



Midwestern Legislative Conference

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

76th Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Legislative Conference of The Council of State Governments

July 10 – 13, 2022

Resolution on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives

- WHEREAS,** missing and murdered Indigenous relatives (MMIR) refers to a human rights crisis that disproportionately impacts Indigenous and Aboriginal people of North America who are victims of violence, disappear without appropriate investigation, and murdered across all age and gender groups; and
- WHEREAS,** according to the Violent Death Reporting System, between 2015 and 2019, the Alaska Native/American Indian (AN/AI) population (19 percent of Alaska’s overall population) makes up 10 percent of the homicide victims and 5 percent of law enforcement intervention death victims; and
- WHEREAS,** according to the 2021 Canada Federal Pathway Annual Progress Report, more than six in ten (63%) Canadian Indigenous women have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime (compared to 45% of non-Indigenous women). The homicide rate is over five times higher for Indigenous women as compared to non-Indigenous women. Further, it has been found that Indigenous women and girls are 12 times more likely to be missing or murdered than non-Indigenous women, although the exact number is unknown as thousands of these deaths or disappearances have been unreported or mis-reported; and
- WHEREAS,** the Urban Indian Health Institute also reported 506 cases across 71 urban cities, not including rural data. Of those cases, 128 were classified as “missing,” 280 as “murdered” and 98 had “unknown statuses.” Anchorage, Alaska was identified as one of the highest-reported MMIW cities during the research; and
- WHEREAS,** due to inconsistent tracking and monitoring, these numbers are racially misclassified, underreported, and/or not tracked at all, leading to disparities in data, which impacts how we are served by law enforcement. The investigation into these missing and murdered individuals requires a high degree of commitment and cooperation among tribal, state and federal law enforcement that does not adequately exist currently; and
- WHEREAS,** delayed investigation into deaths has led to many murders being mislabeled, mishandled and delayed, which dishonors victims and endangers communities by leaving dangerous predators in our communities; and

- WHEREAS,** on November 26, 2019, the President of the United States issued Executive Order 13898, establishing the Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives to “enhance the operation of the criminal justice system and address the legitimate concerns of AN/AI communities regarding missing and murdered people – particularly missing and murdered indigenous women and girls” — an initiative known as Operation Lady Justice; and
- WHEREAS,** on June 2, 2021, in response to the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) and the Métis Perspectives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls that began in 2016, the Canadian Government launched a Federal Pathway to Address MMIWG; and
- WHEREAS,** there has been a significant increase in the number of missing Alaska Native persons in interior Alaska, and many of these missing persons cases have not been classified as criminal investigations, leaving the search responsibilities to the families; and
- WHEREAS,** the Indigenous Peoples recognize that domestic violence and sexual violence dehumanize women and children and are the root causes of the MMIW crisis; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** that the Midwestern Legislative Conference (MLC), through its Midwest-Canada Relations Committee, encourages the state, federal, local and tribal governments to develop an action plan that includes initiatives to:
1. Swiftly respond to cases of dead or missing Indigenous and Aboriginal people through active international criminal investigations and follow-up; and
 2. Increase international information sharing and coordinated resources and research to develop best practices for conducting searches for missing persons in rural communities and in village hubs, as well as developing standards on collection, reporting and analysis of data on unidentified human remains and guidelines stating all appropriate information related to MMIR be entered in a timely manner into ALL applicable international databases; and
 3. Form an international Missing Persons Task Force to provide international awareness and further the mission of protecting Indigenous and Aboriginal persons at risk of victimization, as well as to amplify search efforts, communications, awareness and resources for the healing of afflicted individuals and communities; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** that the MLC will follow progress on these initiatives and report back to the Midwest-Canada Relations Committee; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** that this resolution be submitted to appropriate state, federal and provincial officials.

Adopted this 13th day of July, 2022 at the 76th MLC Annual Meeting in Wichita, Kansas