



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

September 12, 2019

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee,
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Thornberry:

As you begin conferencing on the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, I urge you to retain Section 6020 of the Senate-passed bill, which consists of the House-passed H.R. 297, in the final package. This non-controversial bill would restore federal recognition to the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana. The Little Shell people have suffered long enough at the hands of the bureaucracy in Washington and it is time for Congress to restore the Tribe's federal recognition.

The Little Shell Tribe has fought to restore its status as a recognized tribe for over 100 years. Congress should act now to end their struggle and grant the Tribe the justice it deserves. Congress has acted to legislatively recognize 23 other tribes since 1960. The 115th Congress passed legislation to recognize six tribes in Virginia in 2017. I ask this Congress to afford the Little Shell Tribe the same treatment by retaining Section 6020 in this year's NDAA. The Tribe and its legislation enjoy the support of every other tribe in the State of Montana, the entire Montana Delegation, the Montana Governor, the Montana Attorney General, and the Montana Legislature.

In the 115th Congress, the Little Shell Restoration Act unanimously passed the House, and it overwhelmingly passed the House again in the 116th. Each time, the legislation died in the Senate. Senate passage of the Little Shell Restoration Act as part of the NDAA represents the best opportunity we have encountered in years to finally restore the Tribe's recognition. The Little Shell people have waited long enough. It is time to give them the overdue recognition they deserve. I urge you to provide federal recognition of the Little Shell Tribe in the final National Defense Authorization Act.

Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact Tripp McKemey on my staff if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Gianforte', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Greg Gianforte
Member of Congress