

## **Abstract**

A debate on the reform of the frequently criticized Indian Act of 1876 – the basic law governing the rights and responsibilities of First Nations and their special status within Canada – has been getting more intense with the ongoing socio-economic problems of Aboriginal peoples. Whereas the previous Canadian government of Stephen Harper emphasized self-sufficiency and financial responsibility, First Nations have required the assertion of their constitutional rights to self-determination and self-government in any reform. This piece of work examines various proposals to reform the Indian Act and their potential effect on the status of First Nations. It focuses on Aboriginal policy stances of the Harper Government and the First Nations' reaction to the federal government's approach. In particular, it analyzes the ideas and demands of the Idle No More protest movement that emerged in response to some of the legislative proposals of the Harper Government. The author concludes by arguing that any effort to change the unfavorable situation of Aboriginal peoples in Canada would run into problems because of the discrepancy of ideas of the Conservative Government and First Nations on how to implement the reform of the Indian Act and how to enforce the right to self-determination.