



QUOTES OF SUPPORT FOR THE NATIVE CHILDREN'S COMMISSION IMPLEMENTATION ACT

"Tribal Self-Governance applauds Senator Lisa Murkowski for introducing the Native Children's Commission Implementation Act. This legislation represents an important commitment to ensuring that the recommendations of the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children translate into meaningful action to protect our Native children. For generations, Tribal Nations have demonstrated that Native children and families achieve better outcomes when Tribes have the authority, resources, and flexibility to design and administer programs that reflect their communities' unique cultures, traditions, and priorities. This legislation recognizes that lasting improvements in the lives of Native children require a continued investment in Tribal Self-Determination and Self-Governance," **said W. Ron Allen, Tribal Chairman/CEO, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and President, Tribal Self-Governance**

"In their final report, *The Way Forward*, the Native Children's Commission, provided a detailed assessment of Native children's well-being and recommendations on how to build on the approaches that were working and improve systems that needed further enhancement. The strength of the Commission's approach and recommendations are the connections it identifies between different systems that interact with Native children, their families, and Tribal Nations. This approach is clear in the Native Children's Commission Implementation Act legislation that puts forward opportunities to address the key barriers that hinder Native children's well-being and effective methods to improve systems that play a critical role in supporting well-being. The National Indian Child Welfare Association is greatly appreciative of the Native Children's Commission, Senator Murkowski, and Senator Schatz for introducing this bi-partisan legislation that gives important attention to improving the lives of Native children across the United States," **said Dr. Sarah Kastelic, Executive Director, National Indian Child Welfare Association.**

"On behalf of the Association of Village Council Presidents, we commend Senator Murkowski for introducing the *Native Children's Commission Implementation Act of 2025*—a significant milestone that reflects years of Tribal voices being heard. This legislation gives us hope because

it affirms what our communities have long known: when Tribes are trusted to lead, our children and families thrive. AVCP is especially encouraged by the continued commitment to models like Tiwahe and we look forward to working alongside Congress to ensure this legislation delivers lasting, community-driven solutions that strengthen families and protect the future of the next generation,” **said Vivian Korthuis, CEO of the Association of Village Council Presidents.**

“I cannot think of a member of Congress who has done as much for Native American peoples and communities than Senator Aanaa Shaawátk’i Lisa Murkowski, and it is no surprise that she has championed the Promoting Strong Native Families and Children Act. This act has the potential to increase protections for our children and families, strengthen emotional and behavioral health, and contribute to the survival and health of Indigenous languages. I am thankful for all of this work and stand with all who support the passage of this impactful and wonderful legislation. It is so rare to see a national focus on the health of Native American peoples, and to try and heal the damages done by attempted erasure, and I am hopeful that we are building towards a future of health and happiness,” **said Lance Twitchell, M.F.A., Ph.D. Hawaiian and Indigenous Language and. Assistant Professor of English, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

"The Native Children's Commission Implementation Act aims to enhance the safety and well-being of Native children, families, and communities by providing culturally grounded services and addressing the various factors that affect children's welfare, including shelter and housing, domestic violence, environmental health, education, and nutrition assistance. The National Indigenous Women's Resource Center endorses the Native Children's Commission Implementation Act and its commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of Native children and families,” **said Lucy R. Simpson, CEO, National Indigenous Women's Resource Center.**

"The PL 477 Program has proven itself to be an invaluable tool for the Wyandotte Nation in exercising our sovereignty. Through our PL 477 plan, we direct our existing federal funding to the services our people need most to secure self-sufficiency for themselves and their families, all while reducing bureaucratic red tape. Senator Murkowski's bill confirms the broad design and functions of this important program, and we celebrate its introduction,” **said Chief Billy Friend, Wyandotte Nation**

"Healing our communities and strengthening our future begins with our children. This legislation recognizes that Tribal Nations are not stakeholders in the wellbeing of Native children—we are governments with the inherent responsibility to care for our people. By expanding Tribal self-governance and investing in Tribal-led solutions, this bill helps ensure Native children can grow up connected to their families, cultures, and homelands. We appreciate Senator Murkowski's leadership and her continued commitment to advancing Tribal self-determination for future generations,” **said Chalyee Éesh Richard Peterson, Tlingit & Haida President**

“The Native Children's Commission Implementation Act is a historic step in addressing the interconnected impacts of the forced removal of our native children from our Tribal families and communities. The Native Children's Commission Implementation Act creates actionable

pathways for our Tribal Nations, Tribal families, and all members of the surrounding community to benefit by a Tribally empowered healing approach that increases Tribal self-determination in public education. We have faced over 150 years of education as something our families survive. Our students deserve a system of education that they thrive in rather than merely survive. The Native Children's Commission Implementation Act marks a turning point in public education by addressing the critical need for systems change that establishes Tribal operational funding for Tribally operated schools. There has never been a pathway like this in Alaska and Alaska is ready for this transformation,” **Dr. Joel Isaak Liq'a co-facilitator Alaska Native Tribal Education Consortium, Tribal Operations Director Kenaitze Indian Tribe.**

“ANTHC thanks Senator Murkowski for her leadership in introducing the Native Children’s Commission Implementation Act and her longstanding commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of Alaska Native people, especially our children. We commend the Senator’s continued work to advance the recommendations of the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children and to strengthen federal support for Tribal programs that serve our youth and families. ANTHC strongly supports this legislation and looks forward to working with Senator Murkowski to address the environmental and social factors impacting the health of our people and communities,” **said Natasha Singh, ANTHC President/CEO.**

“We are grateful for Senator Murkowski’s leadership and for introducing the Native Children’s Commission Implementation Act, which advances legislation that centers Tribal voices and solutions and represents a critical investment in Alaska Native and Tribal communities. This legislation honors the trust responsibility our federal government has to Native peoples by recognizing that safety, stability, and opportunity for our children and families are inseparable from permanent housing, healthcare access, and economic security. The Native Children’s Commission Implementation Act demonstrates that when we invest in Tribal self-determination and community-led approaches, we create lasting change. The AKNWRC stands ready and committed to working with Senator Murkowski and the Committee to bring these transformative provisions to life for our communities,” **said Tami Truett Jerue, Executive Director of the AKNWRC.**

"First Alaskans is encouraged by the introduction of this comprehensive legislative package to improve the health, wellness, and safety for our Native children and families. Grounded in the findings of the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children, this legislation represents a meaningful and long-overdue step forward in addressing the needs of Native children across the country. We especially underscore the importance of Title II, Justice for Children, Youth, and Families, and its strong emphasis on data and research as essential tools for driving informed, effective, and culturally responsive solutions,” **said Tikaan Galbreath, Chief Operating Officer, First Alaskans Institute**

“The Spirit Lake Tribe proudly supports the Native Children's Commission Implementation Act and commends Senator Murkowski, Senator Schatz, Senator Hoeven, and the Senate Committee

on Indian Affairs for advancing legislation that recognizes the importance of Tribal leadership in shaping the future of Native children and families.

“As one of the original TIWAHE Initiative pilot tribes, Spirit Lake has witnessed firsthand the power of tribal self-determination, culturally grounded services, and meaningful federal investments in Native families. Through TIWAHE, we have strengthened local capacity, improved services, and demonstrated that when Tribes are empowered to lead, children, families, and communities thrive.

“This legislation builds upon those successes by ensuring that Tribal voices, lived experiences, and tribally led approaches remain at the center of federal policies affecting Native children. For generations, Tribal Nations have carried the responsibility of protecting and nurturing our children despite significant challenges. The Native Children's Commission Implementation Act represents an important step toward honoring that responsibility through meaningful partnership and informed action.

“Our “Wakanyeza-Sacred Children” are our future, and they deserve every opportunity to grow up connected to their culture, supported by strong families, and empowered by healthier communities with support systems and education through programs such as TIWAHE. We look forward to continuing our work with Congress, Tribal Nations, and our federal partners to ensure that Native children not only succeed, but flourish for generations to come,” **said Lonna J Street, Chairwoman, Spirit Lake Tribe of North Dakota (Tiwahe Tribe).**

“Within Hawai‘i’s correctional system, the Tiwahe model’s emphasis on family-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally grounded practices closely aligns with Native Hawaiian ‘ohana values, which prioritize collective responsibility and the preservation of family connections. Approaches grounded in these shared principles offer a strong foundation for improving outcomes and addressing the intergenerational impacts experienced by Indigenous families.”

“Aloha is what this effort represents — a commitment to strengthening relationships between government and the Indigenous communities it serves. It reflects the shared belief that hope is the journey we walk together, grounded in mutual respect and the well-being of our families.”

“The resilience of the modern Indigenous family reminds us that meaningful change must be understood through the lived experiences of those who face the greatest challenges. This initiative reflects a vision of who we can become when we honor that perspective and commit ourselves to strengthening the well-being of our communities,” **said Mark Kawika Patterson, Commissioner, Chair, Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission.**

“The Fort Belknap Indian Community along with the 22 Tiwahe Pilot, Demonstration, and Incubator Tribes, expresses strong support for the Native Children’s Commission Implementation Act of 2025. The Flexibility of the Tiwahe model is essential, because it allows tribes to move away from one-size-fits-all federal mandates and toward a holistic approach that

integrates culture, traditions, and spirituality into every service we provide. This flexibility empowers tribes to design and deliver services that reflect the unique strengths, values, and needs of our families/children. Tiwahe has been the cornerstone of our success, strengthening family connections, promoting healing, and supporting the well being of our children and future generation. Through Tiwahe, we are creating pathways to hope, healing, resilience, and self-determination for Native Families across Indian Country. We urge Congress to support and advance the Native Children's commission Implementation Act of 2025 to ensure that Tribal communities have the tools, resources, and flexibility to continue this important work," **said Joan Johnson, Tribal Council-member, Gros Ventre At-Large (Both Tribes), Fort Belknap Indian Community Tribe.**

"The Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah strongly supports the Native Children's Commission Act sponsored by Senator Lisa Murkowski, as well as the permanent authorization and full funding of the Tiwahe Initiative for all ten participating Tribes. Tiwahe has allowed our Tribe to build a holistic, family-centered approach that strengthens Native children and families through culturally grounded services, education, child welfare, youth programming, Tribal Court development, and wraparound support.

"Through our Puow'wan Program, Tiwahe funding has helped us move beyond fragmented services and create coordinated systems that support children, families, and future generations through culturally grounded, wraparound services. Tiwahe recognizes what Tribal Nations have always known, that strong children come from strong families, and strong families are built through the guidance of parents, grandparents, and elders. This investment empowers Tribes to strengthen family stability, preserve cultural identity, and improve outcomes for Native children while advancing tribal self-determination and sovereignty. Our experience has shown that when Tribes are trusted to design solutions rooted in their own values and traditions, families thrive.

"Congress must ensure that all ten Tiwahe Initiative Tribes remain fully included and fully funded. This investment is laying the groundwork for stronger families, healthier communities, and brighter futures for Native children while honoring the federal trust responsibility and supporting Tribal Nations in caring for their own people," **said the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah.**

"Native children are the future of our Tribal Nations, and their health is a promise the United States is obligated to keep. The Native Children's Commission Implementation Act turns the recommendations of the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission into action — expanding Tribal self-governance over behavioral health and nutrition, strengthening maternal and child health, and giving Tribes a direct voice in the federal decisions that shape our children's lives. The National Indian Health Board thanks Chair Murkowski and Vice Chair Schatz for their leadership, and we stand ready to help move this bill from introduction to law," **said A.C. Locklear, CEO, National Indian Health Board.**

“We appreciate Senator Murkowski’s focus on addressing homelessness in Tribal communities, including support for Native veterans and expanded Continuum of Care access. These provisions will make a meaningful difference,” **said Brian Wilson, Executive Director of the Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness.**

“Tribal Chairman Darrell G. Seki, Sr., of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians fully supports the Tiwahe Initiative, a component of the Senator Murkowski’s Native Children’s Commission Bill. The Red Lake Nation is aware of the profound significance of the Tiwahe Initiative. The Initiative has effectively decreased child out-of-home placements by 70%.

Over the past decade, we have leveraged this flexible funding model to develop programs that are rooted in our culture, and we have prioritized our children’s connection to community in our decision-making processes. The Initiative has provided financial support to families in reuniting, and through our child welfare intake, funds are allocated to address poverty rather than mistakenly perceiving families’ circumstances as a child welfare concern. The Red Lake Nation is committed to preserving and expanding the Tiwahe Initiative as a permanent program. We extend our sincere gratitude to Senator Lisa Murkowski for steadfast support of the Native Children’s Commission Bill, which incorporates the Tiwahe Initiative,” **said Darrell G. Seki, Sr., Tribal Chairman, Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians.**