



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
Washington, DC 20240

JUN 21 2018

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Memorandum

To: All Employees

From: Acting Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Subject: Bureau of Indian Affairs Ombudsman

I am pleased to announce the designation of a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Ombudsman. The establishment of a BIA Ombudsman is consistent with the Administration's and Secretary Zinke's commitment to foster an atmosphere of dignity and respect at the Department of the Interior. The designation of an ombudsman represents one of several efforts that BIA has undertaken to ensure that every employee experiences a safe and respectful work environment, free of discrimination, harassment and retaliation.

The role of the ombudsman will be fulfilled by Brian Bloch. Brian has extensive experience as an ombudsman and operates with the highest degree of integrity and professionalism. Every BIA employee should feel free to raise a broad range of workplace issues through Ombudsman Bloch without fear of reprisal, including concerns about harassment. As issues are raised, Brian will explore a full range of resolution options with you. He is committed to dealing with you in a prompt, thorough, and consistent manner.

Our ombudsman is an independent, impartial, informal, and confidential resource. Employees who take advantage of this service will encounter a safe channel to openly discuss the most sensitive issues, and will work with the ombudsman to collaboratively identify solutions that benefit employees, managers, and our organization. The ombudsman must adhere to strict standards of confidentiality and will not reveal your identity, except in instances of imminent harm, such as threats to self and others.

The ombudsman position is not part of the management structure of BIA, nor is it part of any formal grievance or complaint process. It is not an investigative unit or oversight body, and it does not replace other processes that employees can use for formal redress. Our bureau's ombudsman will communicate to management the broad themes of issues that have been identified with the utmost care to protect confidentiality. Such reporting will only be done in general terms, and individual identities and specific issues will not be discussed or identified.

Brian will be gathering a wide range of employee perspectives about the strengths and successes of BIA, areas of concern, potential weaknesses in the system, and innovative opportunities for positive change. You can reach Brian at (301) 814-7262 or brian_bloch@ios.doi.gov.

Note: Labor Relations responsibilities must be fulfilled before the services of the Ombudsman are available to bargaining unit employees.