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State-Tribal Relations Committee

65th Montana Legislature

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Senator John Hoeven, Chair
US Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
838 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

March 30, 2018

Dear Chairman Hoeven,

I write on behalf of the Montana Legislature's State-Tribal Relations Committee to express our support of S. 1870, the SURVIVE Act, and S. 1942, Savannah's Act.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, American Indians experience violence at a rate that is more than twice the national average. As our committee studies the subjects of human trafficking, missing persons, and violence against women in Indian Country, we support S. 1870 and its dedication of 5% of the Crime Victims Fund for the next 10 years to support tribal programs that serve crime victims, including with medical care, counseling, and legal services.

We also support S. 1942, sponsored by Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, which provides critical directives to the U.S. Attorney General, including:

- to increase collection of data related to missing and murdered Indian women, to improve the sharing of that data across all jurisdictions, and to improve tribal access to federal databases;
- to review existing law enforcement and justice protocols for missing and murdered Indians and to develop standardized, written protocols for the investigation of cases and the responsibilities of each federal partner;
- to improve inter-jurisdictional cooperation and law enforcement response rates and case follow-up; and
- to ensure that Indians and their families have access to victim services.

These directives are far reaching and the outcomes sorely needed. We urge you and other members of the Committee on Indian Affairs to act swiftly to send S. 1942 to the full Senate for consideration.

Thank you, Chairman Hoeven, for your sponsorship of S. 1870 and your committee's work on both bills. We ask that each be heard by the full Senate as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

Rep. Jonathan Windy Boy, Chairman
Montana State-Tribal Relations Committee

cc: Sen. John Tester
Sen. Steve Daines
Sen. Heidi Heitkamp
U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions
U.S. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke
Montana Attorney General Tim Fox

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