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CONGRESS APPOINTS ARLAN MELENDEZ TO U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Vietnam Veteran is Second American Indian to Serve on Commission

Washington, DC – Arlan D. Melendez, 58, chairman of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony for the past 14 years, was appointed to U.S. Commission on Civil Rights on September 29 by Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid. For 14 years, Melendez has been Chairman of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, a Federally recognized Tribal Government. He represents 840 Paiute, Washoe, and Shoshone tribal members and oversees a Tribal Government employing approximately 300 people. Mr. Melendez also serves as the Western Regional Vice President of the National Congress of American Indians, and Co-chair of its Taxation Sub-committee. He served in the United States Marine Corp during the Vietnam War.

Upon being sworn in as Commissioner, Mr. Melendez said: “There is no question that things have improved over the past 20-30 years, but there is also little doubt that this country needs to make a lot more progress in ensuring that the civil rights of all citizens, regardless of race, gender or religion, are protected.”

Gerald A. Reynolds, Chairman of the Commission said: "It is my hope that Mr. Melendez's commitment to civil rights and scope of experience will help advance the Commission's efforts to reform and bring about a national civil rights agenda for the future. I look forward to his association with us."

The Commission is comprised of four presidential appointees and four members appointed by Congress. Commissioners serve six-year terms. One of the Commission vacancies resulted from the recent expiration of Elsie Meeks' term; Meeks is a member of the Ogalala Sioux Tribe who in 1999 became the first American Indian to serve on the Commission.

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