



Tracy Gruber, Executive Director  
Utah Dept. of Health & Human Services  
195 North 1950 West  
Salt Lake City, UT 84116

December 19, 2022

RE: *Letter of Support for Utah Indian Child Welfare Legislation*

Dear Executive Director Gruber:

I am writing to express my support and the support of Utah Foster Care for State legislation being considered that would codify for Utah many of the same protections currently provided for Native American Tribes, families, and children by the federal government under the Indian Child Welfare Act.

ICWA is often referred to as the gold standard of child welfare, recognizing the role of connection to culture, family, and community in the lives of children and their particular importance to children healing from trauma. Further, ICWA recognizes the role and rights of sovereign Tribes, especially their interest in their children.

Utah Foster Care supports efforts to assure that the rights of Native American Tribes, families, and children in Utah are safeguarded in relation to Utah's child welfare system. Placement preferences that prioritize placement with family and Tribal families align well with Utah's emphasis on kin placement. Ongoing collaboration with Tribes is critical for continued improvement of outcomes and demonstrates that diverse cultural practices are valued.

While federal ICWA law is being challenged in other states, I was happy to see Attorney General Sean Reyes speak out in its support and hope to see this legislation successfully passed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael J. Hamblin".

Michael J. Hamblin, CEO  
Utah Foster Care