

NATIVE CHILDREN'S BILL OF RIGHTS

A PROCLAMATION

Approved by the _____ COUNCIL on [date]: _____

WHEREAS, we the members of the _____ Council recognize our moral, social, spiritual and financial responsibility to protect and provide for the needs of the children of our nation; and

WHEREAS, we believe that all children are created with the inherent right to be safe, to be loved and nurtured, and to have adequate health care, nutrition and shelter; and

WHEREAS, we believe that each child has the right to be free of physical or emotional abuse, to be protected from sexual abuse and exploitation, and to be free from neglect, discrimination and the demeaning or destructive acts of others; and

WHEREAS, all our children have the right to a name and tribal identity, and the right not to be separated from his/her birth parents and to know their extended family and community, which are an important part of the child's tribal identity as well as essential to assure our survival as a people; and

WHEREAS, all our children have the right to learn about and benefit from our tribal history, culture, language, spiritual traditions and philosophy; and

WHEREAS, we believe that parents have primary responsibility for providing their children with proper prenatal care, ongoing age-appropriate physical and emotional care, including emotional nurturing, adequate food, shelter, education, health care; and

WHEREAS, we believe that parents have an absolute responsibility to provide their children with a safe and healthy home and child care environments, to teach their children safety skills, and to provide appropriate supervision; and

WHEREAS, we believe that we too have a responsibility to assure that the children of our tribe have a standard of health, safety, education, and nurturing necessary to assist them in gaining healthy values and behaviors which will help them mature into healthy and productive members of our tribal community; and

WHEREAS, we believe that the treatment of children, and therefore the welfare of our tribal children is the responsibility of the entire community, and that this responsibility extends to all the Native children who reside in our community, irregardless of their tribal origins or their length of residence; and

WHEREAS, we recognize that domestic violence, substance abuse, lack of supervision, inadequate medical care and physical or emotional neglect may result in far-reaching and traumatizing effects on a child's physical and emotional growth and development; and

WHEREAS, maltreated, neglected, parentless and traumatized children often need special care, treatment and support in a way that promotes their healing and safety, as well as their sense of dignity, value and future well-being.

The _____ Council issues and proclaims this Children's Bill of Rights in order to assure that all of the children of our community who are under the age of eighteen years are provided with adequate food, clothing, shelter and health care; that they are protected and supervised to assure their safety and health; that they receive nurturing, appropriate cultural teachings and adequate education/schooling - all of which are their inherent and basic rights as Native children.

The _____ Council shall advocate for and promote the safety, dignity and well-being of the community's children throughout all governmental, business, social services and educational agencies and all other institutions involved in the community for any length of time.

The _____ Council shall undertake such other efforts as may be deemed necessary to assure the long-term safety and protection of our children, including, but not limited to monitoring the well-being of the children, requiring parents to participate in services to remedy behaviors that place children at risk, and placement of children with relatives or other community members when such is necessary for the health and welfare of the child/ren.

This proclamation is undertaken on behalf of our children with the goal of preparing them to assume a creative, productive and honorable role in our society, and to assure that the ultimate future of our people is considered in each action considered from this day forward by the _____ Council.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY a vote of _____ in favor, _____ opposed and _____ abstaining of the _____ Council ON THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 201_____.

Chief, _____ Council

Date

Secretary, _____ Council

Date