



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PUYALLUP TRIBAL COUNCIL URGES THE SPEEDY REUNIFICATION OF CHILDREN WITH THEIR FAMILIES

The Puyallup Tribal Council joins with the National American Indian Court Judges Association and welcomes the halt to the separation of children from their parents at the border. The Tribe deplores the wholesale separation of children from their parents at the U.S. border without the due process of law. This devastating policy imposed undue suffering upon immigrant children. We hope, that while brief, this episode is not soon repeated for any class of children, regardless of status, location, or parental issues. This was a trauma imposed upon children that this country should never allow.

At this time, the agencies have not identified a plan for the reunification of the thousands of children who have been separated from their families. As elected leaders who deal with the effects of historical trauma within our community on a daily basis, and who encourage the implementation of trauma-informed practices, we understand the continued harm that is occurring in these circumstances. We call for the immediate reunification of families in order to minimize the irreparable harm experienced by these children, the most vulnerable of all people, and our most precious resource.

Members of Tribal Council and the Puyallup Tribe, know too well the harm, suffering, and misery experienced by these children. We as Native Americans have our worst memories resurrected when we see children torn from their parents at the hands of law enforcement, taken to unknown locations, and with an unknown path to reunification. We as a people have historically suffered the consequences of such forceful removal of our children from parents and caretakers that created inter-generational harm that we as elected leaders and professionals still struggle to address. Most recently, Native Americans observed the repatriation of native children's remains from distant boarding school cemeteries, having died far from home in the 19th and early 20th century. The emotional and spiritual devastation experienced from the forced removal of Native children from their parents is still being felt in our communities today, and the Puyallup Tribal Council feels compelled to speak out against this practice in the present and future.

We urge all to remember the adverse effect upon these immigrant children when they are removed from their parents. Not only do these children suffer immediate trauma, but their chance for productive and happy lives are significantly reduced by such experiences. As tribal leaders, we see the effects of trauma upon children in our juvenile and family courts. In all our court proceedings involving our children, “the best interest of the child” is of prime concern. This standard should apply to all children. All children deserve to be in a safe, permanent, and stable home.

We are thankful the current separation policy has ended, and the Puyallup Tribal Council urges the speedy reunification of the children with their families. We further urge that regardless of future public policies, the safety and humane treatment of children always be foremost in our Nation’s heart.