BIA head calls for prompt special election in accord with tribal constitution

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WASHINGTON – Interior Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Neal A. McCaleb today announced the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) recognizes the leadership of the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas (KTTT), selected by tribal members on October 28, 2002, as the tribe's provisional governing body. The recognition accepts the Traditional Council members selected through last month's 'Vote of Conscience' for the purpose of maintaining the tribe's government-to-government relationship with the United States.

"I have examined numerous documents relating to October's 'Vote of Conscience' and believe the Traditional Council has the necessary foundation to be recognized as a provisional tribal government," McCaleb said today. "It is vitally important for this provisional government to promptly call for special elections in accord with the tribe's constitution. The tribe's members expect to have a fair opportunity to elect candidates to fill the unexpired terms of the officers who were removed last month."

In announcing BIA's provisional recognition of the KTTT leadership, McCaleb said he was persuaded to accept the substitute leadership in light of the prior tribal council's apparent abandonment of the tribe's constitution, leaving dissenting members no choice but to resolve questions by traditional means. McCaleb, however, urged the provisional government to promptly hold the special election to resolve the controversy.

McCaleb, as the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, has the responsibility for fulfilling the Department of the Interior's trust responsibilities and promoting self-determination on behalf of tribal governments, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. The Assistant Secretary, who oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs, is also responsible for providing services to approximately 1.4 million American Indians and Alaska Natives who are members of the 562 federally recognized tribes.