



National  
Congress of  
American  
Indians



**AAIA**  
Association on American Indian Affairs

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**OFFICIAL STATEMENT:**

**Joint Statement on Indian Child Welfare Case *Brackeen v. Zinke* Ruling**

**(Portland, OR, October 8, 2018)**—In a decision published by the United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) was declared unconstitutional, jeopardizing the landmark legislation protecting tribal children.

This egregious decision ignores the direct federal government-to-government relationship and decades upon decades of precedent that have upheld tribal sovereignty and the rights of Indian children and families. Through 40 years of implementation, ICWA's goal is to promote family stability and integrity. It continues to be the gold standard in child welfare policy.

While this disturbing ruling is a pivotal moment for Indian Country, we vehemently reject any opinion that separates Native children from their families and will continue to fight to uphold ICWA and tribal sovereignty.

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**About the National Indian Child Welfare Association**

The National Indian Child Welfare Association works to support the safety, health, and spiritual strength of Native children along the broad continuum of their lives. NICWA promotes building tribal capacity to prevent child abuse and neglect through positive systems change at the state, federal, and tribal level. For more information, visit [www.nicwa.org](http://www.nicwa.org)

**About the National Congress of American Indians:**

Founded in 1944, the National Congress of American Indians is the oldest, largest and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization in the country. NCAI advocates on behalf of tribal governments and communities, promoting strong tribal-federal government-to-government policies, and promoting a better understanding among the general public regarding American Indian and Alaska Native governments, people and rights. For more information, visit [www.ncai.org](http://www.ncai.org).

**About the Association on American Indian Affairs:**

AAIA is the oldest non-profit serving Indian Country protecting sovereignty, preserving culture, educating youth and building capacity. The Association was formed in 1922 to change the destructive path of

federal policy from assimilation, termination and allotment, to sovereignty, self-determination and self-sufficiency. Throughout its 96-year history, the Association has provided national advocacy on watershed issues that support sovereignty and culture, while working at the grassroots level with Tribes to support the implementation of programs that improve lives on the ground. For more information, visit [www.indian-affairs.org](http://www.indian-affairs.org).

**About the Native American Rights Fund:**

Since 1971, the Native American Rights Fund (NARF) has provided legal assistance to Indian tribes, organizations, and individuals nationwide who might otherwise have gone without adequate representation. Throughout its history, NARF has impacted tens of thousands of Indian people in its work for more than 250 tribes. NARF has defended the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) for decades, and will continue to do so. For more information, visit [www.narf.org](http://www.narf.org).

