



Office of the Governor

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

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Gov. Lujan Grisham issues statement on Supreme Court decision in Indian Child Welfare Act Case

SANTA FE – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Thursday issued a statement in response to the United States Supreme Court's decision in the Brackeen v. Haaland case:

“Throughout history, the child welfare system harmed Native children and their families by disregarding and disrespecting their culture,” said **Gov. Lujan Grisham**. “Today, the court recognized what we already know - the critical importance of sustaining a child’s connection to their cultural identity. That’s why in 2022 the Legislature passed, and I signed the Indian Family Protection Act, codifying the federal Act in our state. By upholding the Indian Child Welfare Act, we ensure this connection is protected today and for future generations. The Supreme Court made the right decision by acknowledging the importance of this Act and its positive impact on children, families, communities, and sovereign nations.”

This case involved the adoption of Native American children. The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), a federal statute adopted in 1978 to safeguard the rights of Native American children and families, has been affirmed by the court.

“Upholding the Indian Child Welfare Act ensures that we can build on protections that promote coordinated efforts among Tribal nations and key partners to ensure that every Native child can maintain an ongoing connection to their community,” said Indian Affairs Department **Secretary-Designate James R. Mountain**.

On March 3, 2022, Gov. Lujan Grisham signed legislation that strengthens and expands protections for Native American children and families in the child welfare system. House Bill 135, the Indian Family Protection Act (IFPA) institutionalizes protections for Native American children and families, preventing the arbitrary removal of Indian children from their homes and Tribes.

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