



SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

SAA Statement on Proposed NAGPRA Amendment

S. 2843, the Native American Technical Corrections Act, sponsored by Senator Campbell (R-CO), was reported out of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee to the full Senate last week. Section 14 of the bill would alter the definition of "Native American" in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in order to address a recent court ruling that the remains known as Kennewick Man do not meet the legal definition of Native American in NAGPRA.

The way in which this amendment to NAGPRA was introduced has raised concerns for SAA. The Society participated in the development and passage of the law and has been consulted as a stakeholder in NAGPRA issues since that time. SAA and many other stakeholders were not consulted or even informed that the amendment was going to be proposed; no hearings or discussion of this significant change in the law will be held prior to Senate consideration of the bill.

After some the discussion of the issues involved, SAA's Board of Directors has agreed on the following position:

- Because NAGPRA is a compromise law formulated through an open, deliberative process involving all the concerned parties, SAA is opposed to changes in this important legislation being made without a full and open hearing. SAA is not opposed to the substance of this proposed amendment, which affirms the Society's position that the definition of "Native American" was intended to include tribes, peoples, and cultures that were once indigenous to the United States as well as those presently recognized as indigenous, but we are strongly opposed to the process through which this amendment is being put forward.

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