

Editorial

Reagan's Support for Self-determination

The new President's hiring freeze has awakened apprehension in the Native community over Reagan's intentions in regard to Self-Determination programs.

The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 was forged under another Republican administration—Richard Nixon—and brought to fruition under several succeeding Democratic administrations.

The Indian Self-Determination Act represents more than just a law; it is National policy. It is a statement of National intent toward American Indians and Alaska Natives. Self-Determination recognizes Indian sovereignty, and puts the conduct of their own affairs as much as possible into their own hands by making it possible for Natives to contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and/or Indian Health Service for their own health and social service programs.

Since these programs are conducted through BIA and IHS, both federal agencies, they could possibly be affected by hiring freezes.

President Reagan, though, has reaffirmed his support for Self-Determination. We take him at his word. To cut back on these programs or even, in some cases, to not allow their expansion, could seriously jeopardize badly needed social programs in the villages.