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WASHINGTON , D.C.—Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today praised President Obama's announcement that he intends to nominate Larry EchoHawk, a former Idaho Attorney General and state legislator, as Interior's Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. The nomination requires Senate confirmation.

"President Obama and I are committed to empowering American Indian people, restoring the integrity of a nation-to-nation relationship with tribes, fulfilling the United States' trust responsibilities and working cooperatively to build stronger economies and safer Indian communities," Salazar said. "Larry EchoHawk has the right leadership abilities, legislative experience and legal expertise to bring about the transformative improvements we all seek for Indian Country. He is a dedicated public servant and an excellent choice for Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs."

A member of the Pawnee Nation, Echohawk was elected Attorney General of Idaho in 1990, the first American Indian in U.S. history elected as a state attorney general. He had served as the Bannock County Prosecuting Attorney since 1986. Before that, he served two consecutive terms in the Idaho House of Representatives, from 1982 to 1986.

EchoHawk began his legal career as a legal services attorney working for impoverished Indian people in California, then opened a private law office in Salt Lake City. In 1977, he was hired as tribal attorney for the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes at the Fort Hall Indian Reservation in Idaho, a position he held for more than eight years. He became special counsel to the tribe in 1998. He is admitted to the bar in Idaho, Utah and California.

EchoHawk has served on the American Indian Services National Advisory Board and Board of Trustees. He was appointed by President Clinton to the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, which is responsible for coordinating the federal government's efforts to combat juvenile delinquency in the United States. He also has served on the Indian Alcoholism Counseling and Recovery House Program and the American Indian Community Resource Center Board.

A former U. S. Marine, EchoHawk is a professor of law at Brigham Young University's J. Reuben Clark Law School, teaching federal Indian law, criminal law, criminal procedure, evidence and criminal trial practice, and has published several scholarly papers.

EchoHawk received his Bachelor of Science degree from Brigham Young University in 1970, where he studied on an NCAA football scholarship and was named to the Western Athletic Conference All-Academic Football Team in 1969. He was a member of the varsity football team at BYU from 1967-69, playing in every game during his career. He started at safety as a junior and senior, leading the team and ranking fourth in the Western Athletic Conference with five interceptions as a junior in 1968. He earned Academic All-Conference First Team honors as a senior.

EchoHawk received his Juris Doctor degree from the University of Utah in 1973; and attended Stanford Graduate School of Business's MBA Program, 1974-1975. He has received numerous awards and

honors, including Distinguished Alumnus Awards from both Brigham Young University (1992) and the University of Utah (2003). In 1991, EchoHawk was awarded George Washington University's prestigious Martin Luther King medal for his contributions to human rights, and was honored as a speaker at the Democratic National Convention. As Idaho's delegation Chair, he became the first American Indian to lead a state delegation to a national political convention.

Professor EchoHawk was honored in 1995 as the first BYU graduate to ever receive the National Collegiate Athletic Association's prestigious Silver Anniversary Award, given to a select few prominent athletes who have completed their collegiate athletic eligibility 25 years ago, and have distinguished themselves in their careers and personal lives.

EchoHawk, 60, and his wife Terry have six children: Jennifer, Paul, Mark, Matthew, Emily and Michael; and 22 grandchildren.