

Humboldt County and State of California Sued for Discriminatory Treatment of Tribal Foster Youth

News

March 16, 2023

With pro bono support from Jenner & Block, the California Tribal Families Coalition (CTFC) and Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria filed a lawsuit against Humboldt County and the State of California for discriminatory treatment of tribal foster youth.

The litigation targets Humboldt County's practice of improperly denying resources to tribal youth after they leave the foster care system at age 18. Tribal youth are the only group of foster youth being denied these resources by the County.

California and other states created programs to provide ongoing resources to assist foster youth in their transition to independent living, which have shown to improve outcomes for this vulnerable population.

Humboldt County provides these extended resources to foster youth from other groups but has enacted a specific policy that improperly denies tribal youth access to these resources. The County's action appeared to be based on an erroneous directive from the State of California, which was subsequently rescinded after the state determined it was discriminatory. However, the state has not taken action to require Humboldt County to follow the law and end this discriminatory practice.

This lawsuit seeks to invalidate County policies that are improperly denying vulnerable tribal youth access to resources made available to others in the foster care system. The complaint was filed in Humboldt County Superior Court in Eureka, CA.

The Jenner & Block team includes Associates Julia Hirata, Benjamin Malings, Benjamin Seelig, and Allison Tjemsland; Special Counsel Krystalyn Kinsel; Partners Kate Spelman, Todd C. Toral, and Keith Harper; former Associate Mei Liu and Junior Paralegal Christal Oropeza.

Attachments

Related Attorneys

Kate T. Spelman

Partner
kspelman@jenner.com
+1 213 239 2246

Todd C. Toral

Partner
ttoral@jenner.com
+1 213 239 2294

Amb. Keith M. Harper

Partner
kharper@jenner.com
+1 202 639 6045

Allison M. Tjemsland

Partner
atjemsland@jenner.com
+1 202 639 6028

Krystalyn Kinsel

Special Counsel
kkinssel@jenner.com
+1 202 639 6062

Benjamin C. Seelig

Associate
bseelig@jenner.com
+1 312 840 7230

Related Capabilities

Native American Law

Related Locations

Los Angeles

© 2026 Jenner & Block LLP. Attorney Advertising. Jenner & Block LLP is an Illinois Limited Liability Partnership including professional corporations. This publication, presentation, or event is not intended to provide legal advice but to provide information on legal matters and/or firm news of interest to our clients and colleagues. Readers or attendees should seek specific legal advice before taking any action with respect to matters mentioned in this publication or at this event. The attorney responsible for this communication is Brent E. Kidwell, Jenner & Block LLP, 353 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60654-3456. Prior results do not guarantee a similar outcome. Jenner & Block London LLP, an affiliate of Jenner & Block LLP, is a limited liability partnership established under the laws of the State of Delaware, USA and is authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority with SRA number 615729. Information regarding the data we collect and the rights you have over your data can be found in our Privacy Notice. For further inquiries, please contact dataprotection@jenner.com.

Stay Informed

