



Testimony of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Oregon House Human Services Committee
HB 3182A
May 6, 2021

Chair Gelser, Vice Chair Anderson and members of the House Human Services Mental Health and Recovery Committee:

My name is Corinne Sams and I am on the elected Board of Trustees of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony from the Umatilla Reservation today on behalf of CTUIR to urge your support for HB 3182A to finalize Oregon ICWA.

Last year's passage of HB 4214, the Oregon Indian Child Welfare Act, was a significant step toward ensuring the State of Oregon's compliance with the federal Indian Child Welfare Act and associated federal regulations.

We have already seen great strides taken by DHS Child Welfare to improve the handling of ORICWA cases, from improving the state's inquiry and notification process to a better understanding of what it means to provide active efforts and coordinate with tribal nations on cases.

This year's bill before you today, HB 3182A, is necessary to complete Oregon ICWA. This bill represents hundreds of hours of work since the passage of HB 4214 by Rep. Sanchez, Tribal Counsel from Oregon's federally recognized Indian Tribes, Legislative Counsel, Judiciary Counsel, the Oregon Department of Justice, the Oregon Department of Human Services, the Oregon Judicial Department, parents' right attorneys, national ICWA experts and others. We sat around the virtual table to iron out the wrinkles in the previous legislation, add necessary adoptions protections to align with ICWA, and recognize tribal customary adoptions. In essence, to complete Oregon ICWA.

Now, we know that with any piece of legislation this size, we'll be back to make minor adjustments to adhere to federal law and regulations and the workgroup's intentions. However, I would like to extend our appreciation to everyone who poured hours of work into the work group and this bill, for recognizing the need and for working so hard together to bring you legislation to ensure Oregon ICWA works to keep native children safe and connected to their tribal government, resources, and traditions.

I want to highlight the Department of Human Services' letter of support for this legislation in your meeting materials and give a personal thank you to our sponsors of this 2021 legislation, including Sen. Hansell and Rep. Sanchez here today.

The Oregon Indian Child Welfare Act passed the House and Senate unanimously last year and the bill before you today passed the House unanimously on April 27th.

We hope the Senate can do the same. Your vote on HB 3182A this session will keep more Native children safe and connected with their culture and the resources of their tribal governments.