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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **President Echo-Hawk selected by Interior Secretary Haaland to serve on First-Ever Secretary's Advisory Committee**

**WASHINGTON** – Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland announced the selection of Pawnee Nation Business Council President Walter Echo-Hawk as the Southern Plains Primary Member to the first-ever Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee (STAC). The STAC launch was made yesterday at the National Congress of American Indians 2022 Mid Year Conference as part of the 2021 White House Tribal Nations Summit.

“As an elected Tribal leader of the Pawnee Nation, I am honored to serve on (STAC). I will be representing a Tribal Nation from BIA's Southern Plains Region. All Tribes in that Region have a government-to-government, treaty, and trust relationship with the United States, which is fostered and promoted by DOI. I will work with STAC and Secretary Haaland on a department strategy to incorporate Tribal guidance on DOI priorities, policies, and budget--as well as to improve the Federal/Tribal relationship and to strengthen self-determination of Tribal Nations,” said President Echo-Hawk about being one of twelve Tribal leaders to be selected to serve as a Primary Member of STAC.

According to a statement by the Interior, STAC, “will ensure Tribal leaders have direct and consistent contact and communication with the current and future Department officials to facilitate robust discussions on intergovernmental responsibilities...and recommendations regarding Departmental programs and funding that impact Tribal Nations to advance the federal trust responsibility.”

“Tribes deserve a seat at the decision-making table before policies are made that impact their communities. Tribal members who are joining the first-ever Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee will be integral to ensuring Tribal leaders can engage at the highest levels of the Department on the issues that matter most to their people,” said Secretary Haaland.

The STAC has twelve primary Tribal representatives from each of the twelve Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Regions. Additionally, there are twelve alternate members from each region. Cheyenne and Arapaho Governor Reggie Wassana was selected as the alternate member for the Southern Plains region with President Echo-Hawk. Appointments will occur on a staggered term for up to two years. The members are appointed on a staggered term for up to two years. A chairperson will be designated from the STAC by the Secretary of the Interior and Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs.

For more information, contact the Pawnee Nation Communications at 918.762.3621 or [communications@pawneenation.org](mailto:communications@pawneenation.org).



**About the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma** - The Pawnee Nation has a long and proud history spanning more than 700 years. Early in the 18th century, more than 60,000 members of the Pawnee Tribe inhabited the area along the North Platt River in Nebraska. The Tribe then, as it is now, was composed of four distinct bands: the Chaui “Grand,” the Kitkehahki “Republican,” the Pitahawirata “Tappage” and the Skidi “Wolf.”

Today, the number of Tribal enrolled members is over 3,200 and Pawnees can be found in all areas of the United States as well as foreign countries within many walks of life. Pawnees take much pride in their ancestral heritage. They are noted in history for their tribal religion rich in myth, symbolism and elaborate rites.