

An Excerpt from Kevin Gover's Prepared Statement to the Committee on Indian Affairs
Hearing Regarding the Reform of the Federal Acknowledgment Process that Occurred April 21, 2004



First, I strongly believe that certain petitioners, which already have been denied recognition, should be permitted another opportunity under the revised process established by this bill. I adopted a policy when I was Assistant Secretary that I would not revisit final determinations of my predecessors in office. While I believe that this was the right policy, I remain troubled to this day that justice was denied to certain tribes, particularly the Miami Tribe. Even some of the petitions I personally acted upon leave me wishing that this revised process had been in effect when I was in office. Into this category I would place the Mowa Choctaw. **Finally, I remain convinced that the Chinook Tribe is deserving of Federal recognition, and I believe that, if Assistant Secretary McCaleb had the resources provided by this bill available to him when he addressed the Chinook petition, the outcome well may have been different.**

Kevin Gover is currently the Director of the National Museum of the American Indian and was the Assistant Secretary of the Interior at the time of Chinook's recognition in January, 2001. Remarkably, the incoming Bush Administration reversed this decision in July, 2002!