



NEWS RELEASE
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Media Contact: Brian Walch
publicaffairs@usccr.gov
(202) 376-8371

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Issues Statement Welcoming the Supreme Court's Ruling on *Dollar General v. Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians*

This release has been updated on August 3, 2016, replacing the original U.S. Commission on Civil Rights release issued July 26, 2016

Washington, DC – The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, by majority vote, issued a statement applauding the Supreme Court's 4-4 ruling in *Dollar General v. Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians*, which, in practical terms, upholds tribal courts' ability to adjudicate claims against non-Indians. The full statement can be viewed here:

http://www.usccr.gov/press/2016/PR_DollarGeneralStatement_7-25-16.pdf

The case arose from the alleged sexual assault of a 13-year old boy. Unable to bring charges, the boy and the tribe had to rely on federal prosecutors. In the civil case, Dollar General had argued that tribal courts could not hear civil claims against non-Indians. Each court that heard the case had rejected Dollar General's claim. While the Court was unable to reach a full decision on the merits, its ruling allows the boy's case to continue. Native sovereignty, so often under attack, has been upheld.

The Commission's 2003 [report](#), *A Quiet Crisis: Federal Funding and Unmet Needs in Indian Country*, detailed the many ways in which the federal government fails to support tribes, including the government's difficulty in investigating and prosecuting crimes on tribal land. The Commission expects to issue an updated *Quiet Crisis* report later this year.

Commission Chair Martin R. Castro stated, "The sovereignty of America's First Nations is often under threat. Too often tribes must continue to litigate their rights, which should have been settled long ago. This decision by the Supreme Court reaffirms the preeminence of Indian law and Indian courts on Indian country and we applaud them."

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