July 14, 2015

The Honorable Donald Young, Chairman
The Honorable Raul Ruiz, Ranking Member
House Natural Resources Committee
Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs
1337 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: NCAI SUPPORTS THE ALYCE SPOTTED BEAR AND WALTER SOBOLEFF COMMISSION ON NATIVE CHILDREN LEGISLATION & URGES SWIFT ACTION IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Dear Chairman Young & Ranking Member Ruiz:

On behalf of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the oldest, largest, and most representative organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments, I urge your committee to support the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children (S. 246). The legislation recently passed the Senate with strong bi-partisan support and support from our tribal nations. NCAI asks you to continue your demonstration of support for Native youth by passing S. 246 out of your subcommittee.

The Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children will create a platform for a national dialogue on the state of Native youth in Indian Country. The Commission will bring together experts in the areas of juvenile justice, social work, education, and mental and physical health to identify the complex challenges facing Native children throughout the country through a deep analysis of a variety of issues including high rates of poverty, domestic violence, substance abuse, and the shortage of economic opportunities. This Commission’s work will begin focusing on the holistic wellbeing of Native youth that is greatly needed.

NCAI’s membership strongly supports S. 246 and urges your subcommittee to take swift action on ensuring this bipartisan bill passes the House of Representatives and arrives on the president’s desk for enactment. If you should have any questions, please contact Denise Desiderio, NCAI Policy Director, at 202-466-7767 or ddesiderio@ncai.org.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Pata
Executive Director
National Congress of American Indians