

MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 10-18-16
SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich.

**Sault Tribe chair testifies for new law
Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children Act will
create accountability**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - President Obama signed into law Oct. 14 S. 246, the "Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children Act," which will create the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children.

The commission will undertake a comprehensive study of federal, state, local, and tribal programs that serve Native children and make recommendations on how those programs could be improved. "The purpose of the Native Child Commission is to create a line of accountability on the broad spectrum (across the federal bureaucracy) of issues affect our Native children," Sault Tribe Chairperson Aaron Payment said.

On behalf of the National Congress of American Indians, Sault Tribe Chairperson Aaron Payment testified to Congress on S246, saying, "Too often the programs impacting our youth are fragmented and communication across agencies and between governments is lacking or non-existent. This results in an incomplete view of the issues facing youth and recommended solutions which only deal with part of the problem."

The bill provides for a Commission consisting of three individuals appointed by the President and eight individuals appointed by congressional leaders, and would place this Commission in a specific office within the Department of Justice.

President Obama said, "During my own visits to Indian Country, I have been inspired by the talent and enthusiasm of young people who want nothing more than to make a positive difference in their communities. From the Indian Child Welfare Act to working to return control of Indian education to tribal nations, I am proud of the progress we have made over the past eight years. I applaud the Congress, and in particular Senator Heitkamp, for the efforts that made this new law possible."

###