



May 2, 2023

Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Nguyen, Vice Chair Scharf, and Members of the House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services

RE: SB 599 – Support

Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Nguyen, Vice Chair Scharf, and members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Creeana Bort, I am a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation, and I represent the NAYA Action Fund located in Portland, OR. Founded by the community for the community, NAYA Action Fund is a 501(c)(4) social welfare organization with a mission to expand political advocacy and build electoral power in partnership with the Native community. The NAYA Action Fund provides tools to shape public policy, cultivate leadership, and elect champions for issues impacting Native people. Our vision of systemic change is youth centered, family driven, and elder guided. I write in support of Senate Bill 599.

Our organizational counterpart, the Native American Youth & Family Center (NAYA) has provided over 200+ units of affordable housing in the Cully neighborhood. The American Indian/ Alaska Native community would benefit from the colocation of housing and early learning as it is a cultural value to pass on teachings to the next generation. Our properties serve as beacons for our community values, art, and housing. Intergenerational learning has been proven beneficial to both younger and older generations and serves as a value among the American Indian/Alaska Native community. There is power within proximity, encouraging the share of knowledge across generations. The Native American population uses storytelling and the power of community to heal and grow, encouraging generations to come together for meals, ceremony, and living. Fostering relationships across generations encourages us to instill values of respect for our elders and the wealth of knowledge and love they bring to our communities.

By passing SB 599, we are allowing for the opportunity for the spread of wisdom across generations, promoting the health and wellbeing of all generations involved. On behalf of the NAYA Action Fund, we urge you to pass SB 599. It's time we go back to our roots and foster a healthier stronger community through intergenerational connections, and with SB 599 and collocation, we can do just that.

Sincerely,

Creeana Bort
Policy and Advocacy Organizer
NAYA Action Fund