

Tribal Statement Responding to Briefs Filed in Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals Opposing the Indian Child Welfare Act

A joint statement follows from Principal Chief Bill John Baker, Cherokee Nation; Chairman Robert Martin, Morongo Band of Mission Indians; Chairman Tehassi Hill, Oneida Nation; and President Fawn Sharp, Quinault Indian Nation:

We are dismayed that opponents of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and tribal sovereignty continued to perpetuate damaging falsehoods in briefs filed [in February] with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit regarding tribal citizenship and the care that Native children receive under the ICWA's landmark protections.

Passed more than 40 years ago by Congress, ICWA was designed to reverse decades of cultural insensitivity and political bias that had resulted in up to a third of all Indian children being forcibly removed from their families, their tribes and their cultural heritage.

ICWA ensures the best interests and wellbeing of Native American children are protected. ICWA preserves the stability and cohesion of tribal families, tribal communities and tribal cultures. As federally-recognized sovereign nations, we have the duty, the responsibility, and the wisdom to protect our children.

The flawed arguments by the plaintiffs and their allies have been rejected time and again by state and federal courts over

the past 40 years. ICWA is not based on race but on the political relationships of individual Native Americans with federally-recognized tribes. The district court's flawed decision potentially upsets a foundational precept of federal Indian law – that the relationship between tribes and tribal citizens is a political one.

Most importantly, opponents disregard decades of evidence and case law that show ICWA's provisions are demonstrably in the best interests of the child. Accepted best practices among child welfare experts – including those in Texas – call for keeping a child with his or her family or relatives whenever possible. ICWA does just that. That is why ICWA is regarded as the gold standard for child welfare and is so strongly supported by preeminent organizations such as the National CASA Association, the National Association of Social Workers, Casey Family Programs and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

We stand with the bipartisan coalition of federal lawmakers, attorneys general from 21 states, and 30 child welfare organizations who have joined 325 tribal governments and 57 tribal organizations in filing numerous amicus briefs urging the Fifth Circuit to overturn the district court's disastrous ruling.

We remain committed to protecting the Constitutionality of ICWA for Native children, families, and tribes. We firmly believe that our rights, and our children's rights, will be affirmed and reinforced. ♣

including Bonus Spin and STAX, and our players love the must-hit-by and community features of these products. We look forward to working with AGS' creative, dynamic team to further enhance our table-game revenues through new progressive features that focus on delivering even more value to our table-games players."

Legends in Concert to Open Year-Round Show and Theater at OWA

Legends in Concert, the longest-running show in Las Vegas, has announced an all-new residency at OWA, in Foley Alabama's Gulf Coast region. OWA is a world-class, award-winning entertainment destination owned and operated by the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. OWA's design celebrates its rural roots and the area's natural beauty. The intimate 430-seat theater will be located in Downtown OWA, immediately adjacent to TownePlace Suites by Marriott and steps away from Tanger Outlets

in Foley. Set to debut summer 2019, the acclaimed production boasting an incomparable cast of music legends, will bring its 35-year continuously operating musical tribute spectacular to its newly constructed venue in the heart of Baldwin County.

"Legends in Concert was our first choice to be the primary year-round theatrical attraction to headline our new multi-million dollar theater in the heart of Downtown OWA," said Cody Williamson, President and CEO of Creek Indian Enterprises Development Authority, the division of Poarch Band of Creek Indians that owns and operates OWA. "With their unparalleled collection of seasonally rotating featured artists and other renowned theatrical production ingredients, we are confident Legends in Concert will not only delight visitors, but also be a crucial component to OWA, and the continued growth of Baldwin County and the Gulf Coast's tourism industry." ♣