Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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American Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Villages have completed balloting on a distribution formula as required by the 1978 Education Amendments Act (P.L. 95-561). After a year long effort, the Indians and Alaska Natives voted to keep the Johnson-O'Malley Act funding formula used by the Bureau of Indian Affairs during the last four years.

The Johnson-O'Malley Act provides funding assistance for supplemental programs in non-Federal schools serving Indian students. In fiscal year 1979 the appropriation for this purpose, serving approximately 171,000 students, was $31,675,000.

Public Law 95-561 established that the distribution formula should be chosen by a majority vote of the tribes and Alaska village groups.

A task force appointed by the Interior Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs published proposed formulas, received numerous contents and held hearings before submitting eight formulas to tribal vote last spring. Since none received the necessary 51 percent, a run-off election involving the two formulas receiving the greatest number of votes was held this fall.

The winning formula, by a vote of 153 to 108, provides straight per capita payments for all students, with increases allowed for states which spend above the national average for education.

The other formula was a straight per capita plan which made no allowance for cost of education in the state.