

# United States Senate

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## MEMORANDUM

April 8, 1931.

Senator Thomas:

You may be interested in the suggested citizenship plan for the Indian, as outlined on the attached circular, by Joseph W. Latimer, whose address is given as Station W, Box 85, New York, N. Y.

I think that the information on the enclosed bulletin from the Bureau of the Census giving the 1930 Census of Distribution, retail trade in Lawton, will be pretty well published by the Press. However, I am getting some copies to send to the local Chamber of Commerce, and thought that you would like to see the data compiled by the Bureau.

M. E. P.

# Suggested Citizenship Plan for the Indian

(Reprinted)

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We consider it a settled question that since Congress has declared the American Indian a citizen of this country he is entitled to all the rights, benefits, and duties of any other citizen. Certainly he should now "be recognized as an American citizen; treated as such; educated as such."

Fortunately, if handled according to established fundamental laws, many of these Indian citizens have vast property interests of which they are the beneficiaries. This property consists of both real and chattel, and though this has been held for years and is now held by a Government bureau, there are fundamental laws in this country which could protect these beneficiaries on the same principles as other properties are protected for beneficiaries. The fundamental question this change involves is in no way complicated, though working out details would involve careful and experienced service.

Again, if Congress now votes such vast sums to the Bureau for Indian maintenance, certainly the same policy should be as freely continued when the funds go into already established State departments all conducted with equal impartiality to all its citizens no matter of what race or creed.

Therefore, as a working basis for fundamental relief for the American Indian from the present Bureau control the following plan has been suggested:

1. Free the Indian at once from Bureau wardship of his person.
2. Each State through its already established channels under which and in the same manner they now treat their other citizens, but the Indian—to educate, to guard health, to police, and to open all its established Courts to the Indian. Congressional appropriations (from Indian funds where treaties provide, or from taxes) now voted annually to the Bureau (and more if needed) to go to the State to cover all cost of foregoing.

In cases of emergency the Red Cross should be given all power, free from Bureau control, to immediately take charge of the Indian health and life situation.

3. Begin at once with competent heads to untangle the Indian property mess existing in the Bureau, with the view of creating legally, active trusteeships, subject to court review, of this property, including tribal funds, preferably creating a separate trust for each reservation and tribal fund. These trusts should be created on same fundamental legal basis as other innumerable trusts which now hold property all over the United States.

At no time, of course, during the above program is the Indian to be inequitably disturbed in the rights, occupancy, and use of any Indian property now by him possessed.

