

This testimony is in favor of bill number HB 2772. My name is Monique Mercurio, I'm from the Esselen Nation and I fully believe it is vital that we continue to take action against the possible overturning of ICWA. I'm testifying as a proponent to the passage of HB 2772. There have been endless counts of Native children ending up in horrendous situations because of the lack of protection of our People due to the negligence of the US Government. Creating state specific ICWA laws is one of many ways we can continue to support and protect Native communities.

It's painful to have to write a testimony to the systems directly built against Indigenous Peoples. We have been fighting for years to have treaties upheld, fighting for Land Back, fighting against appropriation, fighting to protect what homelands we have left, fighting for tribal recognition. It's hurtful that we STILL have to fight to protect our children, even after the rest of the world recently "discovered" the thousands of unmarked graves of Native children who were taken from their families. This "discovery" is something our People have been carrying in our hearts since our children never came home.

To dismantle the Indian Child Welfare Act is to continue the decimation of Native families and communities. I believe it is up to our Government to uphold laws and regulations that help us protect what we have left.

Respectfully,
Monique Mercurio
Resident of Lawrence, Kansas