



Tony Evers

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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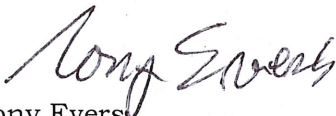
To the Honorable Members of the Assembly:

I am vetoing Assembly Bill 903 in its entirety.

This bill would make two changes to the “Safe Haven” law, under which parents may anonymously relinquish custody of a child 30 days old or younger. This bill would initially apply to a child whose custody is relinquished on the effective date of the bill, which would be the first day of the sixth month beginning after publication. This bill intersects with the federal and state Indian Child Welfare Acts, which, for children identified as having one or more Native American parents, require notification of the Tribe, and preferences for placement with the child’s extended family, in the Tribe, or other Native American home.

I am vetoing this bill in its entirety because I object to the short timeline for termination of parental rights of kids who have been relinquished under Wisconsin’s Safe Haven law. Terminating parental rights is a serious legal action, and doing so too quickly can carry ramifications, as well as lifelong impacts, such as failing to ascertain whether a child has a parent who is Indigenous. Without sufficient time to gather this important information, Native American kids may be inadvertently separated from their extended families or Tribes, and this may ultimately prevent kids from knowing or being identified as Indigenous, which is an untenable result.

Respectfully submitted,


Tony Evers
Governor