



1899 L Street, NW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20036

T 202.822.8282
F 202.296.8834

HOBBSSTRAUS.COM

June 2, 2026

GENERAL MEMORANDUM 26-027

Senators Introduce the Promoting Strong Native Families and Children Act

On May 21, 2026, Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) introduced [S.4638](#), the Promoting Strong Native Families and Children Act, a bipartisan bill aimed at expanding federal support for Tribal child welfare and family services programs. The legislation does this by reforming several federal child welfare programs under the Social Security Act.

A major focus of the bill is increasing Tribal access to child welfare funding that has historically been difficult for many Tribes to obtain or administer. Specifically, the legislation would establish minimum grant amounts for Tribes under the Title IV-B Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program and allow Tribes to join together in consortia to administer funding collectively. The bill would also remove an existing restriction that prevents approval of Tribal plans when allocations fall below \$10,000, a change intended to help smaller Tribes. In addition, the legislation clarifies that funds may be used to support Tribal customary adoptions.

The measure would also increase several Tribal funding set-asides from 3% to 5%, including mandatory and discretionary funding under the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program and funding under the Child Welfare Services Program. According to [the section-by-section summary](#), the bill also seeks to reduce administrative burdens on Tribes by streamlining reporting requirements and allowing the federal government to waive or modify certain match requirements. Tribes would also be allowed to use their federally negotiated indirect cost rates in place of certain administrative cost caps, a change that looks to make grants easier to manage.

The bill includes additional provisions related to Tribal courts and social services. It would increase authorized funding for the Tribal Court Improvement Program from \$2 million annually to \$5 million annually. It would also create a 5% Tribal set-aside within the Social Services Block Grant program and guarantee at least \$25,000 for each Tribe participating in the program. Tribes and Tribal consortia would be able to receive funding directly.

Another section of the legislation addresses prevention services for Native children and families. Under current law, Tribes generally must operate foster care and adoption assistance programs to access certain Title IV-E prevention services funding. The bill would allow Tribes to provide prevention-only services under approved agreements with states, which could help

Tribal communities expand family support services aimed at reducing child removals and out-of-home placements.

The legislation also includes a provision allowing states to count visits by Tribal caseworkers toward federal monthly caseworker visit requirements. According to the bill summary, this issue has been raised by Alaska child welfare officials because Tribal caseworkers currently cannot be included in federal metrics unless they also take on supervisory responsibilities.

The bill was referred to the Senate Finance Committee. Please let us know if you would like to submit a letter of support to your delegation.

###

Inquiries may be directed to:
Elizabeth Bailey (ebailey@hobbsstrauss.com)