



TRIBAL COURT–STATE COURT FORUM

MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING

February 6, 2026

12:15 - 1:15 p.m.

Zoom

Advisory Body Members Present: Hon. Abby Abinanti, Cochair, Hon. Shama Mesiwala, Cochair, Hon. Yvette Ayala Henderson, Ms. Janet Bill, Hon. Richard Blake, Ms. Laila DeRouen, Hon. Leonard Edwards, Hon. Ana España, Hon. Devin Flesher, Hon. Jennifer Lee, Hon. Patricia Lenzi, Ms. S. Lynn Martinez, Hon. Dorothy McLaughlin, Hon. April Olson, Hon. Victorio Shaw, Hon. Alison Tucher, Hon. Rebecca Wightman, and Hon. Zeke Zeidler.

Advisory Body Members Absent: Hon. Michele Fahley, Hon. Benjamin Hanna, Mr. Christopher Haug, Hon. Kristina Lindquist, Hon. Nicholas Mazanec, Hon. Stephen Place, Hon. Karen Riess, Hon. Gary Slossberg, Ms. Christina Snider-Ashtari, Hon. Dean Stout, and Hon. Juan Ulloa.

Others Present: Ms. Mae Ackerman-Brimberg, Ms. Vida Castaneda, Mr. Aaron Cook, Ms. Audrey Fancy, Ms. Anne Hadreas, Mr. Cyrus Ip, Ms. Darya Larizadeh, Mr. Rob Lindsay, Ms. Anne Marie Schubert, Ms. Cassie McTaggart, Ms. Amanda Morris, Ms. Kristen Schmit, and Mr. Jeff Shaw.

OPEN MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call

The chair called the meeting to order at 12:16 p.m. and took roll call.

Approval of Minutes

The advisory body reviewed and approved the minutes of the December 11, 2025, Tribal Court–State Court Forum meeting. Judge Richard Blake moved to approve, and Justice Alison Tucher seconded the motion. Judge Dorothy McLaughlin and Ms. Laila DeRouen abstained from voting.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS (ITEMS 1–3)

Item 1

Tribal Court-State Court Forum Ad Hoc Work Groups

(Presenter: Vida Castaneda, Senior Analyst, Judicial Council of California, Center for Families, Children, & the Courts)

Judge Ana España on behalf of the ICWA ad hoc working group, provided committee members with an update on their projects. The group is continuing to review education resources available online to ensure that they are up to date, relevant, and not duplicative. The committee was also informed that the working group will be adding an advisory member. The next meeting will be in March 2026.

Ms Vida Castaneda provided committee members with an update on behalf of the Tribal Court Orders Enforcement ad hoc working group. Among previously discussed projects on creating new education resources, the possibility of creating a new coversheet for tribal court orders being entered into the state’s system was brought forward and the group plans to continue research into feasibility. Also discussed were potential changes to California court form DV-600 *Order to Register Out-of-State or Tribal Court Protective/Restraining Order*.

Finally, Justice Alison Tucher, as a representative of the DUIs on Tribal Lands working group, informed the committee that their group is continuing to delay projects until the open attorney/committee lead staff position is filled in spring 2026.

Item 2

AB 124 Bench Cards, Guide & Harm Reduction and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth: Guidance Tool

(Presenters/Facilitators: Mae Ackerman-Brimberg, Directing Attorney, Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative, National Center for Youth Law and Darya Larizadeh, Director, California Policy and Capacity Building, Youth Justice, National Center for Youth Law)

Ms. Darya Larizadeh presented to committee members the new AB 124 – “Justice for Survivors” bench cards for judicial officers made in collaboration with the Judicial Council. She provided an overview of AB 124, the content of the bench guides, and how they will support the implementation of the Justice for Survivors Act.

Ms. Mae Ackerman-Brimberg presented to committee members a new guide on engaging commercially sexually exploited youth and the role of harm reduction in the courtroom and beyond. The guide was adapted from judicial bench cards released in 2023 to provide guidance to a broader court professional audience. Ms. Ackerman-Brimberg gave an overview of the guide’s contents, defined harm reduction, why it’s important to practice in court settings, and provided examples of best practices.

Item 3

Cybercheck & Locating Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP)

(Presenter: Anne Marie Schubert, Schubert Strategies)

Mr. Rob Lindsay presented to committee members an overview of the capabilities of Cybercheck and the services the company offers, specifically in aiding locating missing and murdered Indigenous persons.

A D J O U R N M E N T

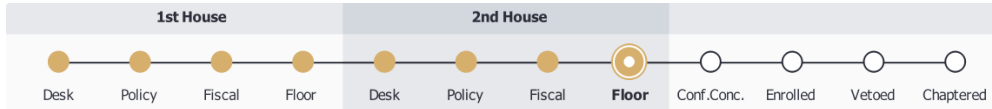
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Approved by the advisory body on enter date.

Legislative Update: Tribal Court State Court Forum

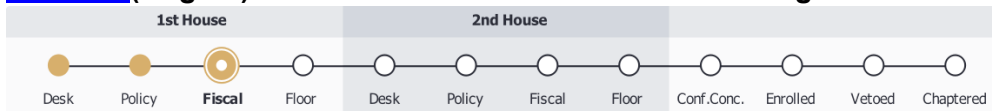
April 9, 2026

AB 1389 (Rubio, Blanca) Tribal gaming: compact ratification.



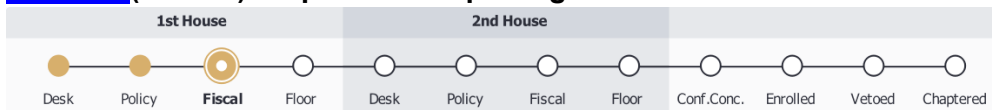
Would ratify the second amendment to the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Yurok Tribe of the Yurok Reservation, California, executed on December 18, 2025, to extend the terms of the tribal-state gaming compact. The bill would provide that, in deference to tribal sovereignty, certain actions related to this amended compact are not projects for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

AB 1574 (Rogers) The Tribal Foster Care Prevention Program.



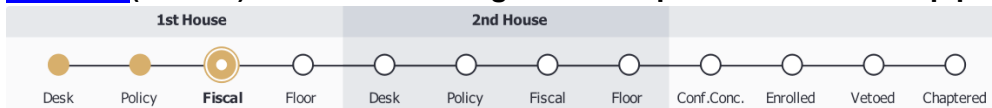
Establishes the Tribal Foster Care Prevention Program to provide funding to assist any federally recognized Indian tribe located in California, or with lands that extend into California, in funding the costs associated with services aimed at preserving families and preventing the entry of children into foster care. The bill would require an Indian tribe that seeks funding for this purpose to submit an annual letter of interest to the department.

AB 1581 (Ramos) Pupils: data reporting: American Indian and Alaska Native pupils.



Requires the California Department of Education, beginning with the 2027–28 school year, to require, as part of the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS), a record of the tribal affiliation of each pupil new to a local educational agencies (LEAs) or charter school who identifies as American Indian or Alaska Native, and requires LEAs and charter schools to collect and report this information in CALPADS.

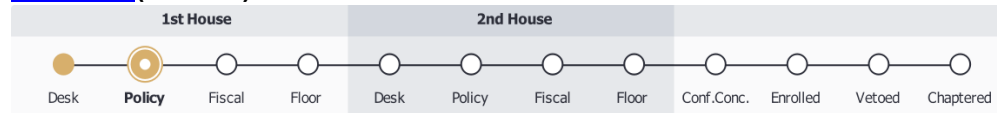
AB 1824 (Ramos) Indian children: guardianship or conservatorship proceedings.



Codifies certain provisions of the federal Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA) into the Probate Code and creates consistency between the Probate Code and existing state law across the Family Code and Welfare Institutions Code currently referred to as the California Indian Child Welfare Act (Cal-ICWA) by revising and recasting existing Probate Code provisions addressing guardianships involving Native American children to incorporate ICWA's

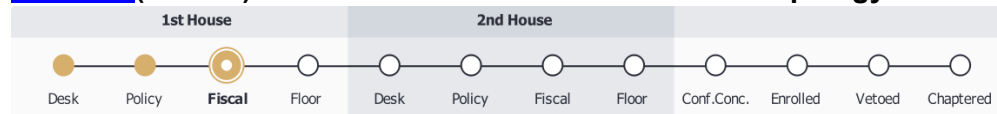
requirements and standard sand making conforming changes throughout Probate Code to align with provisions in Cal-ICWA.

AB 1881 (Ramos) California Indian Freedom Act of 2026.



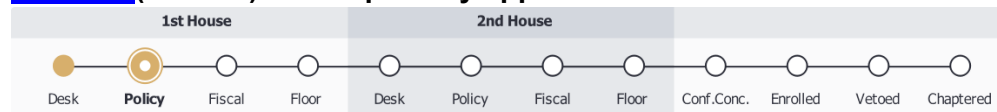
This bill, the California Indian Freedom Act of 2026, would prohibit a governmental agency from substantially burdening a California Indian or California Native American tribe’s exercise of religious beliefs or spiritual practices, including their access to and use of sacred sites and objects, and their ability to perform religious ceremonies and rites, even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability, unless the governmental agency demonstrates that application of the burden is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest and is in the least restrictive means of furthering that interest. The act would apply to all state and local government actions, including, among others, permitting decisions, land use approvals, and enforcement actions. The bill would authorize a California Indian or tribe to assert a violation of these provisions as a claim or defense in any judicial or administrative proceeding, as specified. Before any governmental agency undertakes, approves, permits, funds, or authorizes a project that may impact a sacred site or cultural landscape, the bill would require the governmental agency to engage in early, meaningful and good-faith government-to-government consultation with an affected tribe.

AB 2115 (Ramos) California Native Americans: formal apology.



Requires the State of California to recognize and accept responsibility for harms caused to California Native Americans and to issue and memorialize a formal apology. Requires the Legislature to prepare the formal apology, which shall bear the Great Seal of the State and requests that this apology be signed by the Speaker of the Assembly, the President pro Tempore of the Senate, the Governor, and the Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, and it requires the Secretary of State to submit a final copy of this apology to the State Archives, where it shall be available to the public for viewing in perpetuity.

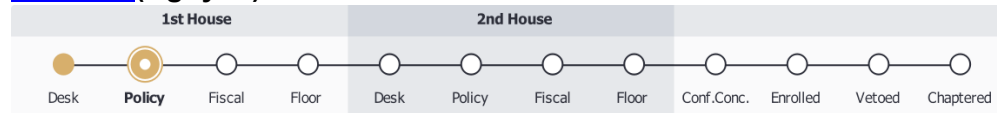
AB 2478 (Schultz) Kinship family approval.



Summary: Current law generally provides for the placement of foster youth in various Creates a streamlined Kinship Family Approval (KFA) pathway to approve a relative, nonrelative extended family member (NREFMs), or extended family member of an Indian child as an approved placement pursuant to a process to be developed by the California Department of Social Services by January 1, 2028. Amends numerous existing code sections to include kinship families along with other foster care placement options. Requires that those who may be eligible for the KFA process be informed about that process as well as the resource family approval process. Expands the authority of the court to authorize temporary placement while approval and exemption processes are pending that are currently in place for relatives to

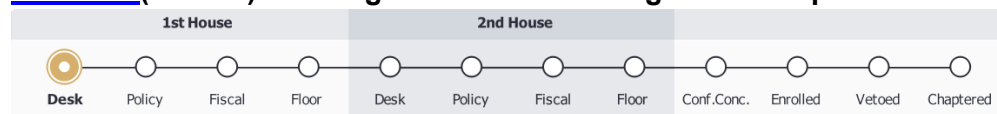
include NREFMs, extended family members, and an extended family member of an Indian child and expands the criminal records exemption process to include these placements.

AB 2507 (Nguyen) Office of Tribal Affairs.



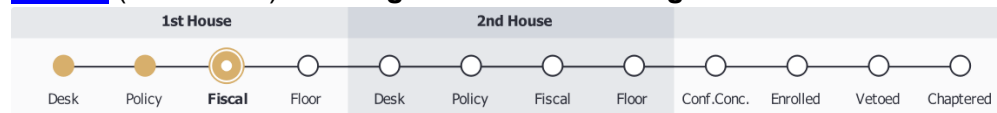
This bill would establish within the Office of the Governor, the Office of Tribal Affairs (office), which is headed by the Secretary of Tribal Affairs who is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor. The bill would require each state agency that engages, or has programs, services, or responsibilities affecting tribal governments to, among other things, designate a tribal liaison. The bill would require the office to be advised by a Tribal Advisory Committee and would require the committee to, among other things, provide recommendations and tribal perspectives to assist the office in strengthening government-to-government engagement and improving the design, access, and implementation of state programs and services affecting tribal governments.

ACR 163 (Ramos) Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Awareness Month.



Would designate the month of May 2026 as California’s Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Awareness Month.

SB 891 (Cervantes) Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Justice Program.



Establishes the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Justice Program (MMIPJP) within and under the discretion of the DOJ. Provides that the program has all the following responsibilities: (1) facilitate collaboration and act as a liaison between tribal victims’ families, tribal governments, and federal, tribal, state, and out-of-state law enforcement agencies, where appropriate, regarding active and inactive cases involving missing and murdered indigenous persons in California, including cases involving human trafficking; (2) provide technical assistance to law enforcement agencies already engaged in investigating cases involving missing and murdered indigenous persons in California, including cases of human trafficking; and (3) publish data on the number of, and facts about, cases involving missing and murdered indigenous persons in California, where appropriate. Require the DOJ to submit an annual report, until January 1, 2029, to the Legislature on its activities including an analysis of all appropriate data, and any recommendations to assist or improve upon necessary collaboration and coordination between local, state, and tribal governments in addressing missing and murdered indigenous persons in California.