

RECLAIMING THEIR VOICES: The Native American Vote in New Mexico

Time Code	Speaker	Text/soundbite
0:00:10	JO COCHRAN	It's been years since we won the right to vote, and we're still not able to...for many of the folks out there. It's an ongoing project- this idea of getting people involved in elections and energizing the community.
0:00:37	LINDA YARDLEY	There are many of our people who feel that their votes do not count. Our people do not understand how one vote can make a difference.
0:00:49	ROLAND JOHNSON	It's even more important in this day and age when we're no longer isolated from the rest of the world. You know, what happens in the world, what happens here in this country has a direct influence on what we are able to do.
0:01:05	JUNE LORENZO	Native people have been so separate from the state government for so long because of discrimination, because of prejudice. To get people to participate in the state system is huge.

0:01:20	NARRATOR	<p>Indigenous people face an ongoing struggle, not only fighting for the right to vote, but also to be able to use their vote to protect their rights. The history of conquerors seizing land and taking away the rights of indigenous people has been repeated in many countries and continues to this day. The subjugation of native people by Europeans after they arrived in the new world is well-documented. One of the first and most aggressive conquests was led by Spain. Following the arrival of Columbus in 1492, most of the Western Hemisphere would soon be under the control of European nations. By 1750, more than 90% of the Americas had been colonized by six different countries. Stories of conquest in the Americas include vivid descriptions of brutality. Images depicting Spaniards torturing Indians were based on reports but not actual observations. Some of these reports were exaggerated. Many of these images may have been created as propaganda. Evidence does exist that these illustrations were based on actual incidents. Within this legacy of injustice, there are stories of hope. Native Americans living in New Mexico today are descendants of people who found the courage to rise up and defend themselves. Conquistadors entered New Mexico in 1540, less than fifty years after they landed in the West Indies. When Europeans first arrived, they exchanged food, and other supplies with the natives. As their numbers grew, and more colonists arrived, the Spanish demanded more goods and services than the American Indians could provide. If these demands were not met, or if other orders were disobeyed the Natives were punished, sometimes through hard labor. The Spanish describe how they kidnapped Natives, enslaving them to work in the silver mines of Mexico.</p>
0:03:41	MICHAEL WILCOX	<p>The story is really revealed through these documents that were recorded by the Spanish, every time they went anywhere or did anything, they had to write down what they did.</p>
0:03:49	NARRATOR	<p>One of the most brutal punishments reported was that Spaniards severed the limbs of captive warriors.</p>
0:03:54	MICHAEL WILCOX	<p>They tell in their own words how violence was used against the Pueblo people to control them.</p>

0:04:02	NARRATOR	Another form of control was to forbid certain Indian cultural practices. Pueblo People weren't allowed to be off their land after dark. They were forbidden to perform their dances and rituals. At the same time, the area is hit by a series of droughts, and the the Indians aren't permitted to carry out the ceremonies that call to their ancestors to bring rain. They believe these rules, enforced by the Spanish, are bringing death to their community.
0:04:35	MICHAEL WILCOX	This collective experience that the pueblos had generated a sense of connection between them. They don't want to be part of the Spanish crown, and it becomes a very very important part of their identity, to resist this occupying force.
0:04:51	NARRATOR	In addition to drought, there was famine. Some Spanish blamed the Indians and believed that these plagues of famine and drought were caused by Pueblo religious leaders through sorcery. In a wave of religious persecution, the Spanish ordered the destruction of Pueblo ceremonial objects and gathering places. Forty-seven Native Religious leaders were arrested and publicly whipped. Four of them were executed. In response to the cruelty, Native warriors surrounded the provincial capital of Santa Fe and threatened retaliation. Frightened, the Spanish released some prisoners. Among those set free was a man named Po'Pay. Po'Pay, a San Juan Pueblo medicine man, used the growing anger of the Pueblo Indians to organize a rebellion using the Taos Pueblo as his headquarters. A date for the revolt was set in early August, 1680. Messengers were sent out to notify the Pueblos about when to attack. On August 10, the Pueblos launch a coordinated assault. The Indians far outnumbered the Spaniards. They slaughter not only soldiers, but priests and colonists as well. The Revolt culminates with the Spaniards trapped in Santa Fe. Dying of thirst and hunger the Spanish leave Santa Fe, leading their people out of New Mexico. Free from outside influence, the pueblos work to cleanse their lives
0:06:34	MICHAEL WILCOX	Spanish tools, Spanish crops, Spanish animals... Anything that's European – is rejected. It's brought into the centers of the plazas that the Pueblos live in and everything is lit on fire, and the Pueblos perform reverse Baptisms, and they try and undo the sacraments that they've had to take part in. So they're undoing colonization.

0:07:01	NARRATOR	<p>The ancestors of Native Americans living in New Mexico had accomplished one of the most successful rebellions against European domination in history. For twelve years, the Pueblos lived free from Spanish rule. In 1692, the Spanish returned, and after friendly overtures, carried out a bloody reconquest. The negotiations and land grants which followed, define the present-day Pueblos. The inhumane treatment of Native people in New Mexico that led to the Pueblo Revolt is a microcosm of what was happening to Indians across the Americas. Under colonial rule, Indigenous people were enslaved, humiliated, and dying from diseases, for which they had no immunity. Indians were forcibly relocated from their homes to barren lands. Repeated rebellions failed to turn back the horrors of this genocide. In 1890, one effort which was documented in photographs drew attention to these previously buried chapters in human history. The confrontation at Wounded Knee was one of the last major efforts in which Indians attempted to protect their land, their culture, and their lives. In the Winter of 1890, the Lakota Sioux in South Dakota, starving and freezing, stood their ground. Like other Native tribes across the Americas, they had been stripped of their language and their rituals. Many of their children had been sent to government boarding schools. Their main food supply, the Buffalo, had disappeared. During the Massacre at Wounded Knee, at least 150 Indians, most unarmed men, women, and children, were killed at close range. Albert White Hat was a descendant of those at Wounded Knee. To make peace with the past, he undertook a vision quest in which he fasted and prayed.</p>
0:09:19	ALBERT WHITE HAT	<p>It was a beautiful night, the stars were out, and it was calm, just beautiful. And it was around midnight, and I got up, and I prayed. And I sat down, and then all of a sudden I had the flashbacks of Wounded Knee. And every policy, every law that was imposed on us by the government hit me one at a time. What has happened in the past will never leave us. And as I sat there I got angrier and angrier, until it turned to hatred. I got up, and I faced the east, and it was beautiful, I mean it was dawn, and right above that blue light in that darkness was the sliver of the moon and the morning star. And I wanted to live. The only way that I was going to do that was if I forgive. And I cried that morning, because I had to forgive.</p>
0:10:48	NARRATOR	<p>After generations of displacement and cruelty to Native People, the United States Government finally recognized the need to give rights to American Indians that would allow them to participate more fully in public life. It was not until 1924 that Native Americans were granted citizenship. Even then, many western states, including New Mexico, refused to allow all American Indians to vote.</p>

0:11:14	LINDA YARDLEY	And, clearly, in looking at the history of our people in New Mexico, we never were given the right to vote until 1948.
0:11:22	NARRATOR	World War II Marine veteran Miguel Trujillo from Isleta Pueblo was a school teacher working in the Laguna community. As a resident of Pueblo lands, he was not permitted to vote. Native Americans have a higher percentage of their people serve in the military than any other group in the country. They received purple hearts, bronze and silver stars, congressional medals of honor, yet when they returned, they were not allowed to vote. Trujillo was outraged by this restriction. He decided to challenge the law and sued the state of New Mexico. He demanded to know: "Why don't all American Indians living in New Mexico have the right to vote?"
0:12:10	KEN MARTINEZ	He says, "Wait a second, I am just as American as you are. You know, I volunteered for service. I fought for my country. I love my country. And I love my pueblo."
0:12:25	NARRATOR	Miguel Trujillo won his case. In 1948, for the first time, all American Indians living in New Mexico were legally able to vote. Yet it wasn't until 1962 after a second supreme court case, that all Native Americans in New Mexico, finally secured the right to vote in public elections. Even with legal barriers removed, discriminatory practices continued to make voting difficult for many. With the Voting Rights Act of 1965 the Federal government stepped in to ensure that all citizens have not only the right to vote but also access to the polls. The voting rights act prohibits any practice that leads to discrimination. Despite this legislation, many American Indians remain reluctant to participate in Federal and state elections.
0:13:26	KEN MARTINEZ	You go to some of the pueblo folks, and they say, "You know, my government, my government, the one that speaks to my heart is Laguna." And you have to go to them and convince them, "But New Mexico is your government, and United States is your government. You know, look at the veterans, and they understand that." But their heart is their pueblo.

0:13:50	NARRATOR	In recent years, Native American groups have been encouraging their communities to overcome this reluctance and vote in US elections. New Mexico has 19 Pueblos, 2 Apache Tribes, and the Navajo Nation. For the 2004 presidential election, community members at the Pueblo of Laguna set out to register at least 500 native voters so that they could participate in United States public elections. While most pueblos appoint their leaders, Laguna has a history of voting for its tribal government.
0:14:23	ROLAND JOHNSON	The primary objective was to convince our people that there was... that it was okay to vote in public elections. And, in fact, for purposes of self-preservation, we needed to be able to get as many people as we could registered to vote.
0:14:45	JO COCHRAN	About May, we put together a Voter 500 team, and 500 came from the number we were targeting for new voter registrants. It took a lot of work just because we had not truly realized that there was still some resistance on the part of community members who had never registered, never voted, were not even involved in tribal community affairs.
0:15:23	ANTOINETTE SILVA	On the reservation, we don't have, you know, a television, a channel, we don't have a radio station, especially on Laguna, so right now, it's, it's that one-on-one contact.
0:15:36	JO COCHRAN	We took our clipboards, basically, and went from little family units to cars throughout the entire area, looking for people who had not registered to vote.
0:15:45	ANTOINETTE SILVA	The main things was to let people know what they're voting for, who they're voting for, and, how they're going to help out our community. I really pushed to focus on our kids that were turning 18 because they're going to be our leaders in the future.
0:16:00	JO COCHRAN	How do we take care of the senior citizens? I thought, "I am going to make some time." And my gosh! We had staffers bringing folks who are in wheelchairs. I think I missed two people of that entire number of residents.
0:16:20	KEEGAN KING	People who, whether they're 18 or whether they're 80, and, this is the first time they're voting. It's important because you're going to them, and you're telling them, well, "This vote really counts, it's really going to make a difference.

0:16:33	LUCILLE HOOPER	We actually reached and exceeded that goal. We registered 541 tribal members here. Election Day came, and everyone was really excited because we had spent, oh, seven months, out there, constantly talking to people.
0:16:53	ANTOINETTE SILVA	A lot of our students, I was there at the polls, and I saw them! I saw them go out and vote, and it was, it was totally, um, incredible. It was awesome.
0:17:02	JO COCHRAN	That excitement had actually built up to the point where, you know, this is it. Show and tell. And it turned out to be...It fell flat.
0:17:20	LUCILLE HOOPER	We had people waiting here at quarter to seven ready to vote when those polls opened. When they went into vote, they found that they were not on the voter list.
0:17:35	STAN LUCERO	We were all registered, I think, ...with the exception of my son, but my wife needed to have her renew her registration, and, we all did, they did, but when it came time to vote, my wife and my son weren't on the list.
0:17:55	CECILIA LUCERO	They looked through their books that they had, you know, set on the table, and they told me my name wasn't on there...and I said, "Well, it has to be on there. They told me that "No, my name wasn't there." And, I walked away feeling really downhearted, and, you know, like, like something was taken away from me.
0:18:19	NARRATOR	Stan and Cecilia soon learned hat their son's voter registration was also not listed.
0:18:25	CECILIA LUCERO	My son was, had just turned 18, and it was his first time to vote, and when he got there, he, he wasn't given that opportunity, and he was...angry about it.
0:18:47	STAN LUCERO	A lot of folks walked away in frustration because they couldn't vote, simply because their names weren't on the list, even though they had registered to vote.
0:18:57	MARLENE ANALLA	When the individual came to my house, she, actually came to my house, took my information. She filled it out. I thought everything was fine and dandy, so by the time voting came, we went to the polls. It was late in the evening, before the polls closed, and found out we weren't on the list.

0:19:13	NARRATOR	The county clerk is in charge of making sure that the names of all newly registered people appear on the voter rolls.
0:19:18	KEN MARTINEZ	There wasn't sufficient personnel in place for the county clerk then to add in all those new names, even though they came in in a timely manner.
0:19:28	LUCILLE HOOPER	So we told them, "Well, if you're not on the voter list, there's a provisional ballot that you can fill out, and your vote can still count.
0:19:38	NARRATOR	At first, provisional ballots appeared to be a solution.
0:19:43	LUCILLE HOOPER	Well, come to find out, we had no provisional ballots. We called the county clerk's office...we pleaded with her to get the provisional ballots here because a lot of our people wanted to vote before they went to work.
0:19:57	NARRATOR	The scarcity of provisional ballots continued throughout the day.
0:20:01	MARLENE ANALLA	So me and another individual who I came in with, um, we were stuck with the one provisional ballot, and so, they're all like, "Well, only one of you get to vote." About five minutes before closing time, they came in with another set of provisional ballots, and by that time, some of the individuals had left because they couldn't vote.
0:20:20	KEN MARTINEZ	We were told that there's not enough, that there was only ten per precinct. Call the Secretary of State's office, there's at least 200 voters there that could vote provisionally, and they say, "Look, photocopy them, you know, whatever you need to do, get ballots out there, and then we'll deal with the issues later on."
0:20:39	LUCILLE HOOPER	They sent the provisional ballot, but only one envelope. And the instruction, the verbal instructions given to the pollworkers at that time by the county clerk herself was that, "Go ahead and use these provisional ballots. Just use the one envelope, and that'll be okay."
0:21:01	JO COCHRAN	That type voting had to be on a, on a bar-coded form, in a bar-coded envelope, into another envelope...We didn't have...any of that.
0:21:20	KATHY GOROSPE	We were advised by poll workers that we could use simple manila envelopes and put those into those envelopes and then send them to the clerk's office.

0:21:32	JO COCHRAN	I don't think we realized the full impact of that problem until the day was over.
0:21:41	KATHY GOROSPE	Well, it turned out that those ballots were not counted at all.
0:21:48	NARRATOR	Across the country in the weeks that followed the 2004 election, reports of widespread voting problems for Native Americans continued to surface. New Mexico was one of the states in which voter IDs were a problem. State law required identification only from first-time voters who had registered by mail. However, some election workers misinterpreted the law and demanded photo IDs from all first time voters.
0:22:15	SANTIAGO JUAREZ	This young woman, first time she was ever going to vote, and her boyfriend, they jump in the car. She leaves her purse, you know, They go to vote. Well, they had registered to vote at the county clerk's office. They were not supposed to be asked for their ID...They were. And so when the young girl was given a provisional ballot, she basically said, "Screw you...I ain't voting."
0:22:43	JOE GARCIA	Tribal people have tribal IDs that say, "This is, this is who I am. I'm a registered citizen. I'm a member of this tribe." Has a picture, has a date. That's a form of ID that was not being accepted in a lot of polling places. Most of our elderly people do not drive, so they don't have a driver's license. The elders are not going to question that. They're just going to walk away.
0:23:13	SANTIAGO JUAREZ	That happened to our people over and over and over again. And people on the other side of the fence are saying, "Oh, come on. It's just an ID question." No, it's more than that. And we on this side know that.
0:23:26	NARRATOR	Another common problem in New Mexico in 2004 was the large number of "undervotes"-when a voter's ballot does not register a marked vote for a certain office. In New Mexico, in 2004, a high percentage of voters "seemed" not to vote for the office of President, and as a result, there were almost 20,000 undervotes.
0:23:46	BILLY J. KNIGHT	New Mexico basically went red in 2004 by a little over 5,000 votes.
0:23:54	NARRATOR	Election observers noted that in 2000, New Mexico had been a blue state.

0:23:57	BILLY J. KNIGHT	What a lot of people don't know, is that there were some 20 thousand votes that never got counted.
0:24:02	HOLLY JACOBSON	Those undervotes were specifically in—highly concentrated in precincts with a Hispanic or Native American plurality.
0:24:10	NARRATOR	In predominantly Anglo precincts, the undervote rate was less than 1%, while primarily Hispanic and Native American precincts, averaged 5% to 7%. Among Native communities with a high undervote rate, Taos Pueblo's election results were especially alarming at 14%.
0:24:29	LINDA YARDLEY	We found that there were 53 votes that were lost. To Taos Pueblo, that is huge. And to this day, we do not have a good answer as to what happened to those votes.
0:24:53	JIM WILLIAMS	As a journalist, I began to ask what had happened, and it became clear that many of the anomalies with electronic DRE voting machines had occurred in largely Hispanic and Latino areas, Native American areas in New Mexico.
0:25:12	LINDA YARDLEY	I keep hearing that, "Well, Indian people don't vote in Presidential elections. They're not interested in the President." I do not buy that...This is happening much too frequently in Indian country.
0:25:29	JOHN BOYD	There have always been efforts to disenfranchise people. When you impose these rigid requirements of presenting a photo ID, um, if you want to vote, then you're going to shave off 1 or 2% at the bottom, and that's the purpose of this, and that has been the purpose of the poll tax and the literacy test and all of the things that have been imposed by the haves against the—to keep the have-nots from voting.
0:26:10	SANTIAGO JUAREZ	This sense of frustration that "I don't belong here anyway." People came...you know, on the phone, to the house, and...literally, you know, I had friends, some friends here crying, saying "That's it." You know, they give up.
0:26:33	GLOJEAN TODACHEENE	Losing their forms, changing their voting, their polling places, during an election year—that's, that's, that's not good for individuals who kind of feel like, "I want to vote," and then there's these barriers that hit them....and so then it's back to being, feeling powerless.

0:26:58	TERESA LEGER	This was yet another reinforcement of the fact that you have been excluded from this process, and we've offered it to you now, we've convinced you to come and vote, and they show up, and they are not allowed to vote cause they're not on the rolls.
0:27:14	LINDA YARDLEY	There needs to be a change. Something needs to happen. This to me is clearly an issue of civil rights.
0:27:23	NARRATOR	The Indians of New Mexico are part of a larger community, not only in the United States but around the world. Change is happening across the planet, people are finding ways to defend their civil rights as indigenous people are taking charge of their lives. When they vote, they have a voice in shaping public policy. One goal is to have the political strength to reclaim and protect lands which were originally theirs. A strategic battle over the future of a sacred site in New Mexico drew national attention. The Petroglyph National Monument in Albuquerque is home to more than 25,000 rock art images with cultural and religious significance.
0:28:14	SONNY WEAHKEE	According to our, our creation stories, this, this place is been with us since we came to this earth. There's a number of them are 2,000 or 3,000 years old.
0:28:24	BINESHI ALBERT	There are a number of petroglyphs here that are from tribal people that are not here in New Mexico, um, who—that can come here and point out directly, “These are petroglyph images that are our images.”
0:28:35	SONNY WEAHKEE	Then you start to think about the commitment that those people made to make the pilgrimage to come here to search for insight, you know, to record their stories.
0:28:44	NARRATOR	The Petroglyphs became a focus of controversy when the city of Albuquerque announced plans to build a four-lane highway through the National monument
0:28:53	SONNY WEAHKEE	So when the city of Albuquerque tells us, “Your sacred site's getting in the way of our progress,” that doesn't equate.
0:28:59	BINESHI ALBERT	The fight to protect this area came together from tribal people, who use this place... We spent a good deal of time of researching and of researching why there was this aggressive push for this road through the petroglyphs. We found that there was a landowner who owned 6700 acres of land on the backside of the monument, and he wanted to build a new community back there of 45,000 new people.

0:29:25	NARRATOR	In order to protect this site The Sacred Alliance for Grassroots Equality, known as SAGE, was founded in 1996. Members of SAGE went to city officials and tried to explain the significance of the Petroglyphs.
0:29:39	BINESHI ALBERT	So, we did a meeting with the mayor. We shared with him the example of why this was a sacred place, and we tried to make a comparison of “This is a church. For Indian people this is a church. You know, how would you feel if a road went through your church?” And he said, “I would absolutely, without a doubt, never allow that. Over my dead body.” And so we thought, “Well, great. That’s what we’re talking about here.” And he was like, “No, it’s not. They’re just rocks. It’s a bunch of graffiti Out there. It’s just rocks.”
0:30:12	CONFERENCE: LAURIE WEAHKEE	We’ve been working for many years to try to protect a sacred site on the west side of Albuquerque. And through that effort, we actually found ourselves...being outvoted, time and time again. So what we started to do was to try to create a voting bloc of Indian people.
0:30:32	BINESHI ALBERT	We realized that we had to be able to play as a community in making sure that people who understood this area and understood why it was sacred were those folks making the decisions.
0:30:48	NARRATOR	In 2002, SAGE created the Native American Voters Alliance. NAVA worked to register voters and educate them about the complexity of the upcoming bond issue.
0:31:00	BINESHI ALBERT	A majority of the City Councilors were getting as much as, uh, as much as 80% of their contributions from developer interest. So we pushed a very public campaign to bring attention to that.
0:31:12	NARRATOR	In 2003, Albuquerque citizens went to the polls to vote on the bond issue
0:31:18	BINESHI ALBERT	...and Native American voters said, “This is the only time that we get to vote for whether or not we route that road through the petroglyphs.” And they voted en masse.
0:31:26	NARRATOR	They voted overwhelmingly to defeat the road through the petroglyphs.

0:31:31	BINESHI ALBERT	That was the first time in the history of Albuquerque that a street bond had ever been voter down.
0:31:38	NARRATOR	SAGE's work was not yet done. A year after construction was stopped, a second bond measure to build the road was introduced. A City Council member outlined specific guidelines to support this bond measure. He called his proposal to develop the road through the Petroglyphs the "Petroglyph Protection Plan." Calling the measure the "protection plan" misled some voters into believing that a "YES" vote would protect the Petroglyphs. Partly due to voter confusion, the second bond measure passed, and construction of the road moved forward. SAGE activists tried to reach the public to stop construction through media coverage. They soon realized that they needed to do even more. Protesters placed themselves in front of bulldozers. Some protesters were arrested. Though SAGE failed to stop construction, they succeeded in demonstrating the importance of speaking out and voting.
0:32:48	SONNY WEAHKEE	When we started getting involved in this political campaigns our native people would go off and vote for maybe one federal election and then not vote again for another eight years. We're being able to see now. They are not just voting in federal elections. They're taking part in municipal elections and county elections, and so it's a good thing for us to see when the community comes together that we can make that kind of change.
0:33:18	JIM WILLIAMS	New Mexico has an opportunity to lead the country in election reform, and although it is happening in other states, this state is really a case study in the necessity for election reform.
0:33:33	NARRATOR	In January 2005, a group of New Mexican voters, including Native Americans, filed a lawsuit against the Secretary of State. The suit underscored the fact that electronic voting machines made it possible to manipulate outcomes with a bias affecting certain ethnic populations. The suit sought to halt the use of voting machines on the grounds that the machines violated the plaintiff's right to vote. The case was settled when legislation banning the use of these machines was passed into law. In the 2006 election, New Mexicans voted on paper. Undervotes in Native American and Hispanic precincts dropped significantly when voters used paper instead of electronic machines.

0:34:21	KEN MARTINEZ	If there is a question about the integrity of the vote, you should be able to open up a box and actually look at individual ballots to do that. How do you do that? Paper balloting.
0:34:36	NARRATOR	In 2006, SAGE and NAVA organized a forum in Albuquerque, with a focus on how to impact elections. The gathering was well-attended by representatives from many different tribes.
0:34:50	NAVA CONFERENCE: JOE GARCIA	Now, we realize that change has to happen, but the change has to be driven by us.
0:34:58	NAVA CONFERENCE: LAURIE WEAHKEE	Many of our people feel powerless, and yet, when we go home, we can definitely see the power within our, our ceremonies, within our dances, within our, our elders, within our religious leaders. I've seen a lot of young kids really starting to grasp for, for our traditional cultures and languages.
0:35:20	NARRATOR	The people of Laguna were able to use the power within their own community to move forward and create change.
0:35:28	JO COCHRAN	Looking back at those problems encountered back in 2004 is basically the reason Laguna has become so committed, and when you've worked so hard at pulling these people out and actually getting them to register, you know, what do you say?
0:35:58	ROLAND JOHNSON	We're so disturbed by what transpired on that day that we made our complaints known and the various agencies begin to investigate.
0:36:07	NARRATOR	It became clear that there had been illegalities, including violations of the Voting Rights Act.
0:36:11	KEN MARTINEZ	The federal government came in because of the disenfranchisement, because of the undervote, and said you have got to set up a process to make sure that this tribal pueblo is included in the voting process, and that plan included the hiring of voting rights coordinators by the county clerk
0:36:35	NARRATOR	The voting rights coordinator's job includes visiting communities to educate voters and training bilingual people to work at the polls.

0:36:45	TERESA LEGER	If we have there the voting happening at the reservations, it's going to be easier to have the necessary interpreter there. In 2004, there were 42 early voting sites in the state of New Mexico. Not a single one was at a pueblo. We drafted a law that says that the clerks will be required to have early voting locations if requested by a tribe.
0:37:14	NARRATOR	Early voting on Pueblo lands would mean that American Indians could vote before election day right in the community where they live, and not at a voting site miles away. The law passed.
0:37:28	TERESA LEGER	What happened at Laguna highlighted a problem that then made us realize, that we'll be able to show those voters who got turned away, your vote is important, and because of what happened, we've tried to make things better. What Lagunas have now done is take an issue that affected them and turned it into something that will benefit all native Americans who are living in remote areas when it come times to vote.
0:38:05	GLOJEAN TODACHEENE	Native Americans are finally really learning the, how the political process works, and when you see that well-oiled campaign machine, it is just totally awesome.
0:38:16	TERESA LEGER	Until Native Americans became active in the political process, they were ignored in the policy-making process. They are now active in the political process, and they're starting to be paid attention to in the policy arena.
0:38:31	GLOJEAN TODACHEENE	You got committed people, you have people who, uh, volunteer, who give up their time, and who have a great passion that this thing, this political process of how it works, "I am going to be a voice. I want to be a decision-maker."
0:38:32	SONNY WEAHKEE	We actually have the tools. We've developed them over the years that we've been in the struggle, and we're passing them on to young people. We're going to teach our young people how to carry this work forth.
0:39:08	ROLAND JOHNSON	It's not unusual for a person in religious leadership, or even those of us who are now elders to say to our family members: (Speaks Laguna). Be grateful for what it is that has been given to us by our creator. But also, (Speaks Laguna). Be careful. Even in the voting process, you know, you think about what this individual is going to be able to do about all of people, all of creation. (Speaks Laguna) is a saying in Laguna, too. "Krishjesh" means "together". Each side can come together and help each other.

0:40:04	NARRATOR	<p>After 25 years of debate in 2007, the UN General Assembly adopted the “Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.”</p> <p>Rights include the freedom to live in peace and security as distinct peoples, to practice cultural heritage and follow traditional knowledge, to exercise rights to traditional lands and languages, to practice indigenous political, economic, and social systems, essentially, the right of self-determination. Ultimately, it will not be a document but the people themselves who will take this message into the future.</p>
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