MINNESOTA

INDIAN AFFAIRS COUNCIL **RESOLUTION 12042025_02**

Foster Youth Bill of Rights

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council membership consists of representatives of ten of the eleven federally-recognized Indian Tribes located within the State of Minnesota, members of the legislature, commissioners from the state department; and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council is a liaison between the state and local units of government in the delivery of services to American Indians in the State of Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, American Indian populations are often identified by the various federal and state agencies as a minority and smallest ethnic group in the United States; and

WHEREAS, American Indian people are citizens of, or descendants of citizens of sovereign nations, federally recognized tribes, and possess a unique political status that is not racial or ethnic in nature; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota is one of only five states that does not have a comprehensive set of rights codified for foster youth, leaving youth in care and their supporters without the information or tools to advocate for themselves effectively; and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Foster Youth Bill of Rights was introduced to ensure youth are informed of their rights while in foster care and to strengthen existing legal protections; and

WHEREAS, the proposed bill is intended to complement existing laws and protections and does not replace or diminish the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) or the Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act (MIFPA).

WHEREAS, Native youth are significantly overrepresented in the foster care system, and the proposed bill provides additional support and protections for all foster youth; and

WHEREAS, the proposed bill was developed in collaboration with and through the consultation of current and former Minnesota foster youth, along with input from agency staff, attorneys, Guardians ad Litem, non-profit professionals, members of the MIFPA Phase III workgroup, and through a review of foster youth rights legislation in 45 other states, and the proposed *Rights of the Indian Child*; and

WHEREAS, the proposed bill provides strengthened protections for foster youth's relationships with siblings, family, extended family, and relatives as defined by youth or tribal traditions, the right to be free from all forms of maltreatment, the right to connection with community, including language, people, and events, and the right to practice their own spirituality and religious beliefs; and

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council hereby extends support for the passage and implementation of the Minnesota Foster Youth Bill of Rights introduced in the 2025 legislative session, SF3154/HF3024 as authored by Senator Mary Kunesh and Representative Jessica Hanson.

CERTIFICATION: We do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly presented and acted upon by a vote of 7 **For,** 0 **Against,** 0 **Silent** at Regular Meeting of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, a quorum present, held on December 04, 2025, in Lower Sioux Indian Community, Cansayapi, Minnesota.

Robert Deschampe, Chairman
Minnesota Indian Affairs Council

Carlos Hernandez, Vice Chairman
Minnesota Indian Affairs Council