



## Congress of the United States House of Representatives

VICE-CHAIR  
NUCLEAR CLEANUP CAUCUS

June 6, 2019

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler  
Chairman  
House Committee on the Judiciary  
2141 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Doug Collins  
Ranking Member  
House Committee of the Judiciary  
2141 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva  
Chairman  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Nadler and Grijalva and Ranking Members Collins and Bishop,

The crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) gained national attention after Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind, a 22-year old member of the Spirit Lake Tribe who was pregnant with her first child, was murdered in August 2017. Savanna's story is heartbreaking; and, tragically, her murder is not an isolated incident.

Native American and Alaska Native women face a murder rate ten times higher than the national average, with 84% experiencing some form of violence in their lifetime. Despite this disturbing and persisting trend, there is still no reliable way of knowing how many Native Women go missing each year because of outdated databases and a lack of coordination between law enforcement agencies. This is unacceptable.

To assist in curbing this epidemic affecting Native Women, I introduced *Savanna's Act* with my colleagues Representatives Norma Torres (D-CA) and Deb Haaland (D-OK), to finally empower law enforcement agencies and tribes to effectively address this devastating issue that impacts communities in Central Washington and across the country.

As your committees continue to discuss policies to address the MMIW crisis and consider holding legislative hearings on *Savanna's Act*, I must respectfully stress the importance of hearing directly from communities on the ground who have been harmed by this epidemic.

Indigenous Women in Washington have been particularly impacted by this crisis, with 71 MMIW open cases statewide, 31 of which occurring on or around the Yakama Nation Reservation. This data is only available due to the diligent reporting of the *Yakima-Herald Republic*, which has created an online hub

that lists open cases involving missing and murdered Yakama Nation women, provides resources for the community to report a disappearance, and links to additional stories highlighting the community response to the crisis. It is with these statistics and community efforts in mind that I invite you to hold a field hearing in Central Washington on the MMIW crisis. Hosting a field hearing in Central Washington—particularly on the Yakama Nation Reservation—would be a meaningful opportunity to gather a diverse community of Tribal and law enforcement stakeholders to share their experiences on the front lines of the MMIW crisis and how legislative proposals, like *Savanna's Act*, would help communities serve justice for Native Women and their families.

Thank you for your consideration and for your strong leadership and advocacy for our nation's Native communities. I look forward to welcoming you to Central Washington and to addressing this crisis that affects communities across our country.

Sincerely,



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Ruben Gallego, Chairman, House Natural Resources Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States  
The Honorable Paul Cook, Ranking Member, House Natural Resources Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States