

PHS-Indian Health
Committees:
APPROPRIATIONS
SELECT COMMITTEE ON SMALL
BUSINESS
PT

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

February 24, 1967

Dr. E. S. Rabeau, Director
Division of Indian Health
Public Health Service
7915 Eastern Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Dear Dr. Rabeau:

I appreciate the courtesy extend^{ed} by Mr. Drew of your staff in visiting my office and advising of your forthcoming plans for Oklahoma and of your visit to the state in April.

During his call at my office the subject of the position of executive officer at the Oklahoma City office also was mentioned. You may recall by checking your files that I sent a letter in behalf of consideration of Mr. John Spaan as the result of the recommendations he received from many responsible Oklahoma citizens, including Indian leaders.

Since the notice some days ago that the vacancy would be filled by a transfer from Alaska, and particularly within the last day or two, since Mr. Drew visited my office, I have received numerous protests from Indian leaders. I am enclosing one signed by many of them which is typical.

I do not, of course, take the position that a specific individual should be chosen. But within the last few days it has become increasingly clear that there is very strong Indian sentiment in behalf of the selection of someone who has had some Oklahoma background and is familiar with the special problems and characteristics of the tribes in our area, so different from those in most other regions.

They feel deeply about this, citing experiences they have had in the past. This sentiment is so sharp that I feel that in fairness I should state now that it appears virtually certain that serious difficulties in relationships with Indians are ahead if the position actually goes to someone without previous experience with Oklahoma.

No doubt there are many able people in the service, such as the health director recently designated, who have that kind of record.

I have no interest whatever in who is chosen other than that it be someone whose experience will give them a fair chance for a constructive relationship with the Oklahoma Indians.

Sincerely yours,



TOM STEED, M. C.

TS:nh

bc: Charley Ward