



Saint Paul Indians in Action

Mission:

To address the socioeconomic conditions in the St. Paul Indian community through systems advocacy, policy development and community participation.

April 11, 2024

Dear Legislators,

Saint Paul Indians in Action (SIA) strongly supports SF 4480/HF 4838, which expands the protections of the Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act (MIFPA).

Minnesota has consistently led the way in ensuring protections for Indian children and their families, strengthening MIFPA in 1985, 2015, and 2023. The latest version incorporated the Indian Child Welfare Act's protections into Minnesota law when the US Supreme Court case *Brackeen v. Haaland* threatened to dismantle these protections at the federal level. The current bill seeks to fine-tune and build upon those protections.

SIA exists to address the socioeconomic conditions in the St. Paul Indian community through systems advocacy, policy development and community participation. Many of the families in our community are impacted by the child protection system, whether or not they are directly involved with the system. Keeping children within their families, communities, and cultures is vital to our very existence and this bill strengthens our ability to do that.

These amendments will benefit the families in our community as well as Indian families throughout the state. While this is a tribally led bill, the MIFPA workgroup has engaged with various other stakeholders, including community partners, community organizations, the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators, the Minnesota County Attorneys Association, and the Association of Minnesota Counties.

Thank you for considering this legislation. We strongly, and without any dissent, endorse it. Miigwech, Pidamayaye, Pilamayaye, Pinigigi (thank you).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelly Miller", written in a cursive style.

Kelly Miller, Chair
St. Paul Indians in Action