

# **Executive Branch Protocol and Procedures for Working with and Communicating to the Osage Nation Congress**

## **Testifying before a Congressional Committee**

- Prior to testifying in support of a budget or providing information on a proposed bill, you must receive written clearance from the Principal Chief or his designee in order to represent the Executive Branch.
- Once clearance has been granted for you to testify, always observe the following protocol and procedure:
  - Address the Chair formally.
  - Do not speak unless recognized by the Chair.
  - Respond to questions through the Chair.
  - Do not get caught up in disputes between members of Congress.
  - Never be in the audience unnecessarily. While there, do not talk or disrupt the meeting, even if others do so.
  - Answer briefly, simply using *yes* or *no* when practical.
  - Never read your testimony. Summarize it in accord with the circumstances. The most effective testimony is given with conviction, confidence, and clarity.
  - If you do not know the answer to a question, please say so. Do not guess. Tell the Chair you will be pleased to get the answer to him or her promptly.
- Do not express a position on a bill except in formal testimony that is approved by your Director or governing board and reviewed and cleared through the Office of the Principal Chief.
- If you have a concern about an Executive Branch proposal or position, resolve it with the Principal Chief's Office as soon as possible. Do not raise it in a committee meeting or discuss it with members of Congress outside of the Committee.
- Avoid taking a position on a bill introduced by a member or a committee until you know the position, if any, that the Principal Chief may have toward the bill.
- Don't agree to compromises unless you know the Principal Chief and your Director or governing board have approved the changes. Tell the Chair that you will verify approval and promptly respond. This may not please the committee, but is far better than having to recant your statement.
- Your primary role is to provide accurate and objective facts bearing on a bill.
- Leave advocacy, negotiations or compromises to the Principal Chief or the Chief's staff. Do not agree to the compromise or amendment of a bill.
- Data about fiscal or program impact of a bill should be reviewed and approved by your Director or governing board and cleared through review by the Principal Chief's Office.

## **Responding to questions and/or providing information or data to Members of the Osage Nation Congress**

- When visited or called by a Member or Members of the Osage Nation Congress, always observe the following protocol and procedure:
  - Greet and acknowledge Members by their formal title, no matter how well you know them.
  - Treat all members of the Nation and their representatives with respect at all times, regardless of the circumstances.
  - Act with highest level of integrity throughout the visit or call, and remember, in your professional capacity, you represent the Executive Branch and the Principal Chief, not yourself, and must act accordingly.
  - When asked for opinion, information or data, promptly notify the Member(s) of Congress that you, as a representative of the Executive Branch, are required to respond to any Congressional requests in writing and receive clearance from the Office of the Principal Chief to ensure the most clear and accurate responses are transmitted to Congress. Politely inform Members of Congress who visit or call that you are also required to document the visit and/or call and that a timely response will be forthcoming. Clarify the request and ask if there are any additional questions or information needed prior to ending the visit or call.
  - Document any and all visits and calls from Members of Congress by completing the approved Congressional Request for Information Form and sending it within 48 hours to the Office of the Principal Chief.
  - Promptly report to a supervisor or governing board/commission, who shall document the occurrence and report to the office of the Principal Chief, any conflicts or unusual events involving Members of Congress or their staff. When unsure how important an event or contact with a Member of Congress or their staff is, opt to report it.
- When you receive a written request from a Member or Members of the Osage Nation Congress, always observe the following protocol and procedure:
  - Acknowledge receipt of the request by e-mail immediately and notify the Member or Members of Congress and or their staff you are processing the request as required in accordance with the protocol and procedures outlined in this Order.
  - Respond with highest level of integrity throughout any communication, and remember, in your professional capacity, you represent the Executive Branch and the Principal Chief, not yourself, and must act accordingly.
  - When asked for opinion, information or data by e-mail or in written correspondence, notify the Member(s) of Congress that you, as a representative of the Executive Branch, are required to respond to any Congressional requests in writing and receive clearance from the Office of the Principal Chief prior to sending a response to ensure the most clear and accurate responses are transmitted to Congress and that a timely written response will be forthcoming.

- Document any and all e-mails and written correspondence from Members of Congress by completing the approved Congressional Request for Information Form and sending it within 48 hours to the Office of the Principal Chief.
- Promptly report to a supervisor or governing board/commission, who shall document the occurrence and report to the Office of the Principal Chief, any conflicts or unusual events involving Members of Congress or their staff. When unsure how important an event or contact with a Member of Congress or their staff is, opt to report it.