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**Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry  
Committee**

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**2SSB 5477**

**Brief Description:** Implementing the recommendations of the Washington state missing and murdered indigenous women and people task force.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Torres, Trudeau, Braun, Muzzall, Billig, Boehnke, Conway, Dhingra, Frame, Hasegawa, Hunt, Kauffman, Keiser, Kuderer, Liias, Lovelett, Nguyen, Pedersen, Randall, Saldaña, Salomon, Shewmake, Van De Wege, Wagoner, Warnick and Wilson, C.).

**Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill**

- Reestablishes the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People Task Force through June 30, 2025.
- Requires certain entities initiating and conducting an investigation of a reported missing person to enter the case into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System if the missing person has not been found within 30 days of the report, or at any time the investigating agency suspects criminal activity as the basis for the person being missing.

**Hearing Date:** 3/13/23

**Staff:** Corey Patton (786-7388).

**Background:**

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People Task Force.

In 2022 the state established the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People Task Force (MMIWP Task Force) in the Office of the Attorney General and directed the MMIWP

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Task Force to review the laws and policies pertaining to missing and murdered Indigenous people and develop related recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature.

#### National Missing and Unidentified Persons System.

The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System is a national information clearinghouse and resource center for missing, unidentified, and unclaimed person cases across the United States.

#### **Summary of Bill:**

#### Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People Task Force.

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People Task Force (MMIWP Task Force) is reestablished. The MMIWP Task Force must be composed of the following membership:

- one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the Senate;
- one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the House of Representatives;
- five members from federally recognized tribes in Washington;
- one member representing the Seattle Indian Health Board;
- one member representing the NATIVE Project;
- one member representing the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board;
- one member representing the American Indian Health Commission;
- two Indigenous women or family members of Indigenous women that have experienced violence;
- one member representing the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs;
- the Chief of the Washington State Patrol, or the Chief's representative;
- one member representing the Office of the Attorney General (AGO);
- one member representing the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs;
- one member representing the Washington State Association of Counties;
- one member representing the Washington State Association of Cities;
- one member representing the Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys; and
- one member representing the Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

The legislative members of the MMIWP Task Force must convene an initial meeting before the end of 2023, and a minimum of two subsequent meetings and one summit annually. The membership of the MMIWP Task Force must select co-chairs, including one legislative and one non-legislative member. The MMIWP Task Force must review the laws and policies relating to missing and murdered American Indian and Alaska Native people, and develop recommendations for the following purposes:

- assessing systemic causes behind violence including patterns and underlying historical, social and economic, institutional, and cultural factors which may contribute to disproportionately high levels of violence that occur against American Indian and Alaska Native people and recommending changes to address these systemic causes;
- identifying ways to improve cross-border coordination between law enforcement and federally recognized tribes that share a border with Washington;
- assessing and recommending improvements to data tracking and reporting practices

- relating to violence against American Indian and Alaska Native people in Washington;
- making recommendations and best practices for improving specific forms of data collection and reporting, data sharing, interjurisdictional collaboration and coordination, and communication and transparency;
- reviewing prosecutorial trends and practices relating to crimes of violence against American Indian and Alaska Native people in Washington, identifying disparities, and recommending changes to address such disparities;
- identifying barriers to providing more state resources in tracking and addressing violence against American Indian and Alaska Native people and reducing the incidences of violence;
- assessing and identifying state resources to support programs and services for survivors, impacted family members, and tribal and urban Indian service providers working with American Indian and Alaska Native people who have experienced violence and identifying needs of survivors, impacted family members, and tribal and urban Indian service providers that are not currently being met;
- identifying and making recommendations for increasing state resources for trainings on culturally attuned best practices for working with American Indian and Alaska Native communities for tribal, local, and state law enforcement personnel in Washington; and
- supporting efforts led by American Indian and Alaska Native people to address this crisis, with the recognition that those personally impacted are already doing critical work to address the impacts of the missing and murdered Indigenous women and people crisis in communities and that community-led work must be centered in order to identify and fully address the scope of the issue.

The MMIWP Task Force must, with the assistance of the AGO, consult with federally recognized tribes in Washington and bordering states, and engage with urban Indian organizations to submit reports to the Governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2023, and June 1, 2025. The MMIWP Task Force and the AGO must conduct eight site visits in different locations across Washington in collaboration with tribes and Native-led organizations. The AGO must administer and provide staff support to the MMIWP Task Force, organize the MMIWP Task Force's summits, oversee the development of the MMIWP Task Force's reports, and coordinate with the MMIWP Task Force to create and update a missing and murdered Indigenous women and people resource with specific information. The MMIWP Task Force expires on June 30, 2025.

#### National Missing and Unidentified Persons System.

When a reported missing person has not been found within 30 days of the report, or at any time the investigating agency suspects criminal activity to be the basis of the person being missing, the sheriff, chief of police, county coroner or county medical examiner, or other law enforcement authority initiating and conducting the investigation for the missing person is required to enter the case into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on June 1, 2023.