

To implement--

Indian self-determination

WASHINGTON — South Dakota Sen. Jim Abourezk was unsuccessful recently in an attempt to get the U.S. Senate to pass a \$25 million funding amendment to implement PL 93-638, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act which was passed and signed into law Jan. 4, 1975.

Abourezk said that while he was disappointed that the Senate failed to consider his amendment he was at least able to get a promise from members of the Senate Interior Appropriations Committee that such an amendment would be offered if the Office of Management and Budget and the BIA had not requested the implementation funds within the next two months.

The South Dakota senator noted that if these implementation funds are not approved the cause of Indian self-determination will again be harmed.

"Failure to pass the funding measure would especially hurt the smaller Indian tribes who simply do not have the money to hire the lawyers, clerical staff, etc., needed to implement

the self-determination law," Abourezk said.

In appealing to members of the Senate for passage of his amendment, Abourezk said, "This Congress and the President have gone on record in support of Indian self-determination. What that means is that we are going to make an effort to cut the strings from the Bureau of Indian Affairs so that the Indian tribes around the country can learn to govern themselves. That is the objective of this Congress.

"The only problem with agreeing with that objective is that we have not provided the funds to allow the Indian tribes to do just that. The reason we have not provided them is because the Bureau of Indian Affairs has failed to request them in this budget.

"The reason the BIA has refused to request the \$25 million, which they will concede internally they need to give to the tribes, is because it means that the balance of power between the BIA and the tribes will be upset," Abourezk said.