

# Summary of H. R. 2786, Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2007

## Background

According to census data, the poverty rate for Native Americans is approximately 26 percent, more than twice the average for all Americans. While 5.8 percent of the general population of the U.S. is unemployed, the current unemployment rate among Native Americans living on reservations is 13.6 percent. On Native American lands, 11.7 percent of residents lack complete plumbing facilities and 16.9 percent lack telephone service. This, coupled with the price of a new home and the lack of existing housing, has created a dire need for affordable housing on reservations.

On June 26, 2007, the Committee on Financial Services approved by voice vote H. R. 2786, "Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act" (NAHASDA) which reauthorized NAHASDA through FY 2012. The goal of H.R. 2786 is to provide greater autonomy to Native Americans in using federal grant funds and give tribes more resources and flexibility to meet their affordable housing needs. The bill specifically accomplishes the following:

- Authorizes the Indian Housing Block Grant program for five years.
- Reauthorizes the loan guarantee program established under Title VI of NAHASDA and requires HUD to conduct educational seminars with tribes on how to utilize these funds.
- Reauthorizes funds for training and technical assistance to tribes regarding housing.
- Creates a self-determination program whereby tribes may set aside 15% of their NAHASDA grant, up to \$1 million, for housing activities not approved or directly regulated by HUD.
- Reauthorizes housing assistance and block grant programs for Native Hawaiians.
- Directs the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study of NAHASDA's effectiveness.
- Clarifies the ability of tribes to compete for funds under the Home Investment Partnership Program.
- Make Federal supply sources through the GSA more accessible to tribes.
- Recognizes tribal in addition to Indian preference in hiring and contracting for NAHASDA activities.
- Makes various technical changes to existing law.