land Homeownership Act) and H.R. 635 (WaterSMART Access for Tribes Act) aimed at expanding access to housing and water infrastructure. These developments display a broader federal commitment to equitable program access and Tribal authority in administering government functions.

Congressional activity also featured robust Tribal engagement. A total of 11 hearings addressed Native issues, including the Senate Oversight Hearing on Native Communities' Priorities and the House Hearing on the State of BIE Schools. Notably, the House held three days of American Indian and Alaska Native Public Witness testimony, reinforcing the visibility of Tribal leadership in the legislative process.

Federal Register activity in 2025 remains dominated by NAGPRA-related notices, making up 184 of the 221 entries. However, key regulatory updates included HUD's extension for the Section 184 Indian Housing Loan Guarantee Program and NOAA's designation of the Papahānaumokuākea National Marine Sanctuary, covering over 582,000 square miles of ocean surrounding the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. These actions reflect ongoing shifts in federal housing policy and environmental governance affecting Tribal communities.

At the state level, the Arizona Legislature opened its 2025 session, introducing several bills that impact Tribes, including legislation on Indigenous Peoples' Day, Native veteran license plates, and tribal language educator certifications.

Federal Landscape

Federal Landscape & Executive Action

A new administration's early months often signal a policy direction shift, and true to expectations, we have seen a significant shift in the policy pendulum that is still in process and will undoubtedly bring unprecedented change to Tribal-Federal relations and potential challenges to the Trust Relationship.

In the first quarter of 2025, President Donald Trump signed [130 executive orders](#)—nearly 3.5 times more than President Biden’s 37 in early 2021 and over 7 times more than President Obama’s 18 in 2009. On his first day in office in 2025, Trump issued 26 executive orders, compared to a single executive order on Day 1 in 2017 – a sharp increase that highlights the administration’s substantial escalation in executive action.

As expected, most of these orders focus on reversing previous policies. [Executive Order 14148](#), signed January 20, 2025, revoked 78 executive orders and memoranda from the Biden administration. This pace and volume of action reflect a decisive shift in administrative priorities and a rapid effort to reshape the federal policy landscape at the outset of the term. Among the rescinded directives were several with direct implications for tribal nations and entities, including policies related to tribal consultation, climate resilience funding, and Indigenous education initiatives. The revocations raise concerns about the continuity of federal commitments to tribal sovereignty and the government-to-government relationship.

Executive Order Summary

| President & Year | EO Signed 1st Quarter | EO Signed in 1st Year |
|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Trump 2025 | 130 | pending |
| Biden 2021 | 37 | 77 |
| Trump 2017 | 23 | 55 |
| Obama 2009 | 18 | 40 |

Executive Orders

EOs

- **Executive Order 14248 - Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections:** This order mandates proof of citizenship for voter registration and requires that mail-in ballots be received by Election Day to be counted.
- **Executive Order 14253 - Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History:** Directs the removal of "divisive narratives" and "improper ideology" from Smithsonian Institution exhibits - specifically targets content related to gender identity.
- **Executive Order 14151 - Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing:** Terminates diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs within the federal government, arguing that such initiatives are radical and wasteful. It rescinds previous executive actions that promoted DEI efforts across federal agencies.
- **Executive Order 14191 - Expanding Educational Freedom and Opportunity for Families:** Directed the Secretary of the Interior to explore mechanisms allowing families of students eligible to attend Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools to use federal funding for educational options of their choice, including private, faith-based, or public charter schools.
- **Executive Order 14241 - Immediate Measures to Increase American Mineral Production:** Order aimed to boost domestic mineral production by streamlining regulations and leveraging the Defense Production Act. While intended to enhance economic growth, tribal communities expressed concerns about potential environmental impacts on tribal lands and the adequacy of consultation processes regarding mineral extraction projects.
- **Executive Order 14236 - Additional Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions:** Rescinded several prior executive actions, including Executive Order 14112, titled "Reforming Federal Funding and Support for Tribal Nations to Better Embrace Our Trust Responsibilities to Promote the Next Era of Tribal Self-Determination." The revocation raised concerns among tribal leaders about increased federal interference and potential limitations on tribal self-governance.

Senate

- 2/12/25 - [Oversight Hearing to “Examine Native Communities’ Priorities for the 119th Congress”](#)
- 3/5/2025 - [Business Meeting to consider several bills](#)

House

- 1/23/2025 - [Legislative Hearing on H.R. 231, H.R. 261, H.R. 331 & H.R. ____ | Water, Wildlife and Fisheries Subcommittee](#)
- 2/5/2025 - [Legislative Hearing on H.R. 410, H.R. 412, H.R. 504 & H.R. 741 | Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs](#)
- 2/12/2025 - [Leaving Indian Children Behind: Reviewing the State of BIE Schools | Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee](#)
- 2/25/2025 - [Federal Indian Trust Asset Management: Progress Made But Improvement Needed | Indian and Insular Affairs Subcommittee](#)
- 2/25/2025 - [American Indian and Alaska Native Public Witness Day 1, Morning Session](#) AND [American Indian and Alaska Native Public Witness Day 1, Afternoon Session](#)
- 2/26/2025 - [American Indian and Alaska Native Public Witness Day 2, Morning Session](#) AND [American Indian and Alaska Native Public Witness Day 2, Afternoon Session](#)
- 2/27/2025 - [American Indian and Alaska Native Public Witness Day 3](#)
- 3/25/2025 - [Legislative Hearing on H.R. 276, H.R. 845, H.R. 1897 & H.R. 1917 | Water, Wildlife and Fisheries Subcommittee](#)

Federal Legislation

Federal Legislation Summaries

- H.R.165 - Wounded Knee Massacre Memorial and Sacred Site Act - This bill directs the Department of the Interior to complete all actions necessary to place approximately 40 acres of land in Oglala Lakota County, South Dakota, into restricted fee status for the Oglala Sioux Tribe and the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. Restricted fee status refers to land that is owned by a tribe or tribal member but is subject to restrictions by the United States against alienation (i.e., sale or transfer) or encumbrance (e.g., liens, leases, or rights-of-way) by operation of law. The bill requires the land to be held and maintained as a memorial and sacred site, as outlined by the document titled Covenant Between the Oglala Sioux Tribe and the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, dated October 21, 2022. Further, it prohibits commercial development and gaming activity on the land. Sponsored by Rep. Dusty Johnson [R-SD-At Large]
- H.R.635 - WaterSMART Access for Tribes Act - This act seeks to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to improve Tribal access to water conservation and efficiency grants. The bill authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to waive or reduce the non-federal cost-share requirement for Tribes participating in WaterSMART grants if meeting the match would cause financial hardship. This change aims to remove a key barrier to Tribal participation in federal water infrastructure programs, promoting equitable access to resources that support sustainable water management in Tribal communities. Sponsored by Rep. Melanie A. Stansbury [D-NM-1]
- H.R.22 - SAVE Act - This bill requires individuals to present documentary proof of U.S. citizenship when registering to vote in federal elections. States may not process voter registration applications without such proof, which must meet standards like those outlined in the REAL ID Act. The bill mandates that states implement verification systems and programs to ensure only U.S. citizens are registered, including ongoing efforts to identify and remove noncitizens from voter rolls. Sponsored by Rep. Chip Roy [R-TX-21] Note: A similar bill, S.128 – SAVE Act, has been introduced.

- S.723 - Tribal Trust Land Homeownership Act of 2025 - This act aims to streamline and expedite the mortgage process for residential, business, and land development on Indian lands by requiring the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to meet specific deadlines for reviewing and processing mortgage packages and related documents. The bill mandates timely communication with lenders, completion of title status reports, and increased transparency in the approval process. It also calls for improved access to the Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS), an annual reporting requirement to Congress, a GAO study on digitization needs, and the establishment of a Realty Ombudsman to ensure accountability and act as a liaison between tribes, lenders, and federal agencies. Sponsored by Sen. John Thune (R-SD)
- S.761 - Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act of 2025 - This bill establishes the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the United States within the legislative branch. It sets forth its powers, duties, and membership. Among other duties, the commission must investigate the impacts and ongoing effects of the Indian Boarding School Policies (federal policies under which American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children were forcibly removed from their family homes and placed in boarding schools). Further, the commission must develop recommendations on ways to (1) protect unmarked graves and accompanying land protections; (2) support repatriation and identify the tribal nations from which children were taken; and (3) discontinue the removal of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children from their families and tribal communities by state social service departments, foster care agencies, and adoption agencies. Sponsored by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK).
- S.390 - BADGES for Native Communities Act - This bill strengthens federal coordination and accountability in responding to cases of missing or murdered Indigenous people. The bill requires federal law enforcement agencies to improve data collection, increase transparency, and report annually on personnel and resource needs in Indian Country. It creates a Tribal facilitator role within the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, establishes a grant program to enhance response coordination, and supports Tribal-State partnerships. The bill also launches a demonstration program to streamline BIA law enforcement background checks, directs the GAO to study barriers to evidence handling, and promotes interagency support for law enforcement wellness. Overall, the bill seeks to close critical gaps in investigations and services while honoring Tribal sovereignty and the safety of Native communities. Sponsored by Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto [D-NV]

Federal Legislation

- S.953 - Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Act of 2025 - This bill seeks to resolve long-standing water rights claims of the Navajo Nation, the Hopi Tribe, and the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe. The bill authorizes a comprehensive settlement agreement that includes water allocations from the Colorado River, infrastructure development such as the iiná bá – paa tuwaqat’si pipeline, and the establishment of tribal trust funds to support water delivery and management. It also includes provisions for leasing water, funding implementation, waiving certain claims, and formally recognizing the San Juan Southern Paiute Reservation. Sponsored by Sen. Mark Kelly [D-AZ]

Federal Legislation Breakdown

During the first quarter, the majority of the legislation tracked fell within three primary policy domains: Water Rights, Healthcare, and Land. Explore the bills below:

Federal Legislation Summary

| Water Rights | Healthcare | Land |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.R.907 • H.R.1444 • H.R.302 • H.R.2025 • H.R.635 • S.240 • S.241 • S.546 • S.562 • S.563 • S.564 • S.565 • S.640 • S.689 • S.637 • S.953 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.Res.119 • H.Res.185 • H.Res.210 • H.R.444 • H.R.741 • H.R.1418 • S.Res.32 • S.Res.67 • S.632 • S.870 • S.1055 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.R.165 • H.R.411 • H.R.42 • H.R.43 • H.R.226 • H.R.410 • H.R.412 • H.R.504 • S.550 • S.236 • S.622 • S.642 • S.673 • S.748 • S.1084 |

We invite you to consult the [Policy Dashboard](#) for a comprehensive review of the 78 congressional bills tracked this quarter.

Federal Register Notice Summaries

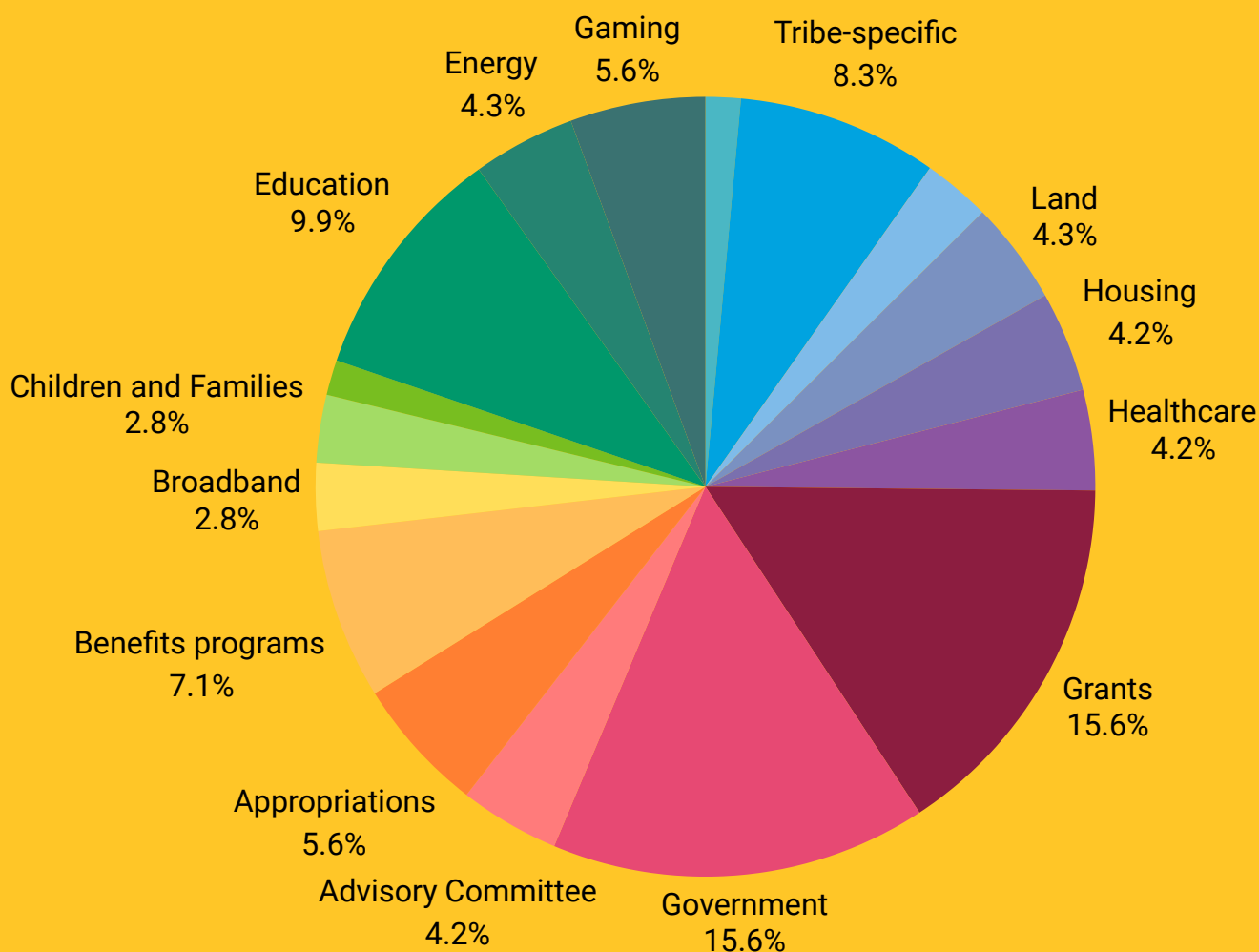
- Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustments - This rule revises U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) regulations implementing the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) to provide for annual adjustments of civil penalties to account for inflation under the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015 and Office of Management and Budget guidance. The purpose of these adjustments is to maintain the deterrent effect of civil penalties and to further the policy goals of the underlying statute. This rule also updates the mailing address for the NAGPRA Program.
- Extension of Compliance Date for Strengthening the Section 184 Indian Housing Loan Guarantee Program - HUD has extended the compliance deadline for its final rule, Strengthening the Section 184 Indian Housing Loan Guarantee Program, from March 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025. This extension allows HUD additional time to develop a comprehensive program handbook, finalize new forms, and support the transition for Tribes, lenders, servicers, and other stakeholders. The added time ensures all participants can align their policies, procedures, and systems with the new requirements outlined in the final rule.
- Papahānaumokuākea National Marine Sanctuary Designation - NOAA has officially designated the Papahānaumokuākea National Marine Sanctuary to protect the region's nationally significant biological, cultural, and historical resources. Encompassing approximately 582,570 square statute miles of Pacific Ocean surrounding the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, the sanctuary will now be managed as part of the National Marine Sanctuary System. The final rule establishes the sanctuary's terms of designation and implementing regulations. In coordination with the State of Hawai'i, NOAA has also released a final environmental impact statement (EIS), a final management plan, and a Record of Decision to guide long-term stewardship of this culturally and ecologically vital area.

Federal Register

Federal Register Breakdown

NAGPRA-related notices continue to represent a significant portion of Federal Register publications, totaling 184 entries this quarter. Excluding these, the three most prominent categories are Government-related notices (11), Grant announcements (11), and Tribe-Specific notices (6). The chart below presents a categorical breakdown of the remaining notices, excluding those pertaining to NAGPRA.

Federal Register Summary



Arizona Legislation

Arizona Legislation

The 2025 Arizona Legislative Session began on January 13th, initiating a pivotal period for state policymaking. This section highlights legislation directly impacting Arizona's Tribal communities, with a focus on key proposals considered before the session's 100th day, April 22, 2025 – a date that marks the typical end of session, though lawmakers may vote to extend it beyond that point.

HB2336 - Native American Veteran Special Plates: Arizona bill would create a Native American Veteran special license plate, if a sponsor pays the startup cost by the end of 2025. The plate would raise money for a nonprofit that supports Native American veterans and their families through services like funeral escorts, home repairs, and community events.

HB2937- Holiday; Indigenous Peoples' day: This bill would designate the 2nd Monday in October as Indigenous Peoples' Day, adding it to the list of official state holidays. The bill outlines how the holiday should be observed instead of Columbus Day. This addition recognizes and honors the contributions of Native American communities in Arizona.

SB1454 - Subject matter expert certification: This bill updates teacher certification laws, expanding pathways and flexibility for obtaining and renewing teaching credentials. Notably, the bill continues to recognize the Native American language certificate as a valid teaching credential that does not require a bachelor's degree, reaffirming support for Native language and cultural education. This provision ensures that Native American language speakers can teach in schools, helping preserve Indigenous languages and promote culturally responsive education.

HB 2281 - Missing indigenous person; alert system: This bill creates a Missing Indigenous Person Alert System within the Department of Public Safety to quickly issue alerts when an Indigenous person is reported missing. Alerts can be activated by law enforcement if the disappearance is suspicious, the person is believed to be in danger, and public assistance could aid in their recovery. The system relies on the federal emergency alert system and must also share alerts with other relevant notification networks in the state.

Arizona Legislation

Arizona Legislation

HB 2926 - AHCCCS; eligibility: This bill modifies eligibility conditions for Medicaid expansion under the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). It ties continued eligibility for certain low-income adults to a series of conditions, including work requirements, biannual redeterminations, and a five-year lifetime limit.

HB 2852 - Identification driver licenses; Native American: This bill allows individuals to request a distinguishing mark on their Arizona driver license or nonoperating ID card to identify themselves as Native American, provided they submit valid tribal documentation.

SB 1566 - Sober living; residential care; penalties: This act increases enforcement and penalties for unlicensed or noncompliant residential care and sober living homes. It creates the Indigenous Peoples Protection Revolving Fund to support tribal behavioral health services, victim restitution, and tribal college programs. A portion of collected penalties will fund these efforts, along with state oversight and licensing activities.

SB 1571 - Appropriation; coal-impacted workforce; study: This bill establishes a study committee to assess the social and economic impacts of coal industry decline on rural and tribal communities, with a focus on economic diversification strategies. The committee will submit a report by December 31, 2025, and dissolve after September 30, 2026.

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