

Senator Vic Atiyeh sponsored SB 386 in 1975. Given the lack of existing state services for Indians, shifts in the Indian population, shifts in government responsibilities, and the fact that twenty-one states (fifteen with smaller Indian populations than Oregon) had a Commission or Office of Indian Affairs, Senator Atiyeh proposed that the Oregon Legislature create a Commission on Indian Services. The Commission would originally have ten members: a senator, a representative, and eight Indian representatives of communities across Oregon. The Commission started out with a one dollar limitation on expenditure of funds and went to the emergency board in July of 1975 and received a one-year appropriation. SB 386 was signed by Governor Robert W. Straub on August 7, 1975

Facts about the first Commission

- Warren "Rudy" Clements and Arthur Bensell were the first elected officers in April 1976
- Bruce Bishop was hired as the first Executive Officer in August 1976
- Doris Miller was hired as the first Secretary to the Commission in September 1976
- In 1977-78, Commission meetings were held throughout the state to receive advice on needs for state services and areas in which the Commission should work
- In Spring of 1977, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) created a task force on the state role in Indian affairs composed of legislators from states with experience in that area. The Senate President and Speaker of the House appointed Sam Johnson, the first State Representative to serve on the Commission, as their representative on the task force. State-Tribal relations among the states, including Oregon's model, is something NCSL continues in-depth research on today:
<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/statetribe/statetribe.htm>

Highlights of Early Tribal Legislation

- In November of 1977, the United States restored federal recognition to the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon. In 1979, SB 174 requested that the north coast area seat on the Commission be changed to a tribally specific one for the Siletz. SB 174 also requested that the term "native Americans of Indian descent" be replaced by the term "American Indians" in the statute that established the Commission on Indian Services. Similar changes in statute were made as tribes became federally recognized, and today's Commission has thirteen standing members and includes two legislators, a member of each of Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes, a Portland urban area representative, and a Willamette Valley area representative.
- 1979 – HJM 12 asked Congress to formally repudiate its termination policy and to establish procedures that tribes could follow if they wished to be restored to their former status with the federal government. (Pass?**)
- 1989 – SB 841 allowed Indian governments in Oregon to obtain access to the application process for Lottery funds distribution for economic development. (did this pass?)
- 1993 – cultural resources bill
- 1995 – SB 1121 amended current archaeological statutes by adding new provisions that would impose penalties on those who knowingly disturb archaeological sites and make the violation of its provisions a Class B misdemeanor.