

Savanna's Act

Addressing the Crisis of Missing and Murdered Indian Women

Congresswoman Norma J. Torres, Congressman Dan Newhouse, and Congresswoman Deb Haaland

Endorsed by: National Congress of American Indians, National Indigenous Women's Resource Center, Seattle Indian Health Board, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Washington, Alaska Native Women's Resource Center, Western Native Voice, Friends Committee on National Legislation, All Pueblo Council of Governors (representing 20 Pueblos), Intertribal Association of Arizona (representing 21 Tribal Nations), United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund (representing 27 Tribal Nations), Muckleshoot Tribe of Washington, The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and Navajo Nation.

Savanna's Act is named in honor of Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind, a 22-year old pregnant member of the Spirit Lake Tribe who was tragically murdered in August 2017. Native American women face a murder rate ten times higher than the national average, with eighty-four percent experiencing some form of violence in their lifetime. There is still no reliable way of knowing how many Native women go missing each year because the databases that hold statistics of these cases are outdated, and because of a lack of coordination between law enforcement agencies. The legislation addresses the disturbing increase in murdered and missing Native American women by creating new guidelines for responding to such cases and by incentivizing their implementation.

Section 1: Short Title

Section 2: Findings and Purposes

Section 3: Improving Tribal Access to Databases

- Requires the Attorney General provide training to law enforcement agencies regarding how to record the Tribal enrollment information or affiliation of victims in Federal databases.
- Adds enhancing the safety of Indian women and access to databases to the issues covered in annual Department of Justice (DOJ) consultations with tribes.
- Requires DOJ to conduct outreach to Indian Tribes and the public regarding use of the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System.

Section 4: Guidelines for Responding to Cases of Missing and Murdered Indians

- Requires the Attorney General to direct United States Attorneys to develop, in consultation with Indian tribes, guidelines to respond to cases of murdered and missing Indians.
- Requires the Attorney General to publicly list the law enforcement agencies that have incorporated the guidelines and collect the implemented guidelines as a resource for best practices that can be used by other law enforcement agencies.

Section 5: Implementation and Incentives

- Allows two DOJ grant programs to be used to develop, strengthen, and implement protocols and trainings for law enforcement regarding cases of missing and murdered Indians as well as to assist with data collection on missing and murdered Indians; and
- Increases, by five percent and for no more than two years, the amount of the above grant programs that are made available to law enforcement agencies that the attorney general has found to have incorporated the guidelines; and
- Increases, by no more than five percent over the previous year, the amount of the above grant programs that are made available to law enforcement agencies that the attorney general has found to have complied with the data reporting as specified below.

Section 6: Additional Annual Reporting Requirements

- Requires the Attorney General to collect and make public annual data on missing Indians in the United States.
- Requires the Attorney General to publicly list the law enforcement agencies that have provided such data.

Section 7: Definitions