

House Judiciary Committee Statement
The Honorable Deb Haaland
Members' Day Hearing
September 20, 2019

Chairman Nadler, Ranking Member Collins, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee, thank you for this opportunity to share some key priorities before this body that impact the lives of New Mexicans.

I proudly hail from a majority minority state, where nearly half the population is Hispanic. That's why I urge this committee to consider H.R. 2729, the PROTECT Immigration Act of 2019. This bill discontinues the 287(g) program that authorizes State and local law enforcement to collaborate with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in investigating, apprehending and detaining undocumented people. This bill clarifies that immigration enforcement is solely a function of the Federal Government.

Collaboration between ICE and State and Local Law Enforcement can destroy trust among an entire community. Across the nation, people don't call law enforcement in emergency situations or seek justice in court for fear of being deported or detained. This is unacceptable and doesn't serve or protect our communities.

These are not violent criminals. They are people living in abusive situations. They are individuals who make simple mistakes, like the undocumented woman living in my district since 2000 who went to court for a speeding ticket. Instead of being able to present her case, she was arrested by ICE. Our communities should know they can safely call the police, seek justice as a victim, or pay a speeding ticket. Sowing fear and distrust between communities and law enforcement makes everyone less safe, and that is what happens when we ask local law enforcement to do ICE's job. We cannot place the safety of our communities at risk due to distrust in law enforcement and our justice system.

As Co-Chair of the Native American Caucus and one of the first Native American women elected to Congress, one of my top priorities is addressing the epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous women. I want to thank this committee for supporting my two amendments to VAWA to expand the Tribal Access Program database and to provide victim advocate services to urban Indians.

While this was an important step, homicide continues to be the leading cause of death for Native Women between ages 10 and 24. Tragically, Native women experience murder rates 10 times that of the national average. That's why I urge you to act on the Not Invisible Act, which is the first bill in history to be introduced by all 4 Congressional members of federally recognized tribes. This bill will establish an advisory committee to the Departments of Justice and Interior on violent crime comprised of law enforcement, tribal leaders, federal partners, service providers, and survivors. It would also create best practices for combatting the epidemic of missing persons, murder, and trafficking of Native Americans and Alaska Natives, and would create a position for an expert within the Bureau of Indian Affairs charged with improving coordination of violent crime prevention efforts across federal agencies.

Congress must also address the barriers that stand in the way of efficient law enforcement agency data sharing and officer recruitment and retention, both of which are imperative to address the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women. I urge this committee to move my BADGES Act, which will

increase the effectiveness of federal missing persons resources and give Tribes and States funding to coordinate response efforts so more of us don't vanish.

These bills are important steps to moving towards combatting the overwhelming amount of domestic violence and gender-based crimes in Indian Country and move Tribes closer towards true self-governance.

Thank you for hearing me and I look forward to working with you to people from all communities feel safe and free from violence.