



National  
Caucus of  
Native  
American  
State  
Legislators

### **Statement Supporting the Protection of Native American Children**

The National Caucus of Native American State Legislators (NCNASL) has long supported tribal sovereignty over matters regarding Native American children. NCNASL also encourages strong government-to-government cooperation between states and tribes that honors federal treaties and legal relationships. Strong state and tribal relationships lead to improved outcomes for Native American children and result in a mutual respect of tribal sovereignty.

For over a century, federal governmental policy required the children of Native American populations to be systematically taken from their families and cultures to be reared and educated in dominant-culture government-run boarding schools. These policies resulted in long-term historical trauma and a disproportionate representation of Native children in the United States foster system. NCNASL supports and wishes to elevate the voices of tribes in Native American child custody cases and supports tribal decisions regarding Native American children.

NCNASL has passed three policy resolutions supporting tribes regarding Indian child welfare matters and the inherent right of tribal nations to determine actions for Native children based on strong state-tribal cooperation and support.

With 86 members in 20 states, the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators encourages a broad awareness of state-tribal issues across the country to raise the profile of tribal issues throughout the state legislative arena.

---

NEW MEXICO SENATOR BENNY SHENDO JR (*JEMEZ PUEBLO*)  
NCNASL CHAIR