



Date: February 20, 2013
To: House Human Services and Housing Committee
From: Cheryle A. Kennedy, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Tribal Council
Subject: House Bill 2053

Chairwoman Tomei, Vice-Chair Olson, Vice-Chair Gomberg and Members of the Committee, my name is Cheryle A. Kennedy, and I am member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. I am here today in support of House Bill 2053.

The Grand Ronde Tribe has operated a child welfare program since 1988 and since then has worked collaboratively with the Oregon Department of Human Services to protect Grand Ronde tribal youth. House Bill 2053 will further ensure the safety of tribal youth by allowing for effective and thorough criminal background checks on prospective foster families and relative caregivers seeking approval to care for our children.

Current Oregon law gives tribes the authority to work with Oregon State Police to conduct criminal background checks for the screening of individuals seeking employment in various capacities, including employment with tribal social services, tribal law enforcement, and tribal gaming facilities. **However, the current statute does not specifically authorize tribes to run criminal background checks on prospective foster families and relative caregivers.**

House Bill 2053 provides a mechanism for the Department of Human Services and Oregon State Police to share criminal background checks of prospective and existing foster care providers with tribal child welfare programs.

Since the groundbreaking Senate Bill 770 (2001), tribes and the State of Oregon have worked hard to create a positive government-to-government relationship. We feel strongly that passage of HB 2053 will continue the goodwill and future vision found here in Oregon between tribes and the State. We are proud of the working relationships that we have with the State, and are also proud of our unique partnerships that have produced such positive results over the past decade throughout Oregon.

Please support House Bill 2053.