

**SOCIETY OF  
ARCHITECTURAL  
HISTORIANS**

11 December 2019

The Honorable John Hoeven  
Chairman, Senate Indian Affairs Committee  
838 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall  
Ranking Member, Senate Indian Affairs Committee  
838 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Re: support for S. 2165, the Safeguard Tribal Objects of Patrimony (STOP) Act of 2019.

Dear Chairman Hoeven and Ranking Member Udall:

The Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) offers its support for S. 2165, the Safeguard Tribal Objects of Patrimony (STOP) Act of 2019.

This enormously significant legislation is intended to help protect objects of importance to American Indians and Indian tribes by preventing their sale overseas, where they would likely be lost to private collections. Many of these items were likely obtained in ways that violate other protective federal laws, such as the Archaeological Resources Protection Act and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, designed to protect American Indian interests and – by extension – the interests of all American citizens in the respectful treatment of cultural patrimony. Passage of S. 2165 would provide another avenue for protection of such objects. Further, it would not add federal protection to objects already protected by existing laws. It is in no way redundant, but rather closes a legal loophole by providing American tribes with access to law enforcement in other countries when pursuing stolen cultural property. It also provides a mechanism for voluntary return of such property, a program that would be administered by the Department of the Interior and its highly trained cultural resource management staff.

Passage of S. 2165 would serve both to stem the flood of American Indian objects and artifacts being sold overseas and provide proof of Congress' respect for America's first peoples.

We applaud the lawmakers, tribal leaders, federal officials, archaeologists, art dealers, and others who worked together to formulate this crucial legislation. SAH strongly supports the STOP Act and believes that passage of this bill will help halt the illegal trafficking of tribal cultural patrimony.

We urge the committee to pass S. 2165 as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,



Bryan Clark Green, Ph.D., LEED AP BD+C  
Chair, Society of Architectural Historians Heritage Conservation Committee

cc: Mr. Kenneth Breisch, Ph.D.; Mr. Jeffrey Cody, Ph.D.; Mr. Anthony Cohn, AIA; Ms. Phyllis Ellin; Mr. David Fixler, FAIA; Mr. Sandy Isenstadt, Ph.D.; Mr. Theodore H. Prudon, Ph.D., FAIA, Ms. Pauline Saliga; Ms. Deborah Slaton; Members SAH Heritage Conservation Committee.