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A legal brief strongly supporting Navajo Indian voting rights was filed March 10 by Secretary Stewart L. Udall in the New Mexico election contest between Joseph A. Montoya and seated Lt. Governor Tom Bolack, the Department of the Interior announced today.

Secretary Udall's brief relied heavily upon the words of his late father, Chief Justice Levi S. Udall of the Arizona Supreme Court, whose 1948 decision confirmed the Indians' right to vote in that State.

Secretary Udall is appearing in the case as a friend of the court. Oral arguments will be heard March 14 in Albuquerque before District Judge John B. McManus.

Secretary Udall has designated Max N. Edwards, Assistant to the Secretary and Legislative Counsel, to represent him at this hearing where arguments will be focused on matters questioning the legal residence of the Navajos and the constitutionality of a New Mexico law prohibiting "Indians not taxed" from voting.

Montoya lost the November election by 287 votes and his suit against Bolack challenges the voting rights of over 29,959 Navajos residing on the New Mexico part of the Navajo Reservation.