

LOWER BRULE SIOUX TRIBE

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THE LOWER BRULE SIOUX TRIBE CONDEMNS HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH'S BIASED AND INACCURATE REPORT

Lower Brule, South Dakota

“The report of Human Rights Watch attacking the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe and its leaders is totally baseless and simply republishes misstatements of the past” said Lower Brule Sioux Tribal Chairman Mike Jandreau.

Human Rights Watch (HRW), an organization that claims to be “committed to maintaining high standards of accuracy and fairness” and maintaining high ethical standards, has released a remarkably inaccurate report that attacks Lower Brule Sioux .. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is constantly monitoring all Tribes under its trust responsibilities. In fact, Lower Brule has the lowest unemployment rate of any Tribe in South Dakota because of excellent and consistent Tribal management. The Lower Brule Sioux Tribe condemns the biased, error-ridden, defamatory attack on the Lower Brule Sioux leadership, Lower Brule Sioux sovereignty, and the Lower Brule Sioux people.

Said Chairman Michael Jandreau: “This report is absolutely baseless. It’s shocking that any credible organization would put its name on it. It’s full of factual errors, misrepresentations, and outright falsehoods. We’re exploring our legal options.”

The factual errors run from the ignorant (“The Lower Brule Sioux Reservation . . . is among the smallest . . . in the United States.”) to irresponsible and reckless inaccuracies. The report infers falsely that the stability of the tribal government is due to corrupt elections even though the current tribal council has new members critical of the previous council. The report wrongly concludes that the development of private sector businesses for sustainable future income involves the use of tribal funds. The report denigrates the long-established independent tribal justice system without any evidence that the tribal government prohibits, inhibits or discriminates against critics from reasonable and equitable access. The Lower Brule Sioux Tribe has advocated and supported, through resolution, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The report relies heavily on the false statements from political dissenters within the Tribe and treats the sovereignty of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe as simply a “problematic” and inconvenient barrier to its preconceived conclusions.

The report claims that Lower Brule Sioux tribal members have no way to hold Lower Brule Sioux leaders accountable for their decisions as leaders. To these

claims, Chairman Jandreau says: "The attack entirely ignores the fact that every two years the Lower Brule Sioux people decide through their votes in open elections who will serve as leaders of the Tribe. Our government is completely transparent and open to Members of the Tribe."

The report ignores the fact that any Lower Brule Sioux tribal member could bring an action in Tribal Court if Lower Brule Sioux leaders did not provide information they are entitled to receive.

The inconsistent and contradictory Human Rights Watch report, on one hand, portrays an oppressive tribal government while acknowledging that the government holds fair and open elections at which critics of the incumbents are elected and seated. The report does not allege that freedom of speech is suppressed, or freedom of assembly, or that there is no recourse to tribal and federal courts, or that the tribal government uses physically oppressive tactics of any kind. In spite of its allegations, the report omits the illegal conduct of the three elected tribal council members upon whom the report relies for much of its information. These three individuals attempted to physically take over the tribal government on December 12, 2014. Their wholly illegal and outrageous actions were enjoined in tribal court. While these three dissident tribal council members failed, their actions succeeded in revealing their complete lack of commitment to the rule of law and the thinly veiled and inappropriate political agenda at the root of the Human Rights Watch report. The Human Rights Watch Report is political pamphleteering of the worst sort. ###