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# HB184 – TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE COMPACT

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SENATE HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

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# WHY THE WORK BEGAN

## Significant Disparities

- Alaska Native Children make up 15% of the state's population of children but represent 60% of the children in state custody
- Disparities of this nature indicate a system failure in our child welfare system

## OCS Retention Difficulties

- Office of Children's Services (OCS) typically operates at a 50% vacancy rate and require frontline workers to carry caseloads more than 3x the national average
- The goal of HB 151 (2018) was to lower turnover and vacancy rates, but despite increased funding, turnover rates have not decreased

# HOW THE WORK BEGAN

## Tribal State Collaboration Group

- A 25-year partnership between state, tribal representatives, and invited stakeholders
- Goals:
  - Strengthen Alaska's compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978.
    - ICWA is a Federal law that established standards for the removal and placement of American Indian children and enabled Tribes and families to be involved in child welfare cases.
  - Reduce the disproportionality of Alaska Native children in state custody
  - Build & strengthen working relationships

## Tribal Title IV-E Agreements

- Provides Federal funding to states and tribes for foster care, transitional independent living programs, guardianship assistance, and adoption assistance
- Tribes also receive a higher reimbursement rate than states for covered services, resulting in significant General Fund savings.

# WHAT IS ALASKA'S TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE COMPACT?

- The Alaska Tribal Welfare Compact (Compact) is a government-to-government agreement to improve the life outcomes for Alaska's children and families by transferring specific, negotiated child welfare services and supports (including revenue streams) from the Office of Children's Services (OCS) to the Tribal Co-Signers
- The Compact was signed in 2017 by Governor Walker and 18 Tribal Co-Signers; representing 161 Federally-recognized Tribes and Tribal Organizations and continued under Governor Dunleavy in 2019



# IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

## 2018

- Tribal Co-Signers developed their programs, built capacity and infrastructure
- OCS began sharing Protective Services Reports (PSRs or 'screen ins' or 'screen outs'), and provided training and technical support

## 2019

- Tribal Co-Signers began performing Initial Diligent Relative Searches
- The Parties negotiated four new Scopes of Work for Ongoing Relatives Searches, Family Contact, Licensing Assists, and Safety Evaluations
- State-Tribal partnership was stalled due to a change in Administration

# IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

## 2020

- Parties worked out differences and signed all five previously-negotiated Scopes:
  - Initial Diligent Relative Searches (IDRS)
  - Ongoing Relative Searches (ORS)
  - Family Contact
  - Licensing Assists
  - Safety Evaluations

## 2021

- Compact negotiations included all previously-negotiated scopes of work and added funding for preventative services

## 2022

- Negotiations will occur in April 2022





# ADVANTAGES

- Provides higher quality services, closer to home, at a lower cost through leveraging Tribal resources
- Strengthens state services by engaging Tribes, often the most local government, on an issue of shared interest
- Increased public trust through existing family relationships with Tribes
- Preventative services lower ACE scores
  - ACEs are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years) and can lead to chronic health problems, mental illness, substance abuse disorders and increased incarceration in adulthood.



# SECTIONAL ANALYSIS

Section I: Amends AS 47.05 to add a new section to article I requiring the State to participate in a Tribal Child Welfare Compact.





# Quyana!