

December 7, 2020

Senator Lyman Hoffman
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Hoffman,

We are reaching out about an important issue that has been a concern for far too long that needs your leadership and partnership to protect our Alaska Native women, girls and two-spirit relatives.

There is a nationwide crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit relatives (MMIWG2S). 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. We are experiencing too many tragedies across our state and continue to see insufficient action by our state and law enforcement to adequately address this crisis (i.e. Florence Okpealuk, Nome and Debra Nictune, Fairbanks.)

In a study by the Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI), Alaska as a state ranks fourth in the nation for the highest number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls cases with Anchorage listed as having the third highest number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in cities across the US. This is disturbing and heart breaking on so many levels. You have the power to change, to make a difference and to protect the lives of our Alaska Native women and girls, and all Alaskans.

One of the main goals of our organizations is to advocate for the wellness and protection of Alaska Native peoples. We need partners across the state from the Legislature and Governor, to troopers and police, to non-profits, Tribes, 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 to help us address the preventable violence happening in our state, to stand up for Alaska Native women and children, and to send a clear message that Alaska is a safe place for everyone.

We are asking you to introduce legislation in the upcoming legislation session that will take numerous actions including:

- Require the Department of Public Safety to write best practices for how to investigate those crimes;
- Establish at least two positions to work on cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit relatives;

- Require the Department of Public Safety to conduct a study to determine how to increase state criminal justice protective and investigative resources for reporting and identifying missing and murdered Indigenous women in the state;
- Require training for all public safety officials – troopers, local police, village public safety officers - in government relations with Tribes, racial equity and culture;
- Consultation and collaboration with federally recognized Tribes must be conducted in respect for government-to-government relations;
- Establish a grant program for Tribes that allows for direct funding to communities to address MMIWG2S for self-determined local needs;
- Requirements for interagency cooperation to establish state protocols for missing persons;
- Audits and reporting on law enforcement doing thorough investigations;
- Review of case management by law enforcement;
- Review of prosecution/judicial outcomes of homicides.

We have attached additional documents including a draft bill and more information about the actions listed above.

We know that this will take a team-centered approach with everyone at the table – we stand ready to assist in any way possible to help see this legislation through to final passage.

We would also like to formally request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss this proposal. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Gunalchéesh/Háw’aa/Quyana/Mahsi’/Baasee’/Maasee’/Dogedinh/Thank you,

Kendra Kloster
Executive Director
Native Peoples Action



Charlene Aqpik Apok
Executive Director
Data for Indigenous
Justice



**DATA FOR
INDIGENOUS
JUSTICE**

Enei Begaye
Executive Director
Native Movement



Tami Jerue
Executive Director
Alaska Native Women’s
Resource Center

