



PRESS RELEASE

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION

**For Immediate Release
June 15, 2023**

**Contact: Neeka Somday
509-634-2213**

The Indian Child Welfare Act is Upheld by the United States Supreme Court

(Nespelem, WA) — The United States Supreme Court issued an opinion today that upheld the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) as constitutional. ICWA was enacted decades ago to prioritize the placement of Indian children with Indian families in child welfare cases. The law had been challenged by non-Indian adoptive parents, but the Supreme Court upheld the law in a 7-2 vote and preserved the preference for Indian children to remain connected to Indian families and culture.

The Chairman of the Colville Confederated Tribes, Jarred-Michael Erickson, said, “Today’s court ruling is a great victory for Indian families and tribes. The Tribes especially appreciates the concurring opinion of Justice Gorsuch, which describes the federal boarding school and removal policies that ICWA was enacted to remedy and puts today’s decision in the proper historical context. Colville tribal leaders were directly involved in efforts to pass ICWA in the 1970s and current Colville leadership was honored to join the amicus brief filed by tribes in this case to urge the Supreme Court to uphold ICWA.”

The Chairman continued, “I want to acknowledge and thank the many people who helped achieve this important legal ruling. This is also an opportunity to thank the multitude of people who work diligently every day to protect Indian children and families. It takes social workers, court and legal staff, medical personnel, law enforcement, advocacy groups and so many others around the country to do this essential work. With today’s legal victory, the work will continue and our families will be protected.”

###

About the Colville Tribes:

Today, more than 9,267 descendants of 12 aboriginal tribes of Indians are enrolled in the Confederated Tribes of the Colville. The twelve tribes which compose the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation include: ščəlámxəx^w (deep water) or Chelan; walwáma (Wallowa people) or Chief Joseph Band of Nez Perce; sǰ^wyʔilp (sharp pointed trees) or Colville; šntíyátk^wəx^w (grass in the water) or Entiat; snǰáyckst (speckled fish) or Lakes; mətx^wu (blunt hills around a valley) or Methow; škwáxcənəx^w (people living on the bank) or Moses-Columbia; nspilm (prairie) or Nespelem; uknaqin (seeing over the top) or Okanogan; palúšpam (people from Palouse) or Palus; sənpǰ^wilx (grey mist as far as one can see) or San Poil, and šnpəšq^wáwsəx^w (people in between) or Wenatchi.