



The **RESOURCE** Sentinel

April 11, 2003

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senator
Chairman, Committee on Governmental Affairs
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Collins,

Our organization has been studying Senators Inouye and Campbell's S. 578 since its early discussion in the Indian media, hearings with tribal leaders in the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs and the Senators meetings with the National Congress of American Indians.

The Citizens Equal Rights Alliance (CERA) was formed almost twenty years ago and is the only national organization that works with tribal members to protect all American citizens living on or near reservations from discrimination by United States, State and Tribal laws and policies.

In its early stages S. 578 was called the "Hicks Fix". Its intent was to reverse several United States Supreme Court decisions concerning the nature and extent of tribal sovereignty, the nature and extent of tribal jurisdiction over non-members, tribal taxation authority, and the reach and power of tribal courts. CERA was very involved in one of these decisions called *Atkinson vs. Shirley*. One of our local groups from Minnesota called Proper Economic Resource Management (PERM), submitted an amicus curiae brief in that case and wording from the brief was used several times in Chief Justice Rehnquist's majority opinion. A letter from PERM's legal counsel Randy Thompson to PERM about the 9-0 supreme court ruling is attached for your review.

CERA has grave concerns about this bill and what it will do for the future of our country. The U.S. Constitution, its Bill of Rights and its Fourteenth Amendment equal protections are all in grave jeopardy if S. 578 were to become law.

We respectfully request that your committee invite CERA's Federal Indian Policy experts to testify on this bill. We have many citizens both tribal and non-tribal, as well as very knowledgeable legal counsel who deserve to testify on behalf of the millions of citizens who will be impacted by this legislation.

We are also discussing this legislation with our local Minnesota Senators Dayton and Coleman and seeking their support for our invitation to testify.

Sincerely,

Howard B. Hanson

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