THE NAVAJO NATION
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
INTERNET PUBLIC REVIEW PUBLICATION

LEGISLATION NO: 0275-26 **SPONSOR:** Andy Nez

TITLE: **An Action Relating to the Naabik'íyáti' Committee; Supporting S. 4976, The Native Children's Commission Implantation Act of 2026, To Implement the Recommendations of the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children; and Requesting Amendments to Protect the Interests of the Navajo Nation and Diné Children**

Date posted: **November 13, 2026 at 8:00 PM**

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LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY SHEET
Tracking No. 0275-26

DATE: November 13, 2026

TITLE OF RESOLUTION: AN ACTION RELATING TO THE NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEE; SUPPORTING S. 4976, THE NATIVE CHILDREN'S COMMISSION IMPLEMENTATION ACT OF 2026, TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ALYCE SPOTTED BEAR AND WALTER SOBOLEFF COMMISSION ON NATIVE CHILDREN; AND REQUESTING AMENDMENTS TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF THE NAVAJO NATION AND DINÉ CHILDREN

PURPOSE: This legislation, if approved, would approve support S. 4976 The Native Children's Commission Implementation Act of 2026 and provide technical amendments to the bill.

FINAL AUTHORITY: Naabik'íyáti' Committee

VOTE REQUIRED: Simple Majority Vote

This written summary does not address amendments as may be proposed before the Budget and Finance Committee. The Office of Legislative Counsel requests each Council Delegate to review each proposed resolution in detail.

5-DAY BILL HOLD PERIOD: 11/14 EJ
Website Posting Time/Date: _____
Posting End Date: 11-18-26
Eligible for Action: 11-19-26

PROPOSED STANDING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

25th NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL—Fourth Year, 2026

Introduced by:

Primary Sponsor

Tracking No. 0275-26

AN ACTION

RELATING TO THE NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEE; SUPPORTING S. 4976, THE NATIVE CHILDREN'S COMMISSION IMPLEMENTATION ACT OF 2026, TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ALYCE SPOTTED BEAR AND WALTER SOBOLEFF COMMISSION ON NATIVE CHILDREN; AND REQUESTING AMENDMENTS TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF THE NAVAJO NATION AND DINÉ CHILDREN

WHEREAS:

A. The Naabik'íyáti' Committee is a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council empowered to coordinate all requests for information, appearances, and testimony related to proposed county, state, and federal legislation impacting the Navajo Nation. 2 N.N.C. §§ 700(A) and 701(A)(6).

B. The Navajo Nation is a sovereign Tribal Nation with a government-to-government relationship with the United States, as recognized under the Treaty Between the United States of America and the Navajo Tribe of Indians, June 1, 1868, 15 U.S. Stat. 667, and has an enrolled membership of over 420,000.

C. The United States has a trust responsibility to the Navajo Nation and its citizens, including Diné children, and Congress has declared in the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 that "there is no resource that is more vital to the continued existence and integrity of Indian tribes than their children." 25 U.S.C. § 1901(3).

D. Congress established the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children through legislation enacted in 2016 to conduct a comprehensive study of the federal, state, local, and Tribal programs that serve American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children and youth, and in February 2024 the Commission transmitted its final report, The Way Forward, to the President and Congress.

E. On July 14, 2026, Senator Lisa Murkowski, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, introduced S. 4976, the Native Children's Commission Implementation Act of 2026, with Senator Brian Schatz, Vice Chairman of the Committee, as cosponsor, and the bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. The text of S. 4976 is available at https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/4976.

F. S. 4976 would carry out many of the Commission's recommendations through eight titles addressing justice for children, youth, and families; research and data; physical and behavioral health; environmental health; nutrition; homelessness; workforce and child care; and education, by codifying Tribal advisory committees, establishing Tribal set-asides within federal block grants, authorizing pilot and demonstration programs, and expanding Tribal administration of federal programs.

G. S. 4976 would directly benefit the Navajo Nation by, among other things, increasing the Tribal set-aside under the Child Care and Development Block Grant from 2 percent to 5 percent; reserving 5 percent of the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant and of the Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services Block Grant for direct grants to Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations; codifying the Tribal advisory committees of the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the Secretary of Health and Human Services with a seat for each Indian Health Service area, including the Navajo Area; and authorizing $25,000,000 annually to integrate environmental health into Indian Health Service primary care.

H. S. 4976 would further benefit Diné children by making enrolled members of Indian Tribes, and children with a parent who is an enrolled member, categorically eligible

for free school meals; adjusting school meal reimbursement rates for Bureau-funded schools and schools on or near Indian reservations; codifying the Bureau of Indian Education Behavioral Health and Wellness Program for all Bureau-funded schools and dormitories; increasing the Bureau of Indian Education share of federal homeless education funding from 1 percent to 2 percent; strengthening Indian Head Start, including the authority of a Tribe to prioritize the enrollment of children from families that include Tribal members; and establishing a Tribal homeless housing assistance program under which each Indian Tribe defines homelessness for its own community.

I. Section 401 of S. 4976 would establish a Native Children's Environmental Health Protection Task Force charged with addressing environmental health threats to Native children, expressly including abandoned uranium mines, contaminated lands from mining, and groundwater contamination, which are conditions the Navajo Nation has lived with for generations as the location of more than 500 abandoned uranium mines and four Department of Energy uranium mill tailings sites at Shiprock, Tuba City, Mexican Hat, and Monument Valley.

J. Certain provisions of S. 4976, as introduced, would leave the Navajo Nation underrepresented, ineligible, or unable to participate, including a Tribal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program pilot that requires a cooperative agreement with a single State agency and does not expressly protect participating Tribes from a share of benefit costs; a behavioral health self-governance demonstration limited to Tribes already party to a self-governance compact under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act; a Tiwahe Initiative whose advisory council and funding protections are reserved predominantly to ten existing pilot sites, none of which is the Navajo Nation; an environmental health task force that omits the Department of Energy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and provides no seat for any Tribal government; and a certification process for Native American language schools that gives no role to the Tribe whose language is taught.

K. The Navajo Nation has identified amendments to S. 4976 that would address these concerns, together with technical corrections to the text of the bill as introduced, which are set out in **Exhibit A**.

L. The Navajo Nation's support for S. 4976 rests on the Nation's political and legal status as a sovereign nation and on the federal trust responsibility, and the programs the bill would authorize are provided to the Navajo Nation on that basis.

M. It is in the best interest of the Navajo Nation to support S. 4976, to request amendments that protect the interests of the Navajo Nation and Diné children, and to authorize advocacy for the bill's enactment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

A. The Navajo Nation hereby supports S. 4976, the Native Children's Commission Implementation Act of 2026, 119th Congress, as introduced on July 14, 2026, available at https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/4976, and urges the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and the United States Congress to enact it.

B. The Navajo Nation hereby requests that the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and the United States Congress amend S. 4976 as set out in **Exhibit A**, including the requested amendments in Part I and the technical corrections in Part II.

C. The Navajo Nation hereby supports the reintroduction of this legislation in the 120th Congress, incorporating the amendments and technical corrections set out in **Exhibit A**, should S. 4976 not be enacted before the adjournment of the 119th Congress.

D. The Navajo Nation hereby authorizes the Navajo Nation President, Navajo Nation Vice-President, and the Navajo Nation Council and their designees to take all steps necessary to advocate for the Navajo Nation's position with respect to this resolution.