

Public Health Service SPAAN, Mr. John

February 22, 1967

The Honorable Harry J. W. Belvin  
Principal Chief, Choctaw Nation  
302 West Willow  
Durant, Oklahoma 74701

Dear Chief Belvin:

Your good letters of February 10 and 12 were awaiting me upon my return to the office after having been away for a week for some additional sunshine and rest in the Caribbean area.

I don't think I have ever read more eloquent letters. All I can say in response is that I shall continue to do my best to serve the interests of our Indian friends. Your leadership and advice and counsel are deeply appreciated.

My warm personal regards and very best wishes.

Sincerely,

CARL ALBERT, M. C.  
Third District, Oklahoma

CA/Whn

Public Health Service SPAAN, Mr. John

(to be answered upon Mr. Albert's return)

February 17, 1967

The Honorable Harry J. W. Belvin  
Principal Chief, Choctaw Nation  
Durant, Oklahoma 74701

Dear Chief Belvin:

Thank you very much for your letter of February 10 and the enclosures for Congressman Albert regarding Mr. John Spaan. As you know, Mr. Albert is away from Washington for some rest and sunshine due to the Lincoln Recess of Congress. We'll put your letter on his desk for his attention upon his return early next week.

Warmest regards.

Sincerely,

Charles L. Ward,  
Administrative Assistant


CLW/hn

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF  
**Principal Chief, Choctaw Nation**

Durant, Oklahoma

February 12, 1967

HARRY J. W. BELVIN  
PRINCIPAL CHIEF

*Write him a  
nice letter tell  
him I'd be glad  
to help in any way.*  


Congressman Carl Albert  
Office of the Majority Leader  
House Office Building  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Congressman Albert:

I overlooked sending you the enclosed letter from Dr. Benjamin McBrayer dated January 17, -the contents of which are obvious - when I sent you his letter of January 12.

Dr. McBrayer is the same man who chose to ignore your recommendations regarding the transfer of one of the Talihina Hospital employees and sent her away while your office was investigating the proposed transfer. Charlie will remember the incident. Dr. McBrayer is the same man that chose to employ a non-Indian as Maintenance Engineer at the Talihina Hospital while your office was trying to help us get a full blood Cherokee promoted to this position, one who was apparently in line for this promotion who had had twenty years' experience in that department.

I could write you a small volume on the good doctor, his attitudes, his animosities and prejudices, his vengeful nature, etc. etc., but I won't at this time. He dislikes John Spaan with a passion, and he will not stop at anything to stop John. I hope to come to Washington in the near future, and I hope you will not close the door on the proposal to place an Oklahoman in the position of Executive Officer in the Oklahoma City Area Office, at which time I will tell you more about Dr. McBrayer. Please, note that all the persons discussed in the enclosed letter are being sent to Oklahoma from other areas which is one of the factors about which there is so much complaint. These people are not Oklahoma oriented and the Indians know that.

An INDIAN CONFERENCE ON POLICY AND LEGISLATION was held in Washington, D. C., January 30-February 2, 1967. Following this conference, a letter was sent by Indian leaders to President Lyndon B. Johnson from which I have assorted the following excerpt and which is somewhat apropos to the subject at hand:

"For other citizens, government exists to serve them - as a matter of right and not of favor. It is time that government consistently recognize that it is our servant and not our master. Many of our difficulties today, we feel, lie in the unresponsiveness of public officials to our social and economic needs despite the fact that adequate legislation exists to further



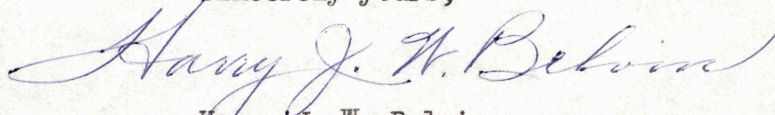
Indian progress in many fields....."

I predict that the time is coming when the government and those in authority will see that Indian progress has been restrained because his little voice has been too weak to be heard in matters concerning his own welfare. When he becomes unfettered and is allowed to develop like other Americans, when he has attained that dignity of bearing that marks the man who is master of his own soul, when he can take the white man by the hand and truly say, "This is my brother", then, and only then will he be free to claim in his own way that heritage that should inure to every free born American.

Carl, we are asking for so little--can't you help us place one Oklahoman in the chain of command in our own Indian facility while so many are being placed in this facility from other states without even consulting the people to be served?

There is only one who can shake my faith in your ability to get things done, and that is you. I shall continue to believe in you until you show me that I can't.

Sincerely yours,



Harry J. W. Belvin  
Principal Chief  
Choctaw Nation

Enclosure



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Public Health Service

Refer to: A:Personnel-1

JAN 17 1967

Mr. Harry J. W. Belvin  
Principal Chief, Choctaw Nation  
302 W. Willow  
Durant, Oklahoma 74701

Dear Mr. Belvin:

In the interest of good communication and so that you may be informed of impending changes, I believe that the following information will be of interest to you.

On or about July 1, 1967 I will transfer to the Division of Indian Health Headquarters Office in Silver Spring, Maryland as Chief, Office of Special Services. I have enjoyed my four years plus in the Oklahoma City Area, but look forward to the challenge of a new job.

E. S. Rabeau, M.D., Assistant Surgeon General, Director, Division of Indian Health, announced on January 10, 1967 the following assignments, effective about July 1, 1967:

1. Jack C. Robertson, Medical Director, Indian Health Area Director, Portland Area, will transfer to the Oklahoma Area and serve as Indian Health Area Director.
2. Robert L. Brutsche, Medical Director, formerly of the Window Rock Sub-Area Office and currently at the University of California School of Public Health, will be assigned to Oklahoma as Deputy Indian Health Area Director.

Previously announced was the assignment of Francis C. Ellis, Pharmacist Director, as Executive Officer replacing Mr. Ernest V. Downing who retired from federal service December 30, 1966. Mr. Ellis is being transferred from Anchorage, Alaska where he has been the Executive Officer of that area for the past six years. Mr. Ellis is expected about April 1, 1967.

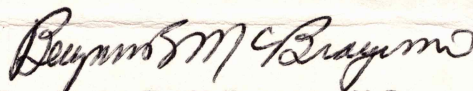
Mr. James Gordon has transferred from the Aberdeen Area Office where he has served as Chief, Area Financial Management Branch, to replace Miss Ruth Buring in the same position in the Oklahoma Area. Miss Buring retired from service in December 1966.



I am well acquainted with Doctors Robertson and Brutsche, as well as Mr. Ellis and I can assure you they are all capable and well-qualified. I have met Mr. Gordon and am well advised as to his capabilities and know he can perform his duties well. I feel all of you will be able to work with these new men in these important positions. They are all vitally interested in the Indian Health program and bring with them years of experience.

During the next few months I will be in all service units and hope to see you before I leave.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Benjamin E. McBrayer". The script is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name "Benjamin" and last name "McBrayer" being clearly legible.

Benjamin E. McBrayer, M.D.  
Indian Health Area Director



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF  
**Principal Chief, Choctaw Nation**

Durant, Oklahoma

February 10, 1967

HARRY J. W. BELVIN  
PRINCIPAL CHIEF

Congressman Carl Albert  
Office of the Majority Leader  
House Office Building  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Congressman Albert:

Enclosed is the letter which Dr. McBrayer sent out to all the members of the Inter-tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes the day after I announced to the Council that we were going to make a concerted effort to get an Oklahoman appointed as Executive Officer of the Oklahoma City Area Office, Division of Indian Health. Also enclosed is a copy of the Resolution which was passed by the Inter-tribal Council bearing upon the subject among other things.

Dr. McBrayer sent his letter in a deliberate effort to discourage members of the Inter-tribal Council from writing you and other members of the Oklahoma Congressional Delegation seeking your help in this important matter. I am frank in saying that if we lose our congressman to the overpowering influence of this giant octopus that is slowly creating a vast empire throughout the United States, the HEW, the Indians will lose the little voice they now have, then, what will we do?

An unhappy history testifies to the fact that the Indian people of this great country have always and forever had to beg for every concession that was ever made to them. We are appealing to you now to get tough with these programmers who persist in sacrificing human sympathy and the human touch to keep on programming for program's sake making the short-lived Indian the guinea pig, then, if the program fails, they try again, through the trial and error method, ignoring the appeal of the ones for whom the congress, in its wisdom, has made provision to assist. Are we going to give just lip-service to the pronouncement, so current, that "we are going to give the Indian people a voice in planning their own future?"

We have had our share of unhappy experiences with administrators who were shipped in here from far away places to try to mold the Oklahoma Indians to their concept. Carl, they are just not in sympathy with the Indians. The BIA office in Muskogee has, in the past, provided celebrated examples of this. Until we got an Oklahoman to grace that good office, we were constantly having trouble with the Area Directors. When Graham Holmes, an Oklahoman, took over there, he started the pendulum in the right direction, and when he left, Virgil Harrington, another Oklahoman, has continued this fine policy, and I want you to know that a vast majority of the Indians of the Muskogee Area would



would walk all the way to Washington, D. C., if they thought that was the only way they could retain his splendid services. He understands Oklahoma Indians, and they love him for his understanding heart and his proven sympathy for the Indian who is struggling to find his way in a changing world. Indians are people, too! and they resent being cut to a pattern rather than having the pattern cut to them.

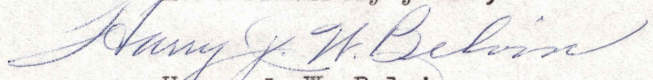
Indians have always gotten the short end, all things else being equal, and it is because they cannot help themselves. They number 1 to 500 in comparison to the rest of the population, and if the essence of our democracy, a representative form of government, is lost to them, their plight is absolutely hopeless.

Carl, the Indian people of this country have not loved you for your achievements in the field of legislation--I doubt that they could tell you what you have done in this area of government--they have loved you because conscientious leaders have sung your praises throughout the breadth and depth of our good Indian country, and because you have been responsive to them and have lent your gentle personal touch to their problems, and you have served them in so many ways. You have lent some of your strength to me, and I, in turn, have repaid you with unswerving loyalty and fidelity, the only way I know.

In the fight to remove W. O. Roberts and Paul L. Fickinger as Area Directors at Muskogee, I did not call upon you to intervene. I did not ask you to recommend the removal of Dr. Herbert A. Hudgins and Dr. Benjamin E. McBrayer as the Area Directors of Indian Health at Oklahoma City. I simply did not want to make myself obnoxious to you by calling upon you unless it became absolutely necessary. But I did let it be known that we would call upon you if we had to in each instance. Now, I am of the opinion that the USPHS, in the future, will have no dread of you, if it runs this over you. Twice before, it has defied you when I asked for your help, and if it gets away with this, it is logical to assume that it will always feel it can prevail upon you to see things its way, and if this be true, the Indians of southeastern Oklahoma will have lost its greatest champion in congress, and their little voice will then, indeed, be that of one "crying in the wilderness".

Please, Carl, get tough with them, and tell them what you want for the Indian segment of your constituency. Show them that we have a champion who can get things done for us. We still have faith in the influence you can wield, and we are going to count on you until it is proven that we cannot.

Most sincerely yours,



Harry J. W. Belvin  
Principal Chief  
Choctaw Nation



FEB 9 - 1967

Dr. Wm. H. Stewart  
Surgeon General  
U. S. Public Health Service  
National Institute of Health  
Building 31  
Bethesda, Maryland 20014

Dear Dr. Stewart:

There is forwarded to you Resolution adopted by The Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes on January 11, 1967 in session at Jones Academy, Hartshorne, Oklahoma.

Your consideration and favorable action on this Resolution will be deeply appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Overton James  
President

cc: Commissioner of Indian Affairs w/c Resolution  
Area Director Harrington  
Chairman, Special Committee on Hospitals  
Harry J. W. Belvin w/2 copies Resolution ✓



The INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL  
of the FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES

ORGANIZED ON FEBRUARY 3, 1950



RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Oklahoma is to have a new Indian Health Area Director, and a new Executive Officer in the office of the United States Public Health Service, Division of Indian Health, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and rumors are that the replacement of the Indian Health Area Director will come from Alaska, and

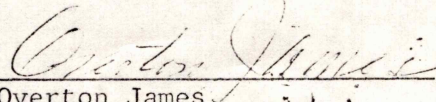
WHEREAS, background administrative experience with Alaska Indians and reservation Indians may be different and insufficient for our integrated Indian population in Oklahoma, and

WHEREAS, there may be available such personnel familiar with Oklahoma, Oklahoma Indians, and cooperative health agencies,


NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by The Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma, in session at Jones Academy, Hartshorne, Oklahoma, on this 11th day of January, 1967, that this Council request the United States Public Health Service, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, D. C., together with our Oklahoma Congressional Delegation, to work cooperatively in selecting an Indian Health Area Director who is not only familiar with Oklahoma Indians, but who has had practical medical experience, administrative training and experience, and otherwise highly qualified.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Executive Officer be preferably an Oklahoman, who is qualified for the position, who is sympathetic with the Oklahoma Indian and who has an understanding of the Indian problems.

Adopted this 11th day of January, 1967.

  
Overton James,  
President

Attest:

  
Executive Secretary

© OFFICERS ©

PRESIDENT  
W. E. MCINTOSH  
111 EAST INDEPENDENCE  
TULSA, OKLA. 74100

VICE-PRESIDENT  
OVERTON JAMES  
6044 N. W. 60TH  
OKLA CITY, OKLA. 73103

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MUSKOGEE, OKLA. 74401

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SABAKWA, OKLA. 74867

CHAPLAIN  
JIM PICKUP  
BOX 235  
TAHLEQUAH, OKLA. 74464

BERGEANT-AT-ARMS  
ALFRED DEERE  
ROUTE 2, BOX 110  
WEWOKA, OKLA. 74884





DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Indian Health Area Office  
301 Post Office & Court House Bldg.  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

73102

Refer to: A:TR-1

JAN 12 1967

Mr. Harry J.W. Belvin  
Principal Chief of the Choctaw Nation  
302 W. Willow  
Durant, Oklahoma 74701

Dear Mr. Belvin:

Francis R. Ellis has been selected by Dr. Rabeau, Director, Division of Indian Health, to replace Mr. Downing as Executive Officer, Oklahoma City Area. As you know, Mr. Downing retired from government service on December 30, 1966.

I have personally known Mr. Ellis for many years and am familiar with his qualifications and work performance. He has been Executive Officer of the Anchorage, Alaska, Native Health Services Area Office, Division of Indian Health, for the past six years. Mr. Ellis is 56 years old, entered on duty in the Public Health Service in August 1945. He is a knowledgeable individual with a good personality and is easy to work with. He is well versed in the many diverse administrative functions, including Finance, Personnel, General Administrative Services and Construction and Maintenance activities. One of his outstanding qualifications is his ability to use the people with whom he works in producing the desired results.

Mr. Ellis has the well-rounded experience in the many administrative functions that enables him to add the needed support to the professional and clinical activities. Many others, who must be and are considered for such a position, lack this experience and knowledge which is so necessary for satisfactory performance. Under his guidance, some might prove their ability to assume greater responsibilities in a widened field of activities with subsequent advancement.

I feel sure you will enjoy working with Mr. Ellis and appreciate his ability and knowledge. At the recent meeting in the Area Office with the leaders of the Five Civilized Tribes I announced the assignment of Mr. Ellis, but thought you might like a more definite statement concerning him.

Sincerely yours,

*Benjamin E. McBrayer*

Benjamin E. McBrayer, M.D.  
Indian Health Area Director

*Charlie asked me to  
send this letter to your  
office when I talked with  
him over the phone, soon  
after I received it.  
H. J. W. B.*



Public Health Service  
SPAAN, John

February 22, 1967

Mr. John Spaan, Chief  
Construction and Maintenance Branch  
Indian Health Area Office  
301 Post Office and Court House Building  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Dear Mr. Spaan:

Thank you very much for your note of February 15 advising us that the Civil Service Commission has confirmed your qualifications for a GS-14 Executive Position Series #341. We also appreciated your report of your visit in Talihina. We are proud of the fine relationship we have always had with our Indian friends in Oklahoma and stand ready to serve them to the best of our abilities. Nothing pleases us more than to be able to help them.

Our best wishes.

Sincerely,

CARL ALBERT, M. C.  
Third District, Oklahoma

CA/whn



Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

February 15, 1967

Representative Carl Albert  
Congress of the United States  
Office of the Majority Leader  
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Mr. Albert:

The U. S. Civil Service Commission has just confirmed my qualifications for a G.S.-14 Executive Position Series #341.

You deserve much credit for the prompt receipt of this material and I certainly appreciate it.

A recent trip to Talihina reminded me what a champion you are to the Choctaw people. I honestly believe these people think you can accomplish anything.

I understand the Indian people have always been good to you. They have certainly been good to me. They seem to have an uncanny loyalty for those who are willing to go to bat for them.

Continue to count me as one eager to help!

Warm regards,



John Spaan  
Chief, Const. & Maint. Branch