



Oregon PTA supports a Yes vote on HB 4148, the *Oregon Indian Child Welfare Act*

February 24, 2020

Chair Prozanski and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Oregon PTA has an over 100 year history of advocating for children and youth in Oregon. Our volunteers are in schools and communities across the state, working for the benefit of all Oregon's children.

We urge your yes vote on HB 4148.

HB 4148 is the result of a robust work group effort to align Oregon statutory laws with the federal *Indian Child Welfare Act*. This Oregon bill codifies national best standards and works to protect and support Native children and families in accord with the federal law and regulations.

Oregon PTA recognizes the troubled history and impact of prior actions on Indian children and families. Far too often those children were subjected to removal from their families and placement outside of their own communities. Their removal and placement outside of their communities was in spite of willing family homes being offered. The children, families and communities all suffered because of that approach to placement.

Oregon Native children are disproportionately placed in foster care, where they are overrepresented and less likely to be adopted. For the sake of those children we can and should act quickly to fix this. HB 4148 is the work group's plan to imbed national standards of the *Indian Child Welfare Act* into Oregon's laws and help those Indian children now.

The recommendations of the work group which are included in HB 4148 work to protect Indian children, honor tribal sovereignty and preserve tribal families. It will help Oregon comply with the federal law when it comes to court hearings and agency actions relating to those Indian children and families. It aligns Oregon's dependency code and requires biennial reporting from the Department of Human Services.

A Yes vote on this bill works to advance the vision of the federal *Indian Child Welfare Act* and 2016 regulations that Oregon work in the best interest of all Indian children and youth.

Please vote YES on HB 4148 the Oregon Indian Child Welfare Act

Otto Schell, Oregon PTA legislative director