

January 31, 2023

Tracy Gruber, Executive Director
Utah Department of Health and Human Services
195 North 1950 West
Salt Lake City, Utah 84116

Re: Letter of Support for HB 40, Indian Child Welfare Amendments

Dear Executive Director Gruber,

The Center for Safe and Health Families at Primary Children's Hospital wishes to express its support for HB40, which would codify the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) into Utah Law. We support the bill's goal of addressing the history of removing Indigenous children from the home of their kin and their communities. We also support the manner in which ICWA serves as a critical tool for protecting Native American families and Tribes while fostering state and Tribal collaboration.

We are particularly interested in ICWA's trauma-informed approach to prioritizing kinship care. In the rare, but tragic cases where a child needs to be removed from their home, a large and convincing body of evidence demonstrates significantly better outcomes for children who are placed in kinship care than those who are not. These improved outcomes span the areas of "education, employment, housing, juvenile delinquency, and mental health."¹ Indeed, [r]esearch has consistently shown that connections to a child's extended family and community are mitigating factors in reducing the trauma that is often experienced prior to a child's placement in foster care or during their removal."²

We hope to see HB40 move forward out of committee and passed into law so that its protections may benefit these children that we serve.

Many thanks,



Dinah Weldon, MPA
Director, Center for Safe and Healthy Families
Intermountain Primary Children's Hospital

¹ "Understanding ICWA Placements Using Kinship Care Research," A publication of the National Indian Child Welfare Association. (available at [2019-Understanding-ICWA-Placements-Using-Kinship-Care-Research-Final.pdf](https://www.nicwa.org/2019-Understanding-ICWA-Placements-Using-Kinship-Care-Research-Final.pdf) ([nicwa.org](https://www.nicwa.org))).

² Alexandra Citrin and Megan Martin, "Protecting Children, Families, and Tribes: The Importance of ICWA" (November 1, 2018) (Available at [Protecting Children, Families, and Tribes: The Importance of ICWA - Center for the Study of Social Policy](https://www.cssp.org/protecting-children-families-and-tribes-the-importance-of-icwa) ([cssp.org](https://www.cssp.org))).