

# INDIAN NEWS NOTES

## **Indian Youths in Washington Testify For Alcohol Prevention Bills:**

A group of Indian teenagers, visiting Washington for an Indian Youth Conference, testified to a House Panel on behalf of two bills to prevent drug and alcohol abuse among Native American youths. The bills, introduced by Representatives John McCain from Arizona, Douglas Bereuter from Nebraska and Tom Daschle from South Dakota, would provide treatment, family counseling programs and education about the dangers of drinking and drug use, including its effects on unborn babies. The education programs would begin in kindergarten and extend through high school, but some teenagers urged the panel to start with pre-school children. In addition, one of the bills calls for establishing summer youth recreational and employment programs and creating

temporary shelters for Indian youths arrested for drunkenness rather than having them sent to jail. The young Indians, in support of the legislation, stressed a need for stability, counseling, supervision, family participation, better education, employment, recreational facilities and communication between Indians and whites. They blame drinking and drug use among Indian youths on aimlessness, depression, a lack of parental understanding, communication and support. Rhoda Tso, a high school student from Page, Arizona, testified that Indian youths "feel they can't make it in a white man's world. They feel alienated. It's two separate worlds, and they clash," she said. National surveys show Native American youths have higher death rates from accidents, suicide, homicide and alcoholism than other race.