

The proposed trail would extend approximately 550 miles from Niobrara, Nebraska, to Ponca City, Oklahoma, tracing the route taken by Chief Standing Bear and the Ponca people during Federal Indian removal and their return to Nebraska.

The trail would commemorate and elevate the story of Chief Standing Bear, including the trial and historic 1879 court case where he became the first Native American to be recognized as a person in a Federal court.

The trail would memorialize the courage, honor, and fortitude of Chief Standing Bear and the Ponca people as they struggled to return to their homeland to bury the son of Chief Standing Bear—serving as a reminder of their fight to achieve justice, freedom, and equality.

I would like to thank Representative FORTENBERRY for championing this important legislation and for his efforts to bring about a greater understanding of our U.S. history and Tribal sovereignty.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this good bipartisan bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1345

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I thank the majority for the bipartisan support on this good piece of legislation.

H.R. 810, authored by our colleague from Nebraska, Congressman FORTENBERRY, directs the Secretary of the Interior to study the feasibility of designating the Chief Standing Bear National Historic Trail.

Chief Standing Bear of the Ponca Tribe is one of Nebraska's most important historical figures and is honored here in the Capitol as one of Nebraska's contributions to the National Statuary Hall Collection.

Chief Standing Bear led his people through a crisis that began with its displacement by droves of westward-bound settlers. The Ponca Tribe moved twice in search of new land but had no success. Finally, in 1877, the U.S. Government forced their relocation.

By 1878, when they reached their destination in Oklahoma's Indian Territory, starvation and disease had claimed almost a third of the Tribe. Among the dead was Bear Shield, the first son of Standing Bear.

Standing Bear's desire to honor his son's wish that he be buried in his Nebraska birthplace, at a time when Native Americans could not legally leave their reservations without government permission, led to the trial for which he is best remembered today. The case established that Native Americans were persons under the law and are entitled to the same rights as anyone else in the Nation. During that case, the words of Chief Standing Bear, pleading on behalf of his Tribe, moved the Nation.

The Chief Standing Bear Trail, extending approximately 550 miles from Nebraska to Oklahoma, follows the route taken by Chief Standing Bear and the Ponca people during Federal Indian removal. If supported by the study, any designation of the trail would require additional action from the Natural Resources Committee and the Congress.

Madam Speaker, I urge adoption of the measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY).

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Speaker, first of all, let me thank my friends and colleagues, Mr. SOTO from Florida and Mr. WESTERMAN from Arkansas, for shepherding this important measure.

Madam Speaker, right outside this door, in Statuary Hall, there is a very large statue with the person's hand extended like that, as if to say welcome, welcome all of America to this institution. That statue is of Chief Standing Bear. And today, I am so proud that we are considering a bill to honor his courage and sacrifice.

As we have heard, here is a bit of his story. Chief Standing Bear and his Ponca people were relocated from their ancestral homeland in Niobrara, Nebraska, to what was called Indian Territory in Oklahoma. As we learned, Chief Standing Bear's son fell ill, and he made his son a promise that he would bury him back in his ancestral homeland. When that happened, Standing Bear took that harrowing journey one cold winter back home, and for that, he was arrested for leaving the reservation.

During his trial, Chief Standing Bear raised his hand and said: "I am a man. The same God made us both." The judge was so moved by his testimony that he declared that Native Americans were to be considered persons for consideration under the law. That wasn't until 1879.

Madam Speaker, Chief Standing Bear didn't seek to be a civil rights leader, but he changed the course of history in that moment, all for the sake of human dignity and human rights. I am proud to offer this bill today in his honor and for the good of all America.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I urge support of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, I wholly support this bill, and I thank the leadership of Mr. FORTENBERRY from Nebraska and the ranking member, Mr. WESTERMAN from Arkansas.

This is a fitting honor for human rights and Tribal sovereignty. I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 810.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mrs. GREENE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

NATIVE AMERICAN CHILD PROTECTION ACT

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1688) to amend the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1688

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Native American Child Protection Act".

SEC. 2. INDIAN CHILD PROTECTION AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACT AMENDMENTS.

The Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act (25 U.S.C. 3202 et seq.) is amended as follows:

(1) By amending section 403(3)(A) (25 U.S.C. 3202(3)(A)) to read as follows:

"(A) in any case in which—

"(i)(I) a child is dead or exhibits evidence of skin bruising, bleeding, malnutrition, failure to thrive, burns, fracture of any bone, subdural hematoma, soft tissue swelling; and

"(II) such condition is not justifiably explained or may not be the product of an accidental occurrence; or

"(ii) a child is subjected to sexual assault,

sexual molestation, sexual exploitation, sexual contact, or prostitution;"

(2) In section 409 (25 U.S.C. 3208)—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) by striking "The Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Service and in cooperation with the Bureau" and inserting "The Service, in cooperation with the Bureau"; and

(ii) by striking "sexual abuse" and inserting "abuse or neglect";

(B) in subsection (b) through the end of the section, by striking "Secretary of Health and Human Services" each place it appears and inserting "Service";

(C) in subsection (b)(1), by inserting after "Any Indian tribe or intertribal consortium" the following: ", on its own or in partnership with an urban Indian organization,";

(D) in subsections (b)(2)(B) and (d), by striking "such Secretary" each place it appears and inserting "the Service";

(E) by amending subsection (c) to read as follows:

"(c) CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE TREATMENT.—In awarding grants under this section, the Service shall encourage the use of culturally appropriate treatment services and programs that respond to the unique cultural values, customs, and traditions of applicant Indian Tribes.";

(F) in subsection (d)(2), by striking "the Secretary" and inserting "the Service";

(G) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (f);

(H) by inserting after subsection (d) the following:

“(e) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of the Native American Child Protection Act, the Service shall submit a report to Congress on the award of grants under this section. The report shall contain—

“(1) a description of treatment and services for which grantees have used funds awarded under this section; and

“(2) any other information that the Service requires.”; and

(I) by amending subsection (f) (as so redesignated by subparagraph (G) of this paragraph), to read as follows:

“(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2027.”

(3) In section 410 (25 U.S.C. 3209)—

(A) in the heading—

(i) by inserting “NATIONAL” before “INDIAN”; and

(ii) by striking “CENTERS” and inserting “CENTER”;

(B) by amending subsections (a) and (b) to read as follows:

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of the Native American Child Protection Act, the Secretary shall establish a National Indian Child Resource and Family Services Center.

“(b) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of the Native American Child Protection Act, the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, shall submit a report to Congress on the status of the National Indian Child Resource and Family Services Center.”;

(C) in subsection (c)—

(i) by striking “Each” and inserting “The”; and

(ii) by striking “multidisciplinary”;

(D) in subsection (d)—

(i) in the text before paragraph (1), by striking “Each” and inserting “The”;

(ii) in paragraph (1), by striking “and inter-tribal consortia” and inserting “inter-tribal consortia, and urban Indian organizations”;

(iii) in paragraph (2), by inserting “urban Indian organizations,” after “tribal organizations”;

(iv) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by inserting “and technical assistance” after training; and

(ii) by striking “and to tribal organizations” and inserting “, Tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations”;

(v) in paragraph (4)—

(i) by inserting “, State,” after “Federal”; and

(ii) by striking “and tribal” and inserting “Tribal, and urban Indian”;

(vi) by amending paragraph (5) to read as follows:

“(5) develop model intergovernmental agreements between Tribes and States, and other materials that provide examples of how Federal, State, and Tribal governments can develop effective relationships and provide for maximum cooperation in the furtherance of prevention, investigation, treatment, and prosecution of incidents of family violence and child abuse and child neglect involving Indian children and families.”; and

(E) in subsection (e)—

(i) in the heading, by striking “MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM” and inserting “TEAM”;

(ii) in the text before paragraph (1), by striking “Each multidisciplinary” and inserting “The”; and

(F) by amending subsections (f), (g), and (h) to read as follows:

“(f) CENTER ADVISORY BOARD.—The Secretary shall establish an advisory board to advise and assist the National Indian Child Resource and Family Services Center in carrying out its activities under this section. The advisory board shall consist of 12 members appointed by the Secretary from Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations with expertise in child abuse and child neglect. Members shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for travel and other expenses while carrying out the duties of the board. The advisory board shall assist the Center in coordinating programs, identifying training and technical assistance materials, and developing intergovernmental agreements relating to family violence, child abuse, and child neglect.

“(g) APPLICATION OF INDIAN SELF-DETERMINATION ACT TO THE CENTER.—The National Indian Child Resource and Family Services Center shall be subject to the provisions of the Indian Self-Determination Act. The Secretary may also contract for the operation of the Center with a nonprofit Indian organization governed by an Indian-controlled board of directors that have substantial experience in child abuse, child neglect, and family violence involving Indian children and families.

“(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$3,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2027.”

(4) In section 411 (25 U.S.C. 3210)—

(A) in subsection (d)—

(i) in paragraph (1)—

(I) in subparagraph (A), by striking “abuse and child neglect” and inserting “abuse, neglect, or both”;

(II) in subparagraph (B), by striking “and” at the end; and

(III) by inserting after subparagraph (C), the following:

“(D) development of agreements between Tribes, States, or private agencies on the coordination of child abuse and neglect prevention, investigation, and treatment services;

“(E) child protective services operational costs including transportation, risk and protective factors assessments, family engagement and kinship navigator services, and relative searches, criminal background checks for prospective placements, and home studies; and

“(F) development of a Tribal child protection or multidisciplinary team to assist in the prevention and investigation of child abuse and neglect”;

(ii) in paragraph (2)—

(I) in subparagraph (A), by inserting “in culturally appropriate ways” after “incidents of family violence”; and

(II) in subparagraph (C), by inserting “that may include culturally appropriate programs” after “training programs”; and

(iii) in paragraph (3)—

(I) in subparagraph (A), by inserting “and neglect” after “abuse”; and

(II) in subparagraph (B), by striking “cases, to the extent practicable,” and inserting “and neglect cases”;

(B) in subsection (f)—

(i) in paragraph (2), by striking “develop, in consultation with Indian tribes, appropriate caseload standards and staffing requirements which are comparable to standards developed by the National Association of Social Work, the Child Welfare League of America and other professional associations in the field of social work and child welfare” and inserting “develop, not later than one year after the date of the enactment of the Native American Child Protection Act, in consultation with Indian Tribes, appropriate caseload standards and staffing requirements”;

(ii) in paragraph (3)(D), by striking “sexual abuse” and inserting “abuse and neglect, high incidence of family violence”;

(iii) by amending paragraph (4) to read as follows:

“(4) The formula established pursuant to this subsection shall provide funding necessary to support not less than one child protective services or family violence caseworker, including fringe benefits and support costs, for each Indian Tribe.”; and

(iv) in paragraph (5), by striking “tribes” and inserting “Indian Tribes”;

(C) by amending subsection (g) to read as follows:

“(g) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of the Native American Child Protection Act, the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, shall submit a report to Congress on the award of grants under this section. The report shall contain—

“(1) a description of treatment and services for which grantees have used funds awarded under this section; and

“(2) any other information that the Secretary of the Interior requires.”; and

(D) by amending subsection (i) to read as follows:

“(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$60,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2027.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the measure under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 1688, introduced by Representative RUBEN GALLEGO from Arizona, our outgoing subcommittee chairman—and I appreciate his leadership on that—amends and reauthorizes several programs within the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act in order to improve the prevention, investigation, treatment, and prosecution of family violence, child abuse, and child neglect involving Native American children and families.

There is an enormous need for family violence prevention and treatment resources in Tribal communities. Native children experience child abuse and neglect at an elevated rate, which leads many to require special education services, to be more likely to be involved in the juvenile and criminal justice systems, and to have long-term mental health needs.

Passage of H.R. 1688 will create technical assistance programs in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, allow for urban Indian organizations to partner with

Tribal governments, and ensure culturally competent care.

I thank Representative GALLEGO for introducing and championing this vitally important legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1688.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 1688 amends the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act to reauthorize three programs administered by the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of the Interior that are intended to prevent cases within Indian communities where child abuse, neglect, family violence, and trauma may occur and to provide treatment for victims of Indian child sexual abuse.

The authorization for appropriations for the three programs expired in 1997. The bill also makes several technical changes to the underlying statute, requiring agencies to report on grant awards.

Advocates cite the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act as the only federally dedicated child abuse prevention and victim treatment funding for Tribal governments, but Congress has only appropriated approximately \$5 million for this program.

I appreciate the sponsor bringing attention to this important issue as abuse, neglect, and violence have no place in any community.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGO).

Mr. GALLEGO. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 1688, the Native American Child Protection Act.

I first want to thank my friend and the dean of the House, Congressman DON YOUNG, for working with me on this bill to ensure Native American and Alaska Native Tribes have the resources they need to keep Native children safe from abuse and neglect.

Last week, I joined my colleagues in recognizing the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

When I was chairman of the Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States last Congress, I held the first-ever House committee hearing on MMIW, which paved the way for critical bills like the Not Invisible Act and Savanna's Act.

At that hearing, we learned that, in addition to experiencing incredibly high murder rates, one in three Native women experience domestic violence in their lives. That statistic is even more horrifying when we recognize that, in 49 to 70 percent of cases, men who abuse their partners also abuse their children.

Despite this fact, Tribes have never received the resources they need to ad-

dress child abuse and neglect in their communities. My bill changes that.

My bill will improve the prevention, treatment, investigation, and prosecution of child abuse and neglect in Indian Country by ensuring Tribes have the resources they need to take care of Native children in culturally competent ways. It does so by modernizing and reauthorizing three programs originally passed as part of the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act.

The Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act became law in 1990, after being authored by the late Arizona Senator John McCain in response to widespread reports that Native children were being physically and sexually abused in BIA-run boarding schools in the 1980s.

The original purpose of the law was to identify the scope of the underreported child abuse in Indian Country, fill gaps in Tribal child welfare services, improve coordination between child welfare and domestic violence programs, and provide funds for treatment in Indian Country.

But the horrible truth is that the grant programs created by this law in 1990 were never funded, never enacted, and were allowed to expire in 1997. My bill revives the three grant programs from the original act that are still sorely needed in Indian Country because the problems identified by Congress in 1990 still exist today.

Specifically, my bill does: one, provides Tribes with more funding for culturally competent child abuse treatment; two, allows Tribes to choose to partner with urban Indian organizations or Tribal consortiums to identify and treat victims of abuse; three, creates a national child resource and family services center to provide technical assistance and support to Tribes in maintaining child welfare programs; four, authorizes enough funds for every Tribe to hire at least one child welfare case manager to help investigate and prosecute instances of abuse; and, five, authorizes the only Tribal-specific grant program aimed at preventing child abuse in Indian Country.

A core part of the Federal Government's trust responsibility is protecting the most vulnerable members of indigenous communities, Native children. Right now, we are failing in that responsibility.

Passing this bill today allows us to take an important step forward in protecting Native children and upholding our trust responsibility to Tribes.

I am proud of the strong bipartisan support this legislation received in the Natural Resources Committee last year when it passed and when it passed by a voice vote in the House. I urge all of my colleagues in the House to join me once again in supporting this important piece of legislation.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), the dean of the House and a true expert on Tribal issues.

Mr. YOUNG. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the compliment. I have been called a lot of things on this floor, including dean.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation. I thank my friend, Representative GALLEGO, for introducing it.

This is a good bill. It improves a bill which I passed 30 years ago, and it is long overdue to make sure that it is running right.

As has been said, it establishes a new National Indian Resource Services Center, which was created over 30 years ago. We are reauthorizing these programs, making sure they work.

It is badly needed because of actions across the country with indigenous people. We hope the victims will have better service than they have in the past.

I congratulate the author of the legislation. I am a sponsor of the legislation also. This is a good bill, and I urge the passage of this bill.

All of my colleagues who understand, let's do the job we were told to do when we became trustees of the indigenous people of this great Nation of ours.

Again, I thank the chairman, the author of the legislation, and the ranking member for all the work they have done.

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I urge support of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

We had extensive hearings on these issues in the Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States, and it became clear we needed resources and technical assistance to protect Native American children and families in addition to what they are getting now.

I thank our outgoing chair, Mr. GALLEGO, for his leadership on this; the dean of the House, Representative DON YOUNG, for his amazing leadership in working together; former Member COOK, who participated in these meetings extensively; as well as now-Secretary Deb Haaland, one of the first Native American women to serve in the Congress. I thank Ranking Member WESTERMAN for helping us get this done in a bipartisan fashion.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1688.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1400

YSLETA DEL SUR PUEBLO AND ALABAMA-COUSHATTA TRIBES OF TEXAS EQUAL AND FAIR OPPORTUNITY ACT

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2208) to restore an opportunity for tribal economic development on terms that are equal and fair, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2208

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and Alabama-Coushatta Tribes of Texas Equal and Fair Opportunity Act”.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT.

The Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and Alabama and Coushatta Indian Tribes of Texas Restoration Act (Public Law 100-89; 101 Stat. 666) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 301. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

“Nothing in this Act shall be construed to preclude or limit the applicability of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 U.S.C. 2701 et seq.).”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the measure under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 2208, introduced by Representative VERONICA ESCOBAR from Texas, amends the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and Alabama and Coushatta Indian Tribes of Texas Restoration Act of 1987 to clarify that the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act applies to both the Pueblo and the Tribe.

The Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas was federally terminated in 1954. This wrong was followed in 1968 by termination of the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, also known as the Tigwa Tribe. Congress rightfully restored both the Pueblo and the Tribe by enacting the aforementioned Restoration Act of 1987.

The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act was enacted just one year later, in 1988. The framework that it created should have applied to both the Pueblo and the Tribe, just as it did to every other Tribe.

However, since the Restoration Act was passed at a time when Indian gaming was just emerging and Federal reg-

ulations had not yet been implemented, it contains a section regarding gaming.

We know from the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD that the intent of this section of the Restoration Act was to clarify Indian gaming policy at the time, not to completely prohibit gaming on these lands in perpetuity.

But that is what is occurring. The language in the Restoration Act has been used by the State of Texas to repeatedly stymie the Pueblo's and the Tribe's ability to engage in class II gaming, much to the detriment of the economic health and well-being of both the Pueblo and the Tribe.

Additionally, the only other federally recognized Tribe in Texas, the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe, is allowed to operate a class II gaming facility, as they were restored by Congress in 1983, without any type of gaming restrictions.

H.R. 2208 remedies this inequality by clarifying that the Pueblo and the Tribe, like the Kickapoo, have the same rights and responsibilities under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act as virtually every other federally recognized Tribe in the United States.

This legislation confers no new or special rights to the Pueblo or the Tribe, nor does it in any way limit the existing rights of the State of Texas. This is simply a matter of parity and fairness, and I urge adoption of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2208, sponsored by my colleague from Texas (Ms. ESCOBAR), would amend the act of Congress that restored the Federal recognition of the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas.

The amendment would override a gaming limitation imposed by Congress on the Tribes, thereby authorizing the Tribes to operate casinos regulated not under Texas law, as Federal law currently provides, but under the Federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988.

The question of whether Texas law or the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act applies to the two Tribes is no longer under serious dispute. Federal courts have settled the question, and the result of the litigation is that the two Tribes may not conduct gaming under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, unless Congress enacts a measure to allow them to do so.

The bill enjoys significant local support in the communities around the reservations of the two Tribes, and the members who represent the Tribes strongly support enactment of the measure.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. ESCOBAR).

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on my colleagues to support H.R. 2208, the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and Alabama-Coushatta Tribes of Texas Equal and Fair Opportunity Act.

On March 26 of this year, I introduced this important bipartisan bill with my colleague, Representative TONY GONZALES from the Texas 23rd Congressional District, to ensure that Native American Tribes are covered by the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

Specifically, this bipartisan bill aims to correct a problem of exclusion that has been affecting only two Tribes in the entire United States—the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and the Alabama-Coushatta Indian Tribes of Texas—since 1987, when Congress passed the Restoration Act and the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

The passage of these 1987 laws inadvertently created uncertainty about which law these Tribes were covered under and what gaming activities they were allowed to offer on their reservations.

Passed in this Chamber during the 116th Congress, this bill offers a commonsense solution that will ensure that the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and Alabama-Coushatta Tribes are covered by the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, which would provide these Native American communities with a critical economic lifeline and an opportunity to recover from the harmful inequity that they have faced.

Simply put, this bill would provide fairness for these two Tribes, like the only other federally recognized Tribe in our State, the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas.

I urge my colleagues to join me in protecting our Native American Tribes' sovereignty and ensuring that they have the ability to engage in the same way other Tribes are able to.

The coronavirus pandemic has impacted everyone, but the economic and health crisis has been devastating to our Tribes, and this bill offers an opportunity for them to safely rebuild their economies. The reason our Tribes have suffered so disproportionately is because of long-term disinvestment and generational lack of adequate access to healthcare and economic assistance.

Communities around the country are eager to repair their economies following the impact of COVID-19, and our Tribes are no different. But they need the clarity this bill would provide so that they can better control their economic future.

The parity this bill would create for these Tribes would also create long overdue opportunities for them to succeed by supporting job creation and their ability to generate revenue that would fund new housing, educational programs, and medical facilities for their people and the surrounding communities, among so many other things.

Now, more than ever, more must be done to protect other Native American Tribes, their families, businesses, and their economic prosperity.