
HOUSE BILL 1713

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Representatives Mosbrucker, Gregerson, Caldier, Dye, Barkis, Corry, Sells, Lekanoff, Schmick, Orwall, Chandler, Hudgins, Ryu, Frame, Jinkins, Ortiz-Self, Peterson, Stanford, Van Werven, Tarleton, Valdez, Macri, Pollet, and Leavitt

Read first time 01/29/19. Referred to Committee on Public Safety.

1 AN ACT Relating to improving law enforcement response to missing
2 and murdered Native American women; creating new sections; providing
3 expiration dates; and declaring an emergency.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that Native American
6 women experience violence at much higher rates than other
7 populations. A recent federal study reported that Native American
8 women are murdered at rates greater than ten times the national
9 average. Many of these crimes, however, are often unsolved or even
10 unreported because there are also very high rates of disappearance
11 for Native American women.

12 The legislature further finds that although violence against
13 Native American women has been a neglected issue in society, there is
14 a growing awareness of this crisis, as well as a recognition that the
15 criminal justice system needs to better serve and protect Native
16 American women. The legislature intends to find ways to connect
17 state, tribal, and federal resources to create partnerships to find
18 ways to solve this crisis facing Native American women in our state,
19 while being mindful to include voices from both tribal and urban
20 communities.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) Two missing and murdered Native
2 American women liaison positions are established in the Washington
3 state patrol. One liaison must reside in western Washington, and one
4 liaison must reside in eastern Washington. The liaisons shall work to
5 build relationships to increase trust between governmental
6 organizations and native communities. The liaisons shall facilitate
7 communications between:

8 (a) Indian tribes and tribal organizations and communities;

9 (b) Urban Indian organizations and communities;

10 (c) Tribal liaisons in other state agencies;

11 (d) Law enforcement agencies at the federal, state, local, and
12 tribal level; and

13 (e) Nongovernmental entities that provide services to Native
14 American women.

15 (2) The salary for the liaison positions is fixed by the
16 Washington state patrol.

17 (3) To be eligible for hire as a liaison, an applicant must have
18 significant experience living in tribal or urban Native American
19 communities.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1)(a) A legislative task force on missing
21 and murdered Native American women is established to monitor and
22 improve law enforcement response to missing persons reports for
23 Native American women, with members as provided in this subsection.

24 (i) The caucus leaders from the senate shall appoint one member
25 from each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

26 (ii) The caucus leaders from the house of representatives shall
27 appoint one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house
28 of representatives.

29 (iii) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of
30 representatives shall jointly appoint:

31 (A) Two members representing families of missing and murdered
32 Native American women, one from western Washington and one from
33 eastern Washington;

34 (B) One member representing each of the following:

35 (I) The Washington state patrol;

36 (II) The Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs;

37 (III) The federal bureau of investigation;

38 (IV) The bureau of Indian affairs;

39 (V) The governor's office of Indian affairs;

1 (VI) The Seattle police department;

2 (VII) The Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians;

3 (VIII) A domestic violence advocacy group; and

4 (IX) Urban Indian organizations; and

5 (C) Two additional members if requested by the cochairs.

6 (b) The task force shall choose two cochairs from among its
7 legislative membership. The legislative membership shall convene the
8 initial meeting of the task force.

9 (2) The duties of the task force include, but are not limited to:

10 (a) Developing a best practices protocol for law enforcement
11 response to missing persons reports for Native American women, as
12 described in section 4 of this act;

13 (b) Developing a tool kit for tribal and urban Indian communities
14 to educate families about what steps they should take if a loved one
15 is missing, including how to report a person missing and what other
16 actions they should take to involve law enforcement;

17 (c) Making recommendations to ensure that state and local
18 jurisdictions are sharing information in response to missing persons
19 reports for Native American women in ways already provided under
20 state and federal law;

21 (d) Raising the public's awareness of the state and national
22 crisis of missing and murdered Native American women;

23 (e) Building relationships to increase trust between governmental
24 organizations and native organizations and communities to help
25 facilitate the response to missing persons reports for Native
26 American women; and

27 (f) Recommending ways that the state can provide support to the
28 families of missing and murdered Native American women, with special
29 consideration to the ways in which needs may differ between urban and
30 tribal communities.

31 (3) Staff support for the task force must be provided by the
32 senate committee services and the house of representatives office of
33 program research.

34 (4) Legislative members of the task force must be reimbursed for
35 travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative
36 members, except those representing an employer or organization, are
37 entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW
38 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

39 (5) The expenses of the task force must be paid jointly by the
40 senate and house of representatives. Task force expenditures are

1 subject to approval by the senate facilities and operations committee
2 and the house of representatives executive rules committee, or their
3 successor committees.

4 (6) The first meeting of the task force must occur prior to
5 October 1, 2019. The task force shall submit a preliminary report
6 regarding its initial findings and recommendations to the appropriate
7 committees of the legislature and the governor no later than December
8 1, 2019.

9 (7) The task force must meet no less than once per quarter.

10 (8) The task force shall report its findings and recommendations
11 to the appropriate committees of the legislature and the governor by
12 June 30, 2021.

13 (9) This section expires December 1, 2021.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The legislature finds that federal,
15 state, and tribal jurisdictions across the state do not have any
16 standardized response to missing persons reports for Native American
17 women. The steps taken to find a missing woman differ depending on
18 where she goes missing and to which law enforcement agency her
19 disappearance is reported. While the legislature does not want to
20 mandate that law enforcement follow a set procedure in every case,
21 the legislature finds that establishing a standard response protocol
22 for reports of missing Native American women, reflecting best
23 practices as developed by experts and stakeholders, will help law
24 enforcement locate more missing women more quickly.

25 (2) The missing and murdered Native American women task force
26 established in section 3 of this act shall develop a best practices
27 protocol for law enforcement response to missing persons reports for
28 Native American women. The protocol must include steps that law
29 enforcement should take upon receiving a missing persons report for a
30 Native American woman.

31 (3) The task force must develop a database of nonprofit or
32 nongovernmental organizations that provide aid or support in locating
33 missing Native American women.

34 (4) The best practices protocol and database described in this
35 section must be completed no later than December 1, 2019. The task
36 force shall submit a report with the protocol and the database to the
37 appropriate committees of the legislature and the governor by
38 December 1, 2019.

39 (5) This section expires January 1, 2020.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** This act is necessary for the immediate
2 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of
3 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes
4 effect immediately.

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