Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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For Immediate Release: July 6, 1979
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Proposed regulations establishing procedures for Indian tribes seeking to form tribal constitutions or charters or make changes in existing ones are being published in the Federal Register, the Bureau of Indian Affairs announced today.

The purpose of the new regulations is to provide uniformity and order in holding elections, authorized by the Secretary of the Interior, to vote on constitutions and bylaws or charters. The proposed regulations will make this single set of regulations applicable to tribes, including those in Oklahoma and Alaska, row governed by three different sets of regulations, published and unpublished.

A significant change, introduced by the proposed regulations, is that petitioning by tribal members will no longer be recognized as a way to initiate a tribal reorganization. The process, under the proposed regulations, can only be initiated by a valid request from a tribe's governing body or a representative committee. The purpose of this change is to require tribal members to world through their government rather than around it. The petitioning process remains valid where tribal constitutions recognize it arid where the Indian Reorganization Act provides for it as the means whereby the Secretary of the Interior may be requested to issue a charter of incorporation.

Related proposed regulations, being published at the same time in the Federal Register., establish procedures for the formulation and submission of petitions in situations where this process is valid according to the tribal constitution or certain Federal statutes.

Comments on the proposed regulations should be sent within 30 days to the Office of Indian Services, Bureau of Indian Affairs, 18th and C Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240. For additional information contact Robert Farring at the above address (202-343-2511).