



CENTRAL COUNCIL
Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
Edward K. Thomas Building
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CENTRAL COUNCIL OF TLINGIT AND HAIDA INDIAN TRIBES OF ALASKA
Eighty-Fourth Annual Tribal Assembly
April 10-12, 2019
Juneau, Alaska

Resolution TA 19-19

Title: Pledge to Support the Indian Child Welfare Act

By: Juneau Tlingit & Haida Community Council

WHEREAS, the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida) is a federally recognized tribe with more than 31,000 citizens; and

WHEREAS, Tlingit & Haida has established it as a priority to promote and protect the health, education, economic and general welfare of its citizens and their children; and

WHEREAS, Congress, working with tribal nations, tribal leadership, and advocates for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) children, passed the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 to address an “Indian child welfare crisis of massive proportions”, whereby an estimated 25% to 35% of all Indian children, including Alaskan Natives, had been separated from their families and placed in adoptive homes, foster care, or institutions; and

WHEREAS, although the crisis flowed from multiple causes, Congress found that nontribal public and private agencies had played a significant role, and that State agencies and courts had often failed to recognize the essential tribal relations of Indian people and the cultural and social standards prevailing in Indian communities and families; and

WHEREAS, to address this failure, ICWA establishes minimum federal standards for the removal of Indian children from their families and the placement of these children in foster or adoptive homes, and confirms tribal jurisdiction over child-custody proceedings involving Indian children; and

WHEREAS, Tlingit & Haida recognizes it as its responsibility to the general welfare of the children it represents and serves by passionately working with the school district, family courts system, health advocates and by promoting foster parenting, among other services; and

WHEREAS, the Tribal State Collaboration Group - SERO Data Indicators Report for southeast Alaska reflects the ongoing need and success when the tribe and tribal communities are actively engaged in a true partnership with the state; and

WHEREAS, early application and consistent compliance with ICWA prevents unlawful removals of AI/AN children from family and promotes stable placements for AI/AN children in loving, permanent homes, connected to family and culture and is an effective policy that protects the best interest of AI/AN children; and

WHEREAS, current research shows that family, culture, and community promote resiliency and healthy development in AI/AN youth; and

WHEREAS, nationwide AI/AN children are still disproportionately more likely to be removed from their homes and communities than other children due largely to misapplication, ignorance, or willful non-compliance with the mandates of ICWA and often without notice to or engagement with the child’s tribe; and

WHEREAS, in June 2016 federal agencies in response to these troubling numbers and shocking reports of widespread ICWA non-compliance acted to improve ICWA and apply consistent minimum federal standards to protect Indian children, families, and tribes; and

WHEREAS, recent opposition to ICWA has risen in the form of frivolous litigation, misinformation campaigns with Congress, and attempts to garner media attention by exploiting tragic events and inaccurate portrayals of AI/AN tribes; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Eighty-Fourth Tribal Assembly of Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska delegation convened in Juneau, Alaska on April 10-12, 2019, hereby pledges to support and defend the Indian Child Welfare Act, recognized as the “Gold Standard” for child welfare practices and thereby opposes any litigation or actions against it; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Tlingit & Haida supports efforts to implement an Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact with the State of Alaska and urges the State remain steadfast in a partnership that improves the child welfare system for AI/AN children, their families and communities in support of our AI/AN children.

ADOPTED this 11th day of April 2019, by the Eighty-Fourth Tribal Assembly of Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska.

CERTIFY



President Richard J. Peterson

ATTEST


Tribal Secretary Ralph Wolfe