

Section by Section: The Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Native Children's Commission Implementation Act

****This legislative proposal is based on the policy recommendations made in [*The Way Forward Report*](#) of the Alyce Spotted Bear & Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children.**

Section 1. Short Title; Table of Contents.

Section 2. Definition of Indian Tribe and Tribal Organization.

Title I – Justice for Children, Youth, and Families

Sec. 101. Advisory Committee on Tribal Juvenile Justice.

This section establishes an Advisory Committee on Tribal Juvenile Justice to advise and provide recommendations to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), the Attorney General, and Congress on juvenile justice, delinquency prevention, and system improvements affecting Tribal youth and Tribal communities.

Sec. 102. Department of Justice and Department of Interior Study on the number and status of Native American missing children's cases.

This section directs the Department of Justice in coordination with the Department of the Interior to consult with Tribes and conduct a study on the number and status of missing Native American children and youth, including cases connected to juvenile justice involvement, child welfare involvement, non-custodial parent abduction, domestic violence, sexual assault, homicide, drug activity, stalking, and human trafficking. The section also requires a report to Congress with recommendations to address reporting gaps, barriers to reporting, and training needs.

Sec. 103. Alaska Native Victim Services Fund at the Denali Commission.

This section codifies the Alaska Native Victim Services Fund at the Denali Commission and authorizes grants to Tribal and nonprofit organizations providing services to Alaska Native victims of crime, including for culturally appropriate victim services and related infrastructure, housing, construction, repair, rehabilitation, and facility improvements.

Sec. 104. Alaska Native and American Indian Family Violence Prevention, Services, and Treatment.

This section incorporates Senator Murkowski's Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) provisions to strengthen services for Native victims of domestic violence. It supports the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center, the Native Hawaiian Women's Resource Center, the StrongHearts Native Domestic Violence Hotline, Tribal training and technical assistance, and grants to Tribal domestic violence coalitions.

Sec. 105. Tiwahe Initiative.

This section permanently authorizes and expands the Tiwahe Initiative to support Tribally driven family centered approaches that strengthen families, reduce out-of-home placements of Indian children, improve coordination among federal programs serving Indian families, and expand the Tiwahe model beyond existing pilot sites.

Sec. 106. Tribal justice support.

This section codifies support for Tribes in Public Law 280 States by ensuring those Tribes are not disadvantaged in receiving Tribal court base funding because of State jurisdiction, limited Indian country, or the absence of a reservation or Tribal land base.

Title II – Improving Research and Data**Sec. 201. National Institutes of Health Tribal Health Research Office.**

This section codifies the NIH Tribal Health Research Office and NIH Tribal Advisory Committee to coordinate and strengthen Tribal health research across NIH. Additionally, this section authorizes grants to develop, test, and implement innovative approaches to Native health, including culturally based interventions and research focused on early childhood, children, youth, and health disparities.

Sec. 202. Improving Native Infant and Maternal Health Data.

This section directs the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to improve the quality, accuracy, and completeness of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian infant and maternal health data. It also supports cooperative agreements with Tribes, Tribal organizations, Tribal Epidemiology Centers, Papa Ola Lokahi, and urban Indian organizations to address misclassification and under sampling and to strengthens Tribal participation in maternal mortality review efforts.

Title III – Improving the Physical and Behavioral Health of Native Children**Sec. 301. Health Resources and Services Administration Tribal Advisory Committee.**

This section codifies the Tribal Advisory Committee to advise HRSA on public health issues affecting American Indian and Alaska Native communities. It also establishes a maternal health subcommittee to focus on maternal mortality, severe maternal morbidity, culturally appropriate care, data collection, postpartum mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and coordination across HHS agencies and Tribal partners.

Sec. 302. Department of Health and Human Services study on the Intersection Between Maternal Mortality and Domestic Violence.

This section directs the Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Department of Justice and the Department of the Interior, to conduct a study on the intersection of maternal mortality and domestic violence among American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian mothers and report the results to Congress.

Sec. 303. Grants to Grow the Perinatal Workforce for Tribal Communities.

This section establishes a grant program to recruit, train, and retain maternity care providers, behavioral health providers, nutrition professionals, midwives, doulas, community health workers, lactation consultants, and other perinatal health workers serving Tribal communities.

Sec. 304. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Tribal Technical Advisory Committee.

This section codifies the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Tribal

Technical Advisory Committee (STTAC) to advise the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use on culturally appropriate mental health and substance use services for American Indian and Alaska Native communities, including behavioral health priorities for Native children and youth.

Sec. 305. Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee.

This section codifies the Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee at the Department of Health and Human Services to strengthen the government-to-government relationship between HHS and Indian Tribes, improve coordination across HHS programs, and provide recommendations on access, coverage, and delivery of services to American Indian and Alaska Native communities

Sec. 306. Community mental health services grants for Indian Tribes and Tribal Organizations.

This section establishes a five percent Tribal set-aside within the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant to provide direct grants to Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations for community mental health services for adults with serious mental illness and children with serious emotional disturbance

Sec. 307. Substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery grants for Indian Tribes and Tribal Organizations.

This section establishes a five percent Tribal set-aside within the Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services Block Grant to provide direct grants to Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations for substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.

Sec. 308. Self-Governance for Behavioral Health Programs for Indian Tribes.

This section establishes a five-year self-governance demonstration program allowing participating Tribes, Tribal organizations, and inter-Tribal consortia to assume administration of certain SAMHSA behavioral health programs through self-governance compacts and funding agreements.

Title IV – Environmental Health Protection

Sec. 401. Native Children's Environmental Health Protection Task Force.

This section amends the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to establish a CEQ-led interagency Native Children's Environmental Health Protection Task Force to coordinate Federal efforts to identify and address environmental health threats impacting Native children.

Sec. 402. Integration of Environmental Health Within Primary Care.

This section amends the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to require environmental health training for Indian Health Service professionals and to establish a comprehensive environmental health system that integrates clinical care decision support, electronic health record capabilities, referrals, and environmental health data sharing.

Title V – Improving Nutrition Programs for Native Children, Youth, and Families

Sec. 501. Tribal Pilot Programs for SNAP Administration.

This section establishes Tribal SNAP administration pilot programs, including an Alaska pilot for ANCSA regional nonprofits and the Metlakatla Indian Community and a Lower 48 Tribal pilot. Participating Tribes and Tribal organizations may directly administer SNAP within their service areas, receive direct federal funding, and receive 100 percent Federal reimbursement for administrative costs.

Sec. 502. Child Nutrition Programs Tribal Pilot Projects.

This section establishes Tribal child nutrition pilot projects and expands Tribal participation in Federal child nutrition programs. It authorizes Tribes Tribal organizations and Tribal educational agencies to operate school lunch, school breakfast, summer meals, and childcare food programs while also supporting locally sourced and culturally appropriate foods.

Title VI – Addressing Homelessness in Native Communities**Sec. 601. Program for Housing Assistance for Homeless Native Americans and Alaska Natives.**

This section amends the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act to establish a Tribal Homeless Housing Assistance Grant Program (modeled after Tribal HUD-VASH) to provide rental assistance and supportive services to Native Americans who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. The program prioritizes youth experiencing homelessness, families with children, and survivors of domestic violence.

Sec. 602. Program for Housing Assistance for Homeless Native Hawaiians.

This section amends the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act to establish a Native Hawaiian Homeless Housing Assistance Grant Program to provide rental assistance and supportive services to Native Hawaiians who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The program prioritizes homeless youth, families with children, and survivors of domestic violence

Sec. 603. Tribal Continuum of Care Participation Grant Program.

This section establishes a Tribal Continuum of Care (COC) Participation Grant Program to support Indian Tribes and Tribally Designated Housing Entities seeking to participate in the Continuum of Care Program, including as a collaborative applicant or project applicant through a local Continuum of Care.

Sec. 604. Improving Tribal participation in the Continuum of Care Program.

This section removes barriers for Tribes and Tribally Designated Housing Entities participating in the Continuum of Care (COC) Program by clarifying the eligibility of Indian Tribes and Tribally Designated Housing Entities, providing certain civil rights and consolidated plan exemptions for Tribal projects, and authorizing waiver authority to facilitate Tribal participation and use of funds.

Title VII – Improving the Workforce for Families

Sec. 701. Strengthening the 477 Initiative.

This section amends the Indian Employment, Training and Related Services Act of 1992 to strengthen the 477 Initiative by clarifying eligible programs, expanding the purposes of integrated services to include self-sufficiency and family well-being, streamlining reporting, protecting approved Tribal 477 plans from later agency reinterpretation, and preventing Federal agencies from requiring removal of programs from an approved plan except as required by law.

Sec. 702. Interagency Agreement to Evaluate on-site Child Care in Affordable Housing.

This section requires HUD and HHS to evaluate the impact of co-locating child care services within affordable housing developments serving American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities. The evaluation must assess impacts on housing stability, workforce participation, early childhood development, child care access, health, economic mobility, and family well-being.

Sec. 703. Set-Aside of Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds for Indian Tribes.

This section increases the Tribal set-aside under the Child Care and Development Block Grant from “not less than 2 percent” to “not less than 5 percent.”

Sec. 704. Requirement of Consultation with Indian Tribes.

This section establishes a Tribal consultation requirement under the Child Care and Development Block Grant, consistent with the Head Start Act, to require consultation with Tribes, Native Hawaiian organizations, experts in Native early childhood education and development, linguists, and the National Indian Child Care Association.

Sec. 705. Early childhood Native American advisory committee.

This section establishes a Tribal Advisory Committee on Early Childhood within the Office of Early Childhood Development at the Administration for Children and Families. The Committee will advise on early childhood development, child care, culturally appropriate care, data collection, traditional practices, and interagency coordination affecting American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children.

Title VIII – Education

Sec. 801. Supporting Native American Teacher Training and Teacher Development.

This section amends 20 U.S.C. 1057(c) to include teacher training and curriculum development as authorized activities under Title III, Part A programs.

Sec. 802. Pilot Program for Native Teacher Apprentices.

This section establishes a demonstration program within the Administration for Native Americans to provide grants to Tribes and educational entities for teacher apprenticeship programs that address shortages of educators serving Native early childhood and K-12 students, particularly in remote and rural communities.

Sec. 803. Supporting after-school programs for Native American children.

This section amends the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to include after-school programming as an allowable activity under Special Programs and Projects to Improve Educational Opportunities for Indian Children.

Sec. 804. Promoting and strengthening Native languages.

This section supports the Native American Language Resource Center and establishes grants for certified Native American Language Schools to expand full language immersion opportunities.

Sec. 805. Addressing the indirect administrative costs of Indian education programs.

This section clarifies that administrative cost caps in certain Indian education programs apply only to direct administrative costs and do not include indirect costs recovered under a federally negotiated indirect cost rate. It also extends the availability of certain grant funds to five years.

Sec. 806. Increasing access to Head Start for Native children.

This section expands access to culturally appropriate early childhood education by establishing Native Hawaiian Head Start programs, creating dedicated funding set-asides for Indian and Native Hawaiian Head Start programs, and strengthening Native involvement in program design, oversight, and delivery.

Sec. 807. Addressing Homelessness in BIE Schools.

This section increases the Bureau of Indian Education set-aside under the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program from one percent to two percent, subject to a hold harmless provision for states. It also supports technical assistance to strengthen BIE's capacity to administer these funds, and clarifies that funds may be used for student emergency housing.

Sec. 808. Bureau of Indian Education Behavioral Health and Wellness Program.

This section codifies the BIE Behavioral Health and Wellness Program, established following COVID-19, to provide BIE schools with behavioral health services, including virtual counseling, crisis support, and technical assistance.

Sec. 809. Alaska Tribal School Program.

This section establishes formula funding within the Department of the Interior for certified Alaska Tribal schools to support school operations, academics, Native language programs, transportation, student services, and other education-related activities.