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July 20, 2010

Re: Vote YES for Senate Amendments to H.R. 725,  
Indian Arts and Crafts Amendments Act

Dear Representative:

I write on behalf of the American Bar Association, which has nearly 400,000 members nationwide, to support the Senate amendments to H.R. 725, the Indian Arts and Crafts Amendments Act. We understand H.R. 725 may be considered on the House suspension calendar as early as Wednesday, July 21.

The Senate amendments to H.R. 725 incorporate S. 797, the bipartisan Tribal Law and Order Act of 2009. This legislation would address the violent crime rate in Indian country, which is nearly twice the national average and more than 20 times the national average on some reservations.

The ABA strongly supports the provisions of H.R. 725 that: (1) authorize funding for the development and continued operation of tribal justice systems; (2) address critical barriers preventing the safety of American Indian and Alaska Native women by boosting law enforcement efforts; (3) provide tools to tribal justice officials to fight crime in their own communities; (4) improve coordination between law enforcement agencies; and (5) increase accountability standards.

The ABA strongly supports the Senate amendments which strengthen protection and assistance for victims of gender-based violence, including American Indian and Alaska Native women. The ABA specifically urges Congress to enact this legislation which (1) supports funding for legal assistance for victims of gender-based violence; (2) supports funding to provide training and education about gender-based violence and the needs of victims; (3) supports efforts to foster a multidisciplinary and community approach to serving victims and ending gender-based violence; and (4) supports efforts to ensure that perpetrators of gender-based violence are held accountable.

The ABA urges you to vote yes for H.R. 725 when it is considered on the Suspension calendar. Thank you for your consideration of the ABA's views.

Sincerely,



Thomas M. Susman