

NCUIH-Endorsed Bipartisan Native American Child Protection Act Passes Senate, Heading to President Biden's Desk with Key Provisions for Urban Indian Organizations

Category: Policy Blog

written by Carrie Kowalyk | December 19, 2024

On December 19, 2024, the National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH)-endorsed legislation, the *Native American Child Protection Act* ([H.R. 663](#)), has passed the Senate and is now headed to President Biden's desk to sign into law. The bill previously passed the House on September 18, 2023 with a vote of 378-32. Representative Ruben Gallego (D-AZ-3) and Representative Dan Newhouse (R-WA-4), reintroduced this bipartisan legislation on January 31, 2023, which revises key programs established by the *Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act*. NCUIH successfully advocated for the inclusion of Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) in key provisions of the bill, such as grants for treatment programs for Native Americans who have been victims of child sexual abuse, a National Indian Child Resource and Family Services Center providing technical assistance and training, and membership on an Advisory Board to assist the Center.

Specifically, the bill:

1. **Makes UIOs eligible** for the Indian Child Abuse Treatment Grant Program.
2. Creates a National Indian Child Resource and Family Services Center (the Center) that will provide technical assistance and training to Tribes, Tribal organizations, **and UIOs**.
3. **Allows UIO representatives** with expertise in child abuse and child neglect to sit on a 12-member Advisory Board to advise and assist the Center.
4. Requires the development of model intergovernmental agreements between Tribes and states to prevent, investigate, treat, and prosecute family violence.
5. Revises the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Program to allow funding to be used for additional activities such as operational costs for child protective services.

Background

Native American Child Maltreatment

According to a 2021 [Administration for Children and Families Report](#), Native American children experience the highest child abuse/victimization rate in the U.S. at 15.1 cases for every 1,000 children. The youngest children are the most vulnerable to maltreatment, with the rate of victims younger than one year is 56.6 per 1,000 children, which is the highest rate among all races or ethnicities. Among types of maltreatment, Native American children are most likely to experience neglect at 83.5%.

Legislative History

The programs revised by the *Native American Child Protection Act* were originally established in 1990 under the *Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act*. The programs include the Indian Child Abuse Treatment Grant Program, the National Indian Child Resource Center, and

the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Program. These programs have yet to be fully funded and have not been reauthorized by Congress.

In 2021, the Senate held a legislative hearing on the bill where Heidi Todacheene, Senior Advisor of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs at the Department of the Interior, acknowledged the first inclusion of UIOs in the legislation, noting that the bill expands “services to be extended to the Urban Indian organizations, and as you know those are critical services to help Tribal communities, especially in places where American Indian, Alaskan Natives don’t have access to some of the services on reservations.”

Resources

- [House Passes NCUIH-Endorsed Bipartisan Native American Child Protection Act, Includes Urban Indian Organizations in Grant Program - NCUIH](#)
- [Full Text of H.R. 663](#)
- [Representative Gallego Press Release on Passage of H.R. 663](#)
- [Link to Recording of H.R. 663 House Consideration](#)