



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

DEC 05 2014

Dear Tribal Leader:

Earlier this year, the Department of the Interior announced that it was reexamining the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Guidelines for State Courts. The ICWA was passed in 1978 to protect the best interests of Indian children and promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families. One of the most common comments was that state courts are not complying with ICWA and are not properly implementing ICWA in Indian child custody proceedings.

This letter is a reminder for those of you who are planning to attend the 14th National Indian Nations Conference on December 11-13, 2014, at the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Reservation in California, that my office is hosting a listening session on ICWA compliance. We have invited participation from the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services to listen to your comments specific to strengthening ICWA compliance. Details of the session are:

ICWA Compliance Listening Session

Friday, December 12, 2014

3:30 - 5:00 p.m.

Renaissance Hotel

Workshop F11 – Smoketree Rooms D & E

888 E Tahquitz Canyon Way

Palm Springs, CA 92262

Additional information, including the agenda, can be found at <http://www.ovcinc.org/agenda>. We respectfully request your input on strengthening ICWA compliance, as you, your judges, counsel, ICWA staff, social workers, and members have first-hand experience with ICWA. We look forward to your comments on this important issue involving tribes' most valuable resource – its children. Should you have any questions, please contact Ms. Rodina Cave, Senior Policy Advisor to the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, at (202) 208-7163 or Rodina_Cave@ios.doi.gov.

Sincerely,

Kevin K. Washburn
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs