

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 9, 2024

The Honorable Gene Dodaro  
Comptroller General of the United States  
U. S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street NW  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Comptroller General Dodaro:

More than 30 years have passed since the enactment of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which requires federal agencies and specific museums to repatriate certain Native American human remains and other cultural items under some circumstances. Agencies have made some progress implementing NAGPRA, but hundreds of thousands of Native American human remains and other cultural items have yet to be repatriated.

The Government Accountability Office's (GAO's) past work and some tribes have indicated that progress has been slow because of several challenges. These include how some agencies are implementing NAGPRA's consultation requirements, the Department of the Interior's (DOI's) civil enforcement process, and DOI's processes for awarding NAGPRA grants. The National NAGPRA Program also recently reported that continued resistance by some museums unwilling to comply with NAGPRA is a barrier to repatriation. These challenges underscore the importance of further examining how federal agencies implement and DOI enforces NAGPRA.

We request GAO conduct a comprehensive review of NAGPRA and consider the following questions:

1. What is the status of federal agency efforts to repatriate Native American cultural items under NAGPRA?
2. How do federal agencies implement NAGPRA's provisions regarding discoveries and intentional excavations on federal and tribal lands?
3. To what extent has DOI's civil enforcement process resulted in identifying noncompliance and assessing penalties?
4. To what extent does DOI have a plan to monitor implementation and compliance with the revised NAGPRA regulations?
5. Since the passage of NAGPRA in 1990, how much grant funding has been awarded, for what purpose, and to whom?

6. What best practices, if any, could help improve repatriation?

We will work with you and your staff to determine the order in which to conduct this work if this request involves multiple jobs. If you have additional questions about this request, please contact Qay-liwh Ammon or Sullivan Gassmann.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Ranking Member  
House Natural Resources Committee