

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
North Dakota Native Vote  
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## SCOTUS RULES CONSTITUTIONALITY OF FEDERAL NATIVE AMERICAN ADOPTION LAWS

Today, the Supreme Court of the United States upheld Federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in a 7-2 vote. The majority opinion written by Justice Amy Coney Barrett in the case of *Haaland v. Brackeen* rejected all constitutional challenges brought by parents and the state of Texas against the law.

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is a federal law passed in 1978 which establishes basic requirements to protect Native American children from continued forced removal from their families, tribes, and tribal culture.

“Today’s ruling is a win for tribal sovereignty and the future of our nations,” said Nicole Donaghy, Executive Director of North Dakota Native Vote. “When we protect Native children by placing them with family first, we are reifying family integrity, cultural identity, and stability within the child’s community.”

Since Federal ICWA laws were challenged, multiple states have legislated state laws that are modeled after the Act, including North Dakota and Montana. North Dakota Native Vote supported North Dakota ICWA legislation brought forth by Representative Jayme Davis -District 9A.

Sharnell Seaboy, North Dakota Native Vote field organizer and ICWA cultural liaison, testified on behalf of the organization and shared her personal experience.

“After hearing the wonderful news this morning, I shed some tears and thanked Creator.” Seaboy exclaimed. “This ruling makes me think of my son, he’s 9 months old now. He came to me through the system at 4 days old. Biologically, he is my baby cousin, but legally he’ll soon be my son. I am currently going through the process to adopt him. I’m in a good place in life where I can raise him in our Dakota way of life. He is surrounded by his biological family.”

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*North Dakota Native Vote’s mission is to engage tribal communities to construct a representative democracy through community organizing, leadership development, civic engagement, and public policy advocacy. Our vision is to inspire tribal members to take action on the issues that affect their daily lives.*