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INTERIOR RECOMMENDS BILL TO DISTRIBUTE JUDGMENT FUNDS TO OMAHA TRIBE OF NEBRASKA

The Department of the Interior has recommended enactment of legislation (H.R. 8917) to provide for distribution of $1,750,000 in judgment funds to the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska.

The award, by the Indian Claims Commission, represents additional compensation for lands in what is now western Iowa and the northwestern Missouri to which the Omahas and other Tribes owned recognized title when the United States made treaties with them in 1825 and 1830.

As recommended, the bill would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to make a per capita distribution up to a maximum of $270 to each enrolled member of the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska. This would include those whose names appear on the tribal roll prepared September 14, 1951 when a previous award was made, plus the names of all children of at least one-quarter degree Omaha Indian blood born since that date.

Present tribal membership is about 2,600, with slightly more than half the members under twenty-one years of age. Per capita payments to tribal members who are minors are to be deposited in a bank account for educational purposes.

The tribal council has proposed several programs for using the balance of the award not distributed per capita. These include a tribal land purchase and land use plan, and an educational program.

The sum of $150,000 will be withheld from disbursement of the award pending settlement of a conflicting claim of the Yankton Sioux Tribe.

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