

Reagan budget slashes millions from JOM



Students learn net mending from Billy Pete at the JOM Subsistence Camp in French for Junior High School students.

photo by Georgia DeBruin

by Jim Benedetto

Tuscola Times Editor

Reagan administration budget cuts and the probable effect of the month-old Gramm-Rudman deficit reduction plan will slash funds from Johnson O'Malley (JOM) Indian education programs by as much as 41 percent this year alone.

This year's appropriation for JOM is over \$3 million lower nationwide than that of the previous year. That should result in a net reduction of local JOM funds of about 12 percent.

The appropriation bill also eliminated contract support funds for JOM programs, separate grants which have in previous years offset the costs of administering the various JOM programs.

The percentage of program dollars which pay for administration of the programs are often referred to as an "indirect rate". Elimination of the contract support dollars will result in a

reduction of 23.7 percent in addition to the 12 percent eliminated by the Reagan administration.

But the real culprit in coming reductions for the important JOM programs and most other domestic social programs will be the Gramm-Rudman Act. The act stipulates that should the Congress and the president be unable to cut spending in order to adhere to specific budget deficit limits, that automatic across-the-board cuts will be implemented.

The deficit spending limit for the FY 1986 budget is \$171.9 billion. Most analysts, including the Reagan administration's own economists, predict that the deficit will exceed the goal. That would mean yet an additional cut in JOM program monies of six percent or more this year alone.

Cuts in the coming years will depend on the success or failure of the government's efforts to meet ever-

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shrinking deficit limits. The real danger to domestic programs is demonstrated by example. Should the budget deficits remain around \$200 billion in the succeeding years, JOM and other programs would incur cuts of approximately 25 percent in FY 1987 *over and above those already endured in FY 1986*. FY 1988, with a deficit limit of \$108 billion, would see *additional cuts of almost 50 percent*.

David ThunderEagle of the Cook Inlet Tribal Council is the JOM Director here in Anchorage. "I've gotten somewhat used to the federal funding rollercoaster," says ThunderEagle, "but the JOM program is so important to the needs of the students... I hoped it would never come to this."

The Johnson O'Malley programs began nationwide in 1934, as part of the Indian Reorganization Act. The program itself was originally designed to provide a funding base for public school districts serving Indian children from nearby reservations.

In 1976, with passage of the Indian Self-Determination Act, the focus of the program changed along with federal Indian policy. Native Americans were encouraged to provide services to their people that up until then were handled by the government.

Parent committees were formed to decide what educational services were

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needed and how they could be provided. The committees became surrogate school boards acting in an advisory capacity within the public school

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Alternative School Counselor Lisa Dolchok at Save I confers with several students.

photo by Bernice Morrison

system itself. Supplemental educational opportunities were offered, the formation of Native Culture Clubs and other organizations was encouraged, and counseling from Native teachers and counselors was provided.

In the Anchorage School District, the JOM program is a huge success. Fewer Native students are dropping out of school. There are more graduates than ever before, and the

standard of academic achievement has increased markedly. Local school district personnel credit JOM with much of the improvement.

"The program here at Dimond and also at Clark provide support people and a lot of positive social contacts to these students... as a result, they're staying in school," says Don Barta, principal of Dimond High School. "All I can say is that they provide a lot of 'warm fuzzies' that makes kids want to come to school," adds Barta.

Other JOM programs serving the Anchorage area include Native Youth Olympics, Native Youth Leadership, Native Dress Review, Greatland

Traditional Dancers and Camp Na Dunae, a day camp where Native children are exposed to cultural crafts, games and traditional values.

This Friday, a meeting will be held by the JOM Parent Committee to perform a needs assessment. The purpose of the meeting will be to determine what programs will be pared or eliminated because of this year's cuts. The meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. at the Fairview Community Center.

Parents of Native children are also urged to submit their certification forms on time. Every form that is submitted means additional funds for the JOM programs in your area.



This youngster learns the proper way to cut fish for drying and smoking at the JOM Junior High Subsistence Camp in Tyonek. photo by Georgia DeKeyser