



National Indian Child Welfare Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NICWA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PRAISES NEW INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT REGULATIONS

(Portland, OR, June 9, 2015)— In response to yesterday’s announcement of new Indian Child Welfare Act regulations, National Indian Child Welfare Association Executive Director Dr. Sarah Kastelic issued the following statement:

The historic step that the Bureau of Indian Affairs has taken with the announcement of these binding, enforceable Indian Child Welfare Act regulations is not one I thought I would see in my lifetime. The protections for Native children that the regulations now guarantee are much needed today, as ICWA is currently under attack by those wishing to overturn this vital law that has served to keep Native children with their families, culture, and communities for over 35 years.

These regulations prove that there is widespread support for the protections of ICWA, despite what a vocal few would say to the contrary. In establishing these regulations, the federal government joins the ICWA Defense Project, 18 non-Native child advocacy organizations, the American Bar Association, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and legal scholars representing 15 law schools in acknowledging that ICWA must be strengthened, not weakened. For far too long, our Native children and families have borne the brunt of a system lacking the clarity, consistency, and protections that these regulations provide. This is a monumental step toward protecting the most vulnerable among us: our children.

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About the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA)

NICWA works to support the safety, health, and spiritual strength of Native children along the broad continuum of their lives. We promote building tribal capacity to prevent child abuse and neglect through positive systems change at the state, federal, and tribal level.

Our Vision: Every Indian child must have access to community-based, culturally appropriate services that help them grow up safe, healthy, and spiritually strong—free from abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation, and the damaging effects of substance abuse.

Our Mission: NICWA is dedicated to the well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native children and families.

To learn more about NICWA, visit www.nicwa.org