Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Office Building Address

Washington, DC 20002

**RE: Action Needed Immediately to Support the Special Diabetes Program for Indians**

Dear **[NAME OF SENATOR**]:

On behalf of the [**INSERT NAME OF TRIBE OR ORGANIZATION]**, and someone who knows first-hand the tremendous burden diabetes places on my Tribal community, I am writing in support for the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI). I ask that you join the bipartisan sign on letter from the Senate Diabetes Caucus as a show of your support for programs effectively combating diabetes.

Thanks to Congressional reauthorization of the Special Diabetes Program (SDP) and the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) through September 2019, my community has the resources needed to address our disproportionate burden of diabetes. As you may know, American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) adults are 2.3 times more likely to have diagnosed diabetes compared with non-Hispanic whites and the death rate due to diabetes for American Indians and Alaska Natives is 1.6 times higher than the general U.S. population. However, the federal investment in SDPI has already shown significant improvements and is advancing the health care quality and access for Tribal communities.

Over the lifetime of the program, AI/ANs nationwide have experienced a reduction in A1C levels, reduced cholesterol levels, and weight loss. Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published data in its Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report about the remarkable decline in End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) due to diabetes seen in American Indians and Alaska Natives in 1996-2013. During this time period, AI/ANs have experienced a ***54% decline in incidence rates of ESRD due to diabetes* –** the steepest decline of any other ethnic group. Additionally, for every year a person is kept off of dialysis, Medicare saves over $88,000.

Today, SDPI supports 301 diabetes programs in 35 states that have led to significant advances in diabetes education, prevention, and treatment. (**Please add a few sentences about SDPI-supported programs in your Area and/or Tribal Community)**. SDPI is saving lives, transforming communities, and saving our federal healthcare system dollars as well.

**[INSERT NAME OF TRIBE]** has relied on Congressional support of SDPI over the years. We would appreciate your support in signing onto the letter from Senators Susan Collins and Jeanne Shaheen, the Co-chairs of the Senate Diabetes Caucus.

To learn more about diabetes in AI/AN communities and stories of how SDPI is saving lives please visit <http://nihb.org/sdpi>.

Sincerely,

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