

House Bill. 1536
Human Service Committee
Testimony Presented by
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Native American Training Institute
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Good morning, Mr. Chairperson, and members of the Committee: I appreciate the chance to give testimony to all of you today.

My name is Jill Doernbach (Wilkie), I am an ICWA Family Preservationist serving indigenous families in Cass County in North Dakota. I am here today in full support of House Bill 1536.

I have been an ICWA Family Preservationist since January 2022, which is a part of the ICWA Family Preservationist program located in Bismarck, North Dakota. The IFP Program is supported and funded by the state of North Dakota and is a bridge between the state social service agencies and the tribes. As an ICWA family preservationist, I am a tribal representative and qualified expert witness only for the tribes who authorize me to do so. In the future, the IFP program plans on expanding and connecting with all tribes within North Dakota and hoping to expand throughout the United States. Through the IFP program, we hope to create unity with all the tribes in order to give all indigenous children a community and warm welcome to protect and preserve Native American culture. In Native American culture, hospitality and helping others in a time of need, no matter the connection someone may have with another, is a common trait across tribes and we will always welcome others into our hearts and homes. The ICWA placement preferences are in place to preserve and protect Native American families as well as our culture and traditions, since the Indian Child Welfare Act become a law. To take away these placement preferences, would be removing the essence of what the Indian Child Welfare Act represents and stands for. I strongly encourage you to be in support of House Bill 1536 and to continue to allow the spirit of the Indian Child Welfare Act to live on in the state of North Dakota.

I would like to thank you and the members of the committee for opening your minds and hearts for your support of the Indian Child Welfare Act. By maintaining the ICWA placement preferences, it will help with the improvement of Child Welfare, which is important in our society and additionally to preserve Native American families in North Dakota.

Jill Doernbach (Wilkie)

ICWA Family Preservationist

Native American Training Institute