

This was a guest editorial in The Oklahoman newspaper July 31, 2006. It was written by Kara Briggs, Yakama, Senior Fellow of the American Indian Policy and Media Initiative.



DOUBLE STANDARD?

By Kara Briggs

"Tribes profit from status" (news story, July 13) uses words and phrases to develop a skeptical tone -- the same one used by anti-Indian activists when they criticize tribal nations. This choice of tone is common in current American journalism, which rewards the reporter who can catch someone in the act, even if the act is legal and beneficial to surrounding communities. This attitude commonly occurs in articles about tribal economic development. One passage punctuates an explanation of the 1887 Dawes Act with the stand-alone exclamation of "That gives the tribe immense advantages for economic development."

Speaking with tribal leaders from Oklahoma recently, many described the poverty facing particularly rural

parts of the state. In rural and urban communities across the U.S., Indians and non-Indians benefit from employment at tribal enterprises, including casinos. Tribes aren't the only governmental entities in the U.S. that benefit from unique legal status. Would an article about a duty-free shop opening in an international airport or about a corporation getting a tax break suggest that someone was getting unfair breaks? I doubt it. It would more likely talk about the number of jobs created.

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