

by Lacey Shepard Jun 15, 2023

The Indian Child Welfare Act is Protected!

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is protected!

It's a great day for Indian Country as ICWA is officially being upheld after a 7-2 vote at the Supreme Court level. Here at Eighth Generation, we are overjoyed at this news—news that affirms the right of Native people and Native communities to raise Native children in our culture—and want to celebrate with you.

Eighth Generation is donating 20% of our profits today and tomorrow to the **National Indian Child Welfare Association**, an amazing organization that supports the health and safety of American Indian and Alaskan Native children.

"What an important day for Indian Country," shares Eighth Generation CEO Colleen Echohawk (Pawnee, Athabascan). "This decision ensures that we as Native people have the ability to care for our children. Native children belong with their culture—a culture that was threatened in this country for centuries. With this decision, Native rights and tribal rights are being upheld, and we're so glad to see that."

"Eighth Generation is owned by the Snoqualmie Tribe. Everything our business does ultimately is about tribal rights, it's about Native prosperity, it's about doing what's best for Native people now and for years to come."

Watch Colleen's short Instagram video on the news [here](#).



*This Protect ICWA design is by our Inspired Natives Artist
Sarah Agaton Howes (Ojibwe).*

Some of the ways you can support the wellbeing of Native children are:

- Donate to the **National Indian Child Welfare Association**
- Make a purchase on **eighthgeneration.com**: 20% of our proceeds Thursday and Friday will be donated to NICWA
- Share our **Instagram post** on your own page so your friends and family can learn more about ICWA and why it's important
- Share Anishinaabe/Ojibwe artist Sarah Agaton Howes' beautiful "**Protect ICWA**" Instagram post on your own page (see her graphic at the top—also available on her website as a shirt!)
- Read below to learn about ICWA and why this SCOTUS decision is so important.



Our **Embraced Baby Blanket** (<https://eighthgeneration.com/collections/urban-manufacturing-initiative/products/embraced-baby-blanket-1>) by David Robert Boxley (Tsimshian) is part of our Gold Label Collection of textiles made by our team in our Seattle studio

What is ICWA

ICWA, the Indian Child Welfare Act, is a governmental response to the large numbers of American Indian and Alaskan Native children who have been removed from their Native communities. The purpose of ICWA is “to protect the best interests of Indian Children and to promote the stability and security of Indian Tribes and families by the establishment of minimum Federal standards for the removal of Indian children and placement of such children in homes which will reflect the unique values of Indian culture.” (25 U.S. C. 1902)

(Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) | Indian Affairs (bia.gov))

Native children are four times as likely to be removed from their homes and placed in non-Native homes, which is detrimental to their cultural connection. ICWA was created to help provide guidance to these cases and ensure the best outcome for Native children and to promote stability in American Indian/Alaskan families.

What Happened?

ICWA was being challenged as violating the Tenth Amendment, which prohibits the federal government from issuing direct orders to states and delegating Congress's power by giving tribes authority to change adoption placement. This argument ultimately went to the Supreme Court.

Why is ICWA Important?

ICWA was enacted in 1978 after research found that 25-35% of all Native children were being removed from their homes by governmental agencies. Of those children, 85% were placed outside of their families, even when fit and willing extended family was available. (About ICWA » NICWA)

This act is so important to protect Native children's safety, security, and cultural ties. When children are removed from their homes, denied moving to their extended families, and removed from their tribal affiliation it strips away their cultural identity. Indigenous lessons are taught from our elders and learned from our community. Removing a Native child from their ancestral lands, and disconnecting them from their heritage is on par with the mission of boarding schools and is not only detrimental to the growth of the individual but to tribal sovereignty as a whole.

By upholding ICWA, there is a better chance of children in these communities being placed with their family members, and when that isn't possible, at least being with a family that can keep them connected to their community. After years of boarding schools and displacement there are a lot of American Indians and Alaskan Natives working to reconnect and reclaim Indigenous ways, the efforts of ICWA keep Native families together and give Indian Country the space to keep teaching the next generation their ancestral ways.