



Rebuilding
Communities
Through Indian
Self-Reliance

Media Release

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EVERY VOTE IS A CRITICAL VOTE FOR INDIAN COUNTRY

By Ernie Stevens, Jr., Chairman
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Our right to vote as Indian people is our opportunity to shape the direction of this great Nation. We are just days away from Election Day – November 4th, 2008 and all throughout the United States of America each of us will make personal decisions that will impact Indian countries future.

Next week, we will not only be voting for new leadership at the Whitehouse, but just as vital, we will vote for leadership in Congressional, State and local elections. These leaders will be making critical decisions that will impact our local, municipal, State, and Tribal affairs.

The National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) has been working with other Native American organizations, such as the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and many tribes throughout Indian country in aggressively moving the Native Get Out the Vote Initiative (GOTV). The effort so far has been well received, owing in great part to the response of each of you in your communities and the unprecedented attention the Native American vote has received this election year.

Our challenge is to make Election Day 2008 turn out as phenomenal and successful as 2004 and 2006. The Native vote will make a difference in every state or nation with significant Indian populations. Most assuredly, Indian Country will play a vital role in the outcome in many state and federal elections. The potential out come is tremendous, not just in Indian country, but for America as a whole.

The price of not voting is too high right now.

Congratulations to the leadership all across the country that have made this election a national priority. One of the greatest effects of these times is that it creates community events all across Indian country that emphasizes positive interactions centered on the national impact of Indian country.

On Election Day we all can take this opportunity to be an example to others by being a catalyst to our Native youth and first time voters by making sure they are able to understand and appreciate their responsibilities, as well as the potential impact of this awe-inspiring exercise of democracy and empowerment of Indian country.

Remember, your State may give you the opportunity for early voting or absentee voting. If you cannot make the polls on Election Day, please seize these opportunities of convenience to cast your vote.

Our path to the polls was paved by a long history of those who came before us and fought for our Native rights. Our Native warriors have also defended this country through military service in every major conflict of this country's history, even though Indians did not have full voting rights until 1960. Your vote is powerful, as it acknowledges and honors the Indian country legacy of standing strong no matter the circumstances.

As we come to the homestretch of Election Day 2008, let's once again show the country the strength and dedication of our Native people; friends, families and employees all through Indian country that the Native vote is the vote that matters!

Vote - Tuesday, November 4th, 2008.

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About the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA)

The National Indian Gaming Association is a nonprofit trade association comprised of 184 American Indian Nations and other nonvoting associate member. The mission of NIGA is to advance the lives of Indian people – economically, socially and politically. NIGA operates as a clearinghouse and educational legislative and public policy resources for tribes, policymakers and the public on Indian gaming issues and tribal community development. For more information, visit www.indiangaming.org.