

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. HJ0003

Supporting federal missing and murdered persons efforts.

Sponsored by: Representative(s) Clifford, Burlingame, Connolly, Dayton, Duncan, Kinner, Salazar, Sweeney and Yin and Senator(s) Anselmi-Dalton, Case, Ellis, Nethercott and Schuler

A JOINT RESOLUTION

for

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION requesting Congress to enact legislation
2 expanding and improving efforts to coordinate reporting,
3 investigation and pursuit of justice for missing and murdered
4 Native Americans and other persons.

5

6 WHEREAS, in some tribal communities, Native Americans are
7 murdered at more than ten (10) times the national average;
8 and

9

10 WHEREAS, Native American and Alaska Native women and girls
11 are at least two (2) times more likely to experience rape or
12 sexual assault and two and one-half (2½) times more likely to
13 experience violent crimes compared to women and girls of all

1 other races, and those factors often are tied to cases
2 involving a disappearance or murder; and

3

4 WHEREAS, the National Crime Information Center reported five
5 thousand seven hundred twelve (5,712) cases of missing Native
6 American and Alaska Native women and girls in 2016, yet the
7 United States Department of Justice's federal missing persons
8 database only logged one hundred sixteen (116) cases; and

9

10 WHEREAS, Wyoming reported to the National Crime Information
11 Center one hundred seven (107) missing Native Americans in
12 2018 and ninety-three (93) missing Native Americans through
13 the end of July 2019, and it is likely that many cases go
14 unreported; and

15

16 WHEREAS, populations that experience chronic unemployment,
17 homelessness, substance abuse, severe poverty and high rates
18 of sexual violence and other crimes including Native American
19 and Alaska Native communities are at a higher risk of human
20 trafficking; and

21

22 WHEREAS, violence against children and crimes associated with
23 dating violence and domestic violence has immediate and long

1 term effects, including increased rates of altered
2 neurological development, poor physical and mental health,
3 poor school performance and substance abuse. Exposure to
4 this violence increases the instances of trauma in tribal
5 communities, which affects health outcomes, reduces
6 educational attainment, hinders economic growth and
7 undermines public safety; and

8

9 WHEREAS, investigation into cases of missing and murdered
10 Native Americans and domestic violence calls, which are
11 amongst the most dangerous calls that law enforcement
12 receives, is made difficult for tribal law enforcement
13 agencies due to a lack of necessary training, equipment or
14 funding, complicated jurisdictional structures, a lack of
15 interagency cooperation and a host of inadequate laws; and

16

17 WHEREAS, no federal agency has comprehensive data on how many
18 Native Americans are murdered or missing; and

19

20 WHEREAS, the Urban Indian Health Institute reported that the
21 challenges and barriers in accessing data on these issues
22 from law enforcement severely impede the ability of

1 communities, tribal nations and policymakers to make informed
2 decisions on how best to address this violence; and

3

4 WHEREAS, Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind, for whom federal
5 legislation is named, was a member of the Spirit Lake Tribe
6 and was murdered when she was eight (8) months pregnant; and

7

8 WHEREAS, Savanna's Act (2019 S. 227/H.R. 2733) will improve
9 tribal access to federal crime information databases on
10 missing persons and cooperation among tribal, federal, state,
11 and local law enforcement, and will mandate the United States
12 Attorney General to consult with tribes and submit a report
13 to Congress on how to resolve the barriers tribes face and to
14 review, revise and develop law enforcement and justice
15 protocols appropriate to address missing and murdered Native
16 Americans; and

17

18 WHEREAS, the Not Invisible Act (2019 S. 982/H.R. 2438) will
19 establish an advisory committee on violent crime composed of
20 law enforcement, tribal leaders, federal partners, service
21 providers and survivors to recommend actions to the
22 Department of Interior and Department of Justice. The bill
23 will also establish best practices for law enforcement on

1 combatting the epidemic of missing persons, murder and
2 trafficking of Native Americans and Alaska Natives, and
3 coordinate prevention efforts, grants and programs across
4 offices within the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Department
5 of Justice and other agencies of the federal government
6 related to the murder of, trafficking of, and missing Native
7 Americans and Alaska Natives; and

8

9 WHEREAS, the Bridging Agency Data Gaps and Ensuring Safety
10 (BADGES) for Native Communities Act (2019 S. 1853/H.R. 4289)
11 will bridge agency data gaps by requiring federal law
12 enforcement databases to report on cases of missing or
13 murdered Native Americans, to coordinate with the National
14 Missing and Unidentified Persons System liaisons, to share
15 data with the tribes and to establish a background check
16 demonstration program to ensure safety for Native American
17 communities; and

18

19 WHEREAS, the Native Youth and Tribal Officer Protection Act
20 (2019 S. 290/H.R. 958) will build on the Violence Against
21 Women Act by allowing tribes to charge offenders for dating
22 violence, domestic violence, child violence and violence
23 committed against members of the tribal justice system and by

1 coordinating federal domestic violence training and hotline
2 resources; and

3

4 WHEREAS, the Studying the Missing and Murdered Indian Crisis
5 Act of 2019 (2019 S. 336/H.R. 2029) will direct the
6 Comptroller General of the United States to report on law
7 enforcement agencies' responses to reports of missing or
8 murdered Indians; and

9

10 WHEREAS, other proposed legislation will continue and grow
11 existing endeavors to support Native Americans and other
12 persons, including the Justice for Native Survivors of Sexual
13 Violence Act (2019 S. 288/H.R. 3977), which amends the Indian
14 Civil Rights Act of 1968 to extend the jurisdiction of tribal
15 courts to cover crimes involving sexual violence; the
16 Securing Urgent Resources Vital to Indian Victim Empowerment
17 (SURVIVE) Act (2019 S. 211/H.R. 1351), which amends the
18 Victims of Crime Act of 1984 and the Native American Child
19 Protection Act (H.R. 4957), which amends the Indian Child
20 Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act and the
21 Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019 (S.
22 2843/H.R. 1585), which reauthorizes the Violence Against
23 Women Act of 1994.

1

2 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE
3 LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WYOMING:

4

5 **Section 1.** That the Wyoming Legislature requests that
6 Congress swiftly enact legislation providing for justice for
7 missing and murdered Native Americans and other persons,
8 including enacting Savanna's Act, the Not Invisible Act, the
9 BADGES for Native Communities Act, the Native Youth and Tribal
10 Officer Protection Act, the Studying the Missing and Murdered
11 Indian Crisis Act of 2019 and other legislation that amends
12 and reauthorizes existing protections.

13

14 **Section 2.** That the Secretary of State of Wyoming
15 transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the
16 United States, to the President of the Senate and the Speaker
17 of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress
18 and to the Wyoming Congressional Delegation.

19

20

(END)