



October 28, 2019

Governor Mike Dunleavy  
Alaska State Capitol, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
PO Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Governor Dunleavy,

We are reaching out about an important issue that has been ignored for far too long that needs your strong leadership and partnership as part of a collective approach to protect our Alaska Native women and girls.

Alaska continues to face some of the highest rates of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) in the Nation. In a recent study by the Urban Indian Health Institute, Alaska ranks fourth in the Nation for the highest number of cases of MMIWG, and Anchorage listed as the third highest number of MMIWG cases across the 71 cities included in the study.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that murder is the third-leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native women and that rates of violence on reservations and rural areas can be up to ten times higher than the national average.

The State and law enforcement on all levels continually fail to protect our Indigenous women. Tragedies continue to be inflicted on our people, including most recently the horrific murders of Kathleen Henry and Veronica Abouchuk, two beautiful souls who were taken from us too soon and in a manner no individual should have to endure. Enough is enough. More work must be done to protect Indigenous women and girls.

One of our main goals is to advocate for the wellness and protection of Alaska Native peoples. We need partners across the state from the Governor's office to troopers and police, to non-profits, tribal governments and communities to come together and be the voice for those who are being silenced through these acts of violence. We are reaching out to seek your assistance and leadership in helping us to address these tragedies, to stand up for Alaska Native women and children, and to send a clear message that this will not be the norm anymore.

We urge your support to include funding in the state operating budget to investigate cases of MMIWG and to continue this funding as long as it is needed. This also includes the Cold Case Investigation Unit, as we need to help bring closure to families of the victims. We need the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Law to have the resources and the ability to work together to address this crisis – the lack of data and the need for special investigations is dire.

Furthermore, no known research outside the UIHI study, has been done on rates of such violence among American Indian and Alaska Native women living in urban areas despite the fact that approximately 71% of American Indian and Alaska Natives live in urban areas. The National Crime Information Center reports that, in 2016, there were 5,712 reports of missing American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls, though the US Department of Justice's federal missing persons database (NamUs) only logged 116 cases. We know that the numbers reported in the study and by the lack of information provided, that we are only scratching the surface of truly understanding the severity of this problem.

We also request transparency and accountability to following investigative processes, protocols, and reporting related to documenting missing and murdered Alaskans, including ethnicity and race. We request cooperation from the Alaska Department of Public Safety, State Troopers, and Alaska Bureau of Investigation



with tribal governments, non-profits, and local organizations. It is imperative that we have a collective effort to address safety of Alaskans.

We appreciate your consideration and hope that we can work together to solve this crisis. Please do not hesitate to contact us, we stand ready and able to help in any way possible.

Gunalchéesh/Háw'aa/Quyana/Mahsi'/Baassee'/Maasee'/Dogedinh/Thank you,

*Kendra Kloster*

Kendra Kloster  
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Native Peoples Action