



PRESS RELEASE

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Oregon House Passes Legislation to Expand Protections for Native Children

House Bill 3182 incorporates the federal Indian Child Welfare Act into Oregon law

SALEM, OR— Yesterday during an evening floor session, the Oregon House voted to codify provisions from the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) into Oregon law. The bill requires Oregon’s judicial system to recognize tribal customary adoptions, which ensure that Native children who are surrendered or placed for adoption can remain connected to their tribe.

“For too many Native children in Oregon, the care that they are receiving while in state custody is not culturally appropriate and out of compliance with federal law,” said [Rep. Tawna Sanchez](#) (D-NE Portland). “Following decades of destructive assimilation policies forced upon Native children and families, the protections and commitments in House Bill 3182 are long overdue.”

The legislation builds on work that was done during last June’s special session, with the passage of [House Bill 4214](#), which passed unanimously in both chambers and, among other provisions, requires the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide biennial reports about American Indian and Alaska Native children in the child welfare system.

“This bill is the product of years of hard work by Representative Sanchez and a wide range of stakeholders,” said [Rep. Paul Holvey](#) (D- Lane County). “Making sure that these children are able to maintain strong ties to their culture is absolutely crucial. I’m proud to be a co-sponsor of this legislation.”

“Adoption or surrendering of children is a complicated and often fraught issue, and one that should always be handled with sensitivity to the needs of the child,” said [Rep. Khanh Pham](#) (D- SE Portland). “This legislation will give Oregon’s courts the tools they need in order to make decisions that are in the child’s best interests.”

HB 3182 passed with unanimous support, and now moves to the Senate for consideration.

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