

SAMPLE LETTER FOR SENATE PASSAGE OF H.R. 9076 REAUTHORIZATION OF TITLE IV-B CHILD WELFARE PROGRAMS FOR TRIBES

[date]

[add your Senator's name and address]

Re: Support for H.R. 9076, Protecting American's Children by Strengthening Families Act

Dear Senator [add Senator's name]:

The [add name of tribal nation or organization] is writing in support of bipartisan legislation, H.R. 9076, approved overwhelmingly by the House of Representatives on September 18, 2024, marking a crucial step toward reauthorizing Title IV-B of the Social Security Act. We recognize the work the Senate Finance Committee has done this session to examine other complementary federal child welfare programs, such as the Family First Prevention Services Act, and appreciate how this builds an understanding of the needs of some of our most vulnerable children and families and support for reauthorizing critical federal child welfare programs like Title IV-B. We support H.R. 9076 because it seeks to increase funding for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) tribal child welfare programs, expands the number of tribal nations eligible for Title IV-B, Subpart 2 funding, improves implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act that provides critical protections for AI/AN children and families in state child welfare systems, and provides the flexibility that tribes need to effectively serve their children and families. **We urge you to support this legislation and advocate for Senate passage in November after Congress returns from the elections.** We also want to emphasize the importance of considering the child welfare and child support provisions together in this bill. This is a top priority for us, and we want to ensure this legislation is enacted into law before the end of the year.

[add information about your tribe or organization]

While there are several important provisions in H.R. 9076 that support tribes and AI/AN children and families, we want to focus on a few key provisions. Additional funding is vital to maximizing tribal access to Title IV-B programs and ensuring that AI/AN children and families receive necessary assistance. The funding levels in both Title IV-B programs influence how many tribes apply based upon either statutory requirements regarding who can apply and/or whether the program provides enough funding to meet administrative requirements and still contribute to services in a meaningful way. This legislation contains provisions that increase mandatory funding under Title IV-B, Subpart 2, change the funding formula under Subpart 1 (Child Welfare Services) to ensure a 3% set-aside from the overall appropriation, and increase funding for the Tribal Court Improvement Program from \$1 million to \$2 million per year. While Title IV-B programs provide a small percentage of child welfare funding to tribes overall, the funding can be used to enhance access to essential services that help keep children out of the foster care system, provide targeted training for tribal staff, and support the recruitment and licensing of homes for children who cannot safely return to their parents. Furthermore, increases in funding must be accompanied by providing flexibility for tribes to offer programs that meet the needs of their children and families. We also support the provisions in this legislation that seek to reduce administrative burdens for smaller tribes and allow for flexible use of funds for all tribes.

Some AI/AN children and families are also involved in state child welfare systems. We

support the provisions that require the Department of Health and Human Services to gather data on Indian Child Welfare Act implementation from states regarding cases involving AI/AN children and families that can inform improved technical assistance for states and tribes. These provisions foster collaboration at the federal, state, and tribal levels to improve outcomes for AI/AN children and families involved in state child welfare systems nationwide. We continue to advocate for investments that strengthen tribal capacity and increase support for states and tribes working together to implement the Indian Child Welfare Act.

We appreciate your long-time leadership to improve our nation's child welfare system and, in particular, issues that impact AI/AN children and families. We look forward to working with you and others to ensure the essential and timely reauthorization of Title IV-B of the Social Security Act through the passage of this legislation. Please contact me if there is anything I can do to help.

Sincerely,