

9b – Power Shift

During the last two centuries, the U.S. government has imposed a series of disastrous and often contradictory policies on American Indian tribes. Despite strong Native opposition to each new plan, the policies were deemed to be in the tribes' best interest. Most of these policies eroded tribal land bases, cultures and sovereign powers, and the U.S. government ultimately acknowledged them as failures.

In the 1960s and 70s, Indian activists insisted that Native peoples be given a greater measure of control in shaping and administering federal policies and programs that directly affect their lives. Congress answered their demands by passing the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act in 1975.

The Congress hereby recognizes the obligation of the United States to respond to the strong expression of the Indian people for self-determination by assuring maximum Indian participation in the direction of educational as well as other Federal services to Indian communities so as to render such services more responsive to the needs and desires of those communities.

The Congress declares its commitment to the maintenance of the Federal Government's unique and continuing relationship with and responsibility to the Indian people through the establishment of a meaningful Indian self-determination policy which will permit an orderly transition from Federal domination of programs for and services to Indians to effective and meaningful participation by the Indian people in the planning, conduct, and administration of those programs and services.

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