



February 10, 2020

Chair Sanchez, Vice-Chair Sprenger, Vice-Chair Bynum, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Children First works with our 120 partner organizations to develop the Children's Agenda. We identify and elevate legislative concepts that will support the needs of Oregon's children - our children - so that all of our children have opportunities to reach their full potential. **HB 4148 - The Oregon Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) - is a priority on the 2020 Children's Agenda.**

We must do better for all of our children, especially those who are impacted by historic racism. The federal ICWA was passed in 1978 in response to the systematic removal of 25% - 35% of all Native children from their families and communities. At that time, 85% of those children were placed outside of their families and communities—even when fit and willing relatives were available.

The ICWA was passed to maintain the cultural, tribal and family connections that children need to thrive. Today, Native children are placed in foster care at the highest rate of any children in Oregon. We need to do better.

The Oregon Indian Child Welfare Act (HB 4148) will codify the national standards of ICWA into Oregon statute to promote the safety of Native children, preserve tribal families and communities, recognize tribal sovereignty, and support compliance with ICWA in courtrooms and DHS offices throughout the state.

We urge you to pass HB 4148 to join other states in the national best practice of having a state ICWA.

Sincerely,
Chris Coughlin
Legislative Director

Our Children Oregon

Bringing Together Children First for Oregon and the Children's Trust Fund of Oregon

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