

# NATIVE American Enterprise Initiative



**U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
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The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than 3 million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations. As part of its efforts to reflect the rich and diverse nature of the American economy, the Chamber officially launched the Native American Enterprise Initiative (NAEI) in 2012 to promote the interests and agenda of tribes and tribal entrepreneurs.

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NAEI seeks to build on the Chamber's record of success and advocacy by focusing on the crucial economic issues confronting tribally owned businesses and Native American-owned enterprises.

### NAEI's Successes

This work is well under way. In 2013, the Initiative brought greater scrutiny to the contract support cost debate—resulting in a reversal of the administration's intentions on the matter and a victory for Indian Country. And in 2014, NAEI successfully lobbied for the passage and, ultimately, the enactment of the Tribal General Welfare Exclusion Act (P.L. 113-168).

In 2015, NAEI founded the Coalition for Tribal Sovereignty, a coalition of more than 150 tribes and tribal organizations, to message Congress on issues of importance to Indian Country. To date, the coalition has messaged on the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act, which seeks parity of treatment for tribal sovereigns relative to labor under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), as well as a *Carcieri* fix. With the support of the NAEI Leadership Council, the Chamber has been instrumental in keeping the debate on these two critical issues alive and moving forward in Congress. In November 2015, the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act passed the House with bipartisan support.

2016 saw the enactment of two NAEI legislative priorities. In June, the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act (P.L. 114-178) was enacted; in September the NATIVE Act (P.L. 114-221) was signed into law after NAEI's direct engagement on amending the bill as introduced in the Senate.

In addition, the Chamber has filed amicus briefs in support of tribal interests before the Supreme Court, resulting in significant victories in the Court, and is actively pursuing solutions to energy, environmental, taxation, labor, and land into trust issues in Congress.

## NAEI's Mission

NAEI's mission is to operate a purpose-built initiative focusing on essential business issues of Indian Country. NAEI promotes an aggressive policy agenda for economic development causes on the Hill in coordination with Indian tribes and other Native American advocacy organizations.

Through the development of a cohesive set of policy priorities by its members, NAEI enables tribes to fight on a level playing field when opposing burdensome and onerous regulations, proposed rulemakings, and other agency overreach.

NAEI strives to return decision-making authority from the federal government back to native sovereign nations that are better suited to make policy decisions for their constituencies.

## NAEI's Scope

- Enables tribes to expand and deepen their reach beyond traditional tribal organizations and become far more integrated into business community priorities.
- Strengthens tribes' ties to and collaboration with state and local chambers of commerce.
- Functions as the Native American policymaking arm of the Chamber.
- Presents tribes with a unique opportunity to deliver the broadest advocacy for tribal business priorities to Congress and the administration.

## Leadership Council

The Leadership Council is composed of major tribes and tribal enterprises. Drawing on the Chamber's vast resources and long-standing track record of impacting public policy, the council brings new energy to develop lasting solutions to Native American issues.

### **Core Council Functions**

- Serves as the governing body of NAEI.
- Identifies and guides NAEI's legislative agenda.
- Develops strategy for advocacy to Congress, executive branch agencies, and other government entities.
- Advises Chamber staff dedicated to the NAEI agenda and advocacy.
- Determines NAEI's participation and coordination with other Native American advocacy organizations and coalitions.



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