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THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON NATIVE CHILDREN RECEIVES A TWO-YEAR EXTENSION

The Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children will have two-additional years to hear from expert witnesses and the public to complete a study on the needs of Native children.

[Washington, DC, October 2021] – The Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children (Commission) was successful in its request to Congress to amend [Public Law 114-244](#), that established the Commission, for a two-year extension. The extension is important to allow additional time to hold hearings and receive testimony to understand the unique challenges facing Alaska Native, American Indians, and Native Hawaiian Youth across the nation.

On September 24, 2021, President Biden signed the bill that became [Public Law 117-41](#) granting the two-year extension. The Commission was established in 2016. Funding was appropriated in 2019. And COVID-19 became a global pandemic in 2020. As the Commission adapted to many challenges, the request to extend the work was important to ensure a comprehensive study of federal, state, local, and tribal programs that serve Native children to develop plans for federal policy related to Native children. The two-year extension will allow the Commission to submit its report to the President and Congress in February 2024.

“We are grateful for the extension in order to most thoroughly and thoughtfully complete our recommendations and report. The delays caused by COVID-19 have especially impeded our ability to fulfill our charge. This

work is so important to the future of our Alaska Native, American Indian, and Native Hawaiian, children and youth.: -- Gloria O'Neill, Chair.

The Commission will hold field hearings based on the regions outlined by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Commission will also hold a hearing to include Hawaii as the comprehensive study includes Native Hawaiian youth. In August 2021, the Commission was able to have a successful hearing in Alaska Region where the Commission received information on how tribal sovereignty allowed the health care system to adopt their own model for success, as well as the unique challenges Alaska Native youth face in remote areas with child welfare. As the Commission plans its two-year schedule, information will be shared with the public on the dates, locations, and time of the event on the Commission's website at www.commissiononnativechildren.org. The hearing schedule will allow time for public testimony and the Commission welcomes testimony from individuals wishing to speak on behalf of Native youth.

Individuals do not need to wait for a regional hearing in their location. The comprehensive study ([Public Law 114-244](#)) covers Native children from birth to age 24. The Commission encourages Native children, their families, tribal leaders, and community members to provide either oral and written testimony on issues that are important to protecting Native children served in the various communities and recommendations for the Commission to consider to be included in the Commission's final report on seven categories: 1) education and vocational opportunities, 2) early childhood education and development, 3) child welfare, 4) physical and mental health, 5) juvenile justice, 6) cross-system issues, and 7) data evaluation issues. Written testimony can be submitted to the Commission at email@commissiononnativechildren.org. Individuals wishing to provide oral testimony, should reach out to the Commission at the same email address and support staff will contact you.

The Commission has an opportunity to fundamentally improve the way we support Native children and communities. Including everyone's voice, will allow the Commission to identify the specific issues communities are facing when serving Native children and make recommendations on how to overcome the inequalities that remain today. The Commission is committed to being a voice for Native children and stand ready to serve as a resource as Congress and the Administration consider future actions to achieve better outcomes for Native children, including – better use of existing resources, increased coordination, measurable outcomes, stronger data, stronger private sector partnerships, and implementation of best practices.

Please follow the Commission on Facebook at: Alyce Spotted Bear & Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children, or on Twitter: @asbwsnc.

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About: *Established by Congress, the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children (Commission), is established as an independent federal entity to conduct a comprehensive study on federal, state, local, and tribal programs and develop recommendations on solutions to issues that would improve the health, safety, and well-being of Native Children.*

