

Administration of Barack Obama, 2016

Statement on Signing the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children Act

October 14, 2016

Today I am pleased to sign into law S. 246, the "Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children Act," which will create the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children. The Commission is tasked with the important work of undertaking a comprehensive study of Federal, State, local, and tribal programs that serve Native children, and making recommendations on how those programs could be improved. Over the past 8 years, my Administration has been committed to working closely with tribes to strengthen our nation-to-nation relationships and to forge a brighter future for all our children. During my own visits to Indian Country, I have been inspired by the talent and enthusiasm of young people who want nothing more than to make a positive difference in their communities. From the Indian Child Welfare Act to working to return control of Indian education to tribal nations, I am proud of the progress we have made over the past 8 years. I applaud the Congress, and in particular Senator Heitkamp, for the efforts that made this new law possible.

The bill provides for a Commission consisting of three individuals appointed by the President and eight individuals appointed by congressional leaders, and would place this Commission in a specific office within the Department of Justice. While I welcome the creation of this Commission, it cannot be located in the executive branch consistent with the separation of powers because it includes legislative branch appointees (who here are empowered to direct other executive branch agencies to provide additional resources to the Commission). I am therefore instructing the Attorney General to treat the Commission as an independent entity, separate from the executive branch.

Upon signing the bill my Administration will begin seeking appointments for the Commission from the Congress so we can implement this legislation as soon as possible. I look forward to seeing the Commission's work in the years to come—work that will help ensure all our young people can reach their full potential.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
October 14, 2016.

NOTE: S. 246, approved October 14, was assigned Public Law No. 114–244.

Categories: Bill Signings and Vetoes : Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children Act, signing statement.

Names: Heitkamp, Mary Kathryn "Heidi".

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