

Testimony of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon

Before the House Committee on Judiciary

House Bill 3182

March 30, 2021

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chair Noble, Vice-Chair Power and members of the House Judiciary Committee, my name is Glendon Smith and I am a member of the Tribal Council of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon and a judge of the Warm Springs Tribal Court. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today to urge you to support HB 3182, for technical corrections and adding adoption provisions to the Oregon Indian Child Welfare Act passed last year. Many thanks to Representative Sanchez for spearheading this lifesaving effort for our children.

Passage of the Oregon ICWA law was a major step that will lead to Oregon's protecting Native families by following the Indian Child Welfare Act and federal regulations. Critically, it will reduce disproportionate treatment of our children in foster care. Already, we see more consistent handling of ICWA cases and a better notification process.

We still need HB 3182 to provide technical corrections to ORICWA and for ICWA's adoption requirements to be readily available to all judges and family law practitioners in Oregon. This area of law is complicated, so the bill from the last session had some technical errors. It did not include ICWA protections in adoptions of Native children because the work group ran out of time to address them. This is especially important when it comes to our Tribes' customary adoptions, which have not been uniformly recognized by state juvenile courts.

The Oregon Indian Child Welfare Act passed both the House and Senate unanimously last year. We again need your support to pass HB 3182. Help us keep more Native children safe and connected with their families, our culture, and the resources of tribal governments. Thank you for your attention to this lifesaving bill.