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Senate Passes the Oregon Indian Child Welfare Act

SALEM – Today, the Oregon Senate unanimously passed House Bill 4214, the Oregon Indian Child Welfare Act.

House Bill 4214 was developed following a two-year long workgroup process in response to reports of Indian children’s experience with the child welfare system.

“I was very concerned by the disproportionate placement of American Indian and Alaska Native children in foster homes, and especially the treatment of those children while in foster care,” said Senator Arnie Roblan (D-Coos Bay) who carried the bill on the Senate Floor. “I am grateful for the dedicated process this legislation went through with stakeholders, all of whom kept the best interest of Indian children in mind and focused on the need to enact policies counter to historical assimilation policies.”

House Bill 4214 requires the Department of Human Services to provide biennial reports about Indian children in the child welfare system. The bill also modifies Oregon's dependency code to conform with the federal Indian Child Welfare Act and promote Indian children's continued connection to culture, family and tribe.

“The cultural connections Indian children will gain as a result of this legislation will ensure better outcomes for Indian children,” said Senator Roblan. “Indigenous people know well the devastation of viral disease and have experienced a long history of racial injustice. It is fitting that this concept has been included in this Special Session, it will improve the lives of young people.”

Senate Bill 4214 now goes to the Governor’s desk for her signature.

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