



NICWA
National Indian Child Welfare Association
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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: September 22, 2008

Contact NICWA for more information:
Kristy Alberty, Executive Communications Manager
503.222.4044, ext. 133

House Bill on Child Welfare Reform Passes, Historic Decision on Tribal Access to Federal Foster Care Funding Is Now Before the Senate

HR 6893, "The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act," was passed by the House of Representatives on Wednesday, September 17, without objection. This child welfare legislation was labeled the most significant child welfare legislation passed by the House in the last ten years, according to Congressional policymakers.

Describing the legislation as, "bipartisan, budget neutral, and good for kids and therefore deserves the support of every member of the House," Rep. Jim McDermott (D-WA), Chairman of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support, introduced the bill earlier this week alongside Ranking Member Rep. Jerry Weller (R-IL).

Representative Earl Pomeroy (D-ND), original cosponsor of the tribal foster care legislation that was incorporated into HR 6893 said, in an official statement, "This bill today puts tribal adoption and foster care one step closer to being on equal footing with states and gives tribes the ability to provide their children with the culturally appropriate care they deserve."

NICWA has been a leader in the effort to create tribal access to the Title IV-E foster care and adoption assistance program for over 18 years. NICWA staff and board members have regularly met in Washington, DC, with policy leaders and child welfare groups, educating them on the inequities in access to federal child welfare funding facing tribal governments and strategies to improve services to American Indian and Alaska Native children.

Following the House's vote, NICWA Executive Director Terry Cross said, "American Indian children have been waiting a long time for the same protections and support afforded to other children in foster care. We commend the members of the House who have worked to make this possible and urge the Senate to do the same."

The full Senate is expected to consider the bill this week. If the Senate approves the bill it will go to the President for signing into law.

NICWA Director of Government Affairs and Advocacy David Simmons said, "The staff and board of directors have considered what benefits this landmark legislation would have for Indian Country. Should the legislation become law, NICWA will be available to tribes to help with their implementation."

NICWA is a national nonprofit and the most comprehensive source of information on American Indian child welfare and works on behalf of American Indian children and families. NICWA provides public policy, research, advocacy, information, training, and community development services to a broad national audience; state child welfare agencies; and other organizations, agencies, and professionals interested in the field of Indian child welfare. Their website is www.nicwa.org or call 503/222-4044.