



COALITION OF LARGE TRIBES

Blackfeet Nation • Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe • Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation • Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation of Oregon • Crow Creek Sioux Tribe • Crow Nation • Eastern Shoshone Tribe • Fort Belknap Indian Community • Hopi Tribe • Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nation • Mescalero Apache Tribe • Muscogee (Creek) Nation • Navajo Nation • Northern Arapaho Tribe • Northern Cheyenne Tribe • Rosebud Sioux Tribe • San Carlos Apache Tribe • Shoshone-Bannock Tribes • Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation • Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe • Spirit Lake Nation • Spokane Tribe • Standing Rock Sioux Tribe • Ute Indian Tribe • Ute Mountain Ute Tribe • Walker River Paiute Tribe

January 13, 2026

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Pass the Credit Card Competition Act at the Senate's Soonest Opportunity

Dear Majority Leader Thune and Minority Leader Schumer:

I write as Chairman of the Coalition of Large Tribes (COLT)—an intertribal organization representing the interests of the more than 50 tribes with reservations of 100,000 acres or more, encompassing more than 95% of the Indian Country lands and more than half the Native American population—to express COLT's strong support for the inclusion of the Credit Card Compensation Act in any moving vehicle at the soonest opportunity. Simply put, the Credit Card Competition Act would be transformative for rural and tribal communities by allowing us to keep more of our revenues in communities rather than allowing big banks to gorge on profits from their unjust, antiquated and completely unnecessary swipe fees.

COLT has supported Senator Marshall's Credit Card Competition Act since he introduced it because it makes good policy sense for tribes and all rural economies. While on average nearly 50% of state and local governmental revenue is generated from taxes, tribal governments do not have any property tax base, with land held in trust by the United States. Nor do we have any reliable sales or income tax base with our historic unemployment on our large land base reservations historically exceeding 50%. Tribal nations' ability to raise governmental revenue via taxation is severely limited. Yet, the needs of the tribal citizenry are often disproportionately high due to the historic lack of investment in tribal infrastructure and economies.

Given these circumstances, many tribal nations have pursued economic ventures spearheaded by tribal businesses and enterprises to fund government operations, stimulate local economic development and provide much-needed employment opportunities for tribal members and non-members. Tribal enterprises are a vital tool of tribal nations in ensuring the safety, security, health, and welfare of tribal members. Those businesses regularly transact with individuals and entities utilizing credit cards—including our tribal convenience stores, grocery



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stores, gas stations, hotels, restaurants, trading posts, art venues, and tourist attractions. But all of these tribal businesses are severely disadvantaged by sky-high credit card swipe fees.

On average, credit card swipe fees are the second-highest operating expense for local businesses and this is true for tribal businesses as well. Visa and Mastercard credit card fees totaled a record \$111.2 billion in 2024 which was an increase of more than 10% from 2023 and nearly triple the \$39.1 billion paid in those fees in 2014. The average swipe fee rate charged to local businesses jumped from 2.26% of the amount of a credit card transaction in 2023 to 2.35% in 2024. The fees have increased more than 70% since the 2020 pandemic alone.

Visa and Mastercard control more than 80% of the credit card market and set the fee pricing for the banks that issue their credit cards. That central price-setting leads to rapid increases in the fees and denies tribal businesses and tribes any ability to negotiate prices and terms as they would with any other vendor that seeks to work with tribal businesses.

The Credit Card Competition Act would save at least \$17 billion in credit card fees per year by simply ensuring that the giant credit card companies (Visa and Mastercard) need to compete for tribal businesses' transactions. Tribal businesses have a competitive choice with others they work with and tribal businesses need to compete with each other (as well as off-reservation businesses). Visa and MC should compete for business as well.

Factors present in origin story of swipe fees in the 1960s are absent today. Then, there were costs to banks in acquiring and maintaining credit card customers with the new and emerging technology in what was a manual process. It was novel to businesses—then—to be able to market to customers who could pay with credit. Now 60+ years later, credit card infrastructure is automated and secure, and much more like a utility. Yet despite the sea-change in factual context, credit card swipe fees have ballooned to outrageous levels while the credit card companies provide no additional value.

Across COLT's member tribes, we estimate eliminating credit card swipe fees would keep [many millions of dollars](#) in the hands of tribal governments each year, allowing us to better serve our citizens and empower of rural economies by keeping more dollars circulating in our communities.¹

¹ Even if tribal businesses are only a small percentage of credit card swipe fees, the costs overall in COLT states are huge—over \$4 billion in Arizona and Colorado, nearly \$2 billion in Oklahoma, nearly \$600 million in each of Montana and South Dakota—making the implications for tribes in those states correspondingly very significant.



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Additionally, we note that credit swipe fees are more than \$1,200 per year per family on average. That is an outrageous amount of money, especially for our tribal families who often live well below the poverty line. Credit and debit fees literally keep food out of reach for some tribal families who cannot commute long distances to grocery stores (often 90 miles or more), or access cash because of a lack of local banking, and must use credit cards at local convenience stores to feed their families—burdened all the more by swipe fees.

Enacting the Credit Card Competition Act would also be complimentary to the Rules recently promulgated by the Department of the Treasury on Tribal General Welfare Benefits² and the Tax Treatment of Entities Wholly Owned by Tribal Governments.³ These regulations are actually deregulatory in nature and foundational in supporting the Trump-Vance Administration’s goals in seeing all American communities, including large land base tribal communities, thrive again. Like the Rules, eliminating swipe fees will also keep more dollars circulating within tribal economies, rather than going into credit card coffers in New York. Tribal sovereignty and our ability to provide services to our citizens through sovereign enterprises should not be burdened by baseless and burdensome swipe fees.

As Congress considers many avenues to uplift the U.S. economy and ensure fairness in our markets, enacting the Credit Card Competition Act should be at the very top of the list. We urge you to include it in any appropriate moving legislation.

Respectfully,

Signed by:


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J. Garret Renville, COLT Chairman
Chairman, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse
Reservation, South Dakota

CC: COLT Congressional Delegations
Members of the Senate Banking Committee
Members of the Senate Agriculture Committee

² 90 FED. REG. 58377 (Dec. 16, 2025).

³ 90 FED. REG. 58151 (Dec. 16, 2025).