



First Nations Oweesta Corporation

1010 Ninth Street • Suite 3 • Rapid City, SD 57701  
(605) 342-3770 • Fax (605) 342-3771

An affiliate of First Nations Development Institute • [www.oweesta.org](http://www.oweesta.org)

4/11/2007

The Honorable Rubén Hinojosa  
2463 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Judy Biggert  
1034 Longworth House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Hinojosa and Biggert:

The Native Financial Education Coalition (NFEC) and First Nations Oweesta Corporation (Oweesta) strongly support your efforts to officially designate April as "Financial Literacy Month". As the national voice advocating for stronger personal financial management skills among Native peoples, the NFEC urges Congress to pass the bi-partisan H. Res. 273 as a step toward raising awareness and spurring action toward better financial education in Native communities across the country.

Native communities across the board are lacking in financial education skills, which directly relates to the poverty and other social ills that often define Native peoples in the eyes of others. For example, Native communities are a hotbed for predatory lenders because Native people do not have the skills or awareness to understand the financing and credit process sufficiently, and a large percentage of our families are among the unbanked. We do not, however, have to let this situation define us and our involvement in Financial Literacy Month over the years is one way of taking control of our own lives and moving towards economic sovereignty.

The NFEC and Oweesta believe so strongly in this issue that this month, on April 26<sup>th</sup>, we will host the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Native Financial Education Policy Briefing in Washington, DC for lawmakers, staffers, Native leaders and others interested in Native financial education. In the past we have intentionally held the Briefing in April to commemorate Financial Literacy Month and see a real benefit to making it officially recognized as such. We commend you for your leadership on this issue and look forward to continuing our work together to make financial education a reality for all Native communities.

Sincerely,

Elsie Meeks  
Executive Director, First Nations Oweesta Corporation  
Chairperson, Native Financial Education Coalition

