



# PRESS RELEASE

## OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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### **Oregon House Unanimously Re-Passes Legislation to Expand Protections for Native Children**

*Senate Bill 562 A incorporates the federal Indian Child Welfare Act into Oregon law*

SALEM, OR—Today, the Oregon House voted to codify provisions from the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) into Oregon law. [Senate Bill 562 A](#) 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. The bill is almost identical to House Bill 3182, which the House passed unanimously earlier this session, with the added clarification that it will not apply to juvenile case review hearings.

“The preservation of Indian families and communities is a top concern for our tribal communities,” said [Rep. Tawna Sanchez](#) (D- East Portland), who carried the bill on the House Floor. “For too many Native children in Oregon, the care that they are currently receiving while in state custody is not culturally appropriate and out of compliance with federal law. I am grateful that we were able to make this fix and preserve the years’ worth of work it took to get this bill right, so we can ensure Native children are getting the support they deserve.

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.

“Adoption or the surrender of children is already an issue that can be traumatic for a child,” said [Rep. Janelle Bynum](#) (D-Happy Valley), who co-sponsored the legislation. “This legislation will ensure a greater degree of cultural competency during the proceedings, and allows children to remain in a place where their culture is not only recognized, but honored and celebrated.”

SB 562 A, which passed with unanimous support, now moves to the Governor’s desk for consideration.

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