



Institute to
Transform
Child Protection

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The Honorable Melissa H. Wiklund
Minnesota Senate
Chairperson
Health and Human Services Committee
2107 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act Modification (SF 4480)

Chair Sen. Wiklund and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

On behalf of the Mitchell Hamline School of Law Institute to Transform Child Protection, we write in support of SF 4480. This modification to the Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act (MIFPA) would promote the stability and wellbeing of Indian families in Minnesota by ensuring the legal strength of MIFPA and continuing to prioritize keeping Indian children within their families, Tribes, and cultures.

As advocates for families in court and through legislative reform, we at the Institute to Transform Child Protection understand that it is critical that children in Minnesota have family and relationship stability. This is particularly important in cases involving Indian children, who are significantly disproportionately impacted by the trauma of child protection involvement. Indian children are still removed from their families in child protection cases at alarmingly disparate rates compared to other children. This disproportionately high rate of removal does not allow for Indian children to foster their familial, community, and cultural ties, and it creates a sense of distrust between the child protection system and the Indian community.

This modification to MIFPA would, among other positive changes, bolster and clarify the active efforts required in cases involving Indian children and further prioritize Tribal involvement in such cases. These changes to MIFPA will bring a positive impact to Indian families in Minnesota by helping to ensure Indian families stay together whenever possible and ensuring that Indian children are afforded every opportunity to foster and maintain their familial, cultural, and Tribal relationships and connections.

We ask that members of the committee vote in favor of SF 4480.

Sincerely,

Institute to Transform Child Protection
Mitchell Hamline School of Law Child Protection Clinic