



Missing and Murdered Native Americans

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June 27, 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:

I am writing as an advocate for families of the missing and murdered and as a family member who has lost my mother and my cousin to share our collective support of Savannah's Act, H. R. 2733. Please accept the invitation to conduct a field hearing on the proposed legislation. The crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) is gaining momentum across the nation with tragic stories like Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind, who was pregnant with her first child when she was murdered in August 2017. Savanna's story is heartbreaking; and, tragically, there are thousands of these stories across the country. There are over 40 missing or murdered women on the Yakama reservation, each with its share of horrific details and failed investigations.

Native American's are the only race in our country where no thorough data is collected, thus there is no reliable way of knowing how many Native Women go missing. Outdated databases and a lack of coordination between law enforcement agencies are creating a literal joke of "Who's on First" where no one wants to take jurisdiction. This bad joke played out this winter in the death of 14 year old Henny Scott. The family fought to get law enforcement to take a missing report or help find Henny wasting critical time. Henny was found dead by a volunteer search party on the Norther Cheyenne reservation in December 2018. This could have been prevented and is unacceptable, and yet, Henny's is just one story.

The Urban Indian Health Institute reports that Washington State ranks second in the nation for missing and murdered indigenous women. Seattle holds sadly is number one and Tacoma is number two. I must respectfully and urgently request your committees to hear directly from the communities hit the hardest as you discuss policies that will impact them the most.

Thank you for your consideration and for your strong leadership and advocacy for our nation's Native communities. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Carolyn DeFord, Founder

Missing and Murdered Native Americans
MMIW Family Member, Daughter of Leona Kinsey