



AN ACT CREATING THE LOOPING IN NATIVE COMMUNITIES NETWORK GRANT PROGRAM; CREATING THE MISSING INDIGENOUS PERSONS TASK FORCE; PROVIDING A COMPETITIVE GRANT FOR A TRIBAL COLLEGE TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN THE CENTRAL LOCATION FOR COLLECTING, STORING, AND SECURING NETWORK DATA; PROVIDING GRANT FUNDS TO TRIBAL AGENCIES TO ESTABLISH ACCESS TO THE LOOPING IN NATIVE COMMUNITIES NETWORK; REQUIRING THE MISSING INDIGENOUS PERSONS TASK FORCE TO ADMINISTER THE GRANT PROGRAM; PROVIDING A TRANSFER OF FUNDS AND AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE AND A TERMINATION DATE.

WHEREAS, Montana is home to eight recognized tribes with over 55,000 enrolled members; and

WHEREAS, Native women and children experience violent crime at significantly higher rates than other American women and children, including being 10 times more likely to be murdered and 9 times more likely to be sexually assaulted; and

WHEREAS, there are more than 5,600 Native women and children in the United States who are currently listed as missing or abducted; and

WHEREAS, there is no comprehensive data collection system for reporting or tracking missing Native American women and children, creating a reporting and investigation gap that makes Native Americans even more vulnerable to violence; and

WHEREAS, 85% of the Native women and children who went missing between 1900 and 2017 were not listed in the Department of Justice's official database; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, at least 25 Native women and children went missing in Montana, and only 1 was found alive; and

WHEREAS, the likelihood of finding a missing person decreases rapidly after the first 24 hours and falls to less than 4% after 72 hours; and

WHEREAS, families of missing Native women and children often encounter layers of jurisdictional bureaucracy that delay or prevent the filing of official reports for days or weeks; and

WHEREAS, a lack of timely action by law enforcement forces families to use social media and community groups to begin looking for missing Native women and children; and

WHEREAS, Montana's U.S. Senators and Representative are leading the charge to combat this bureaucratic inaction, but are encountering resistance from the government agencies who handle tribal and federal law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, in the absence of a federal solution the Legislature of the state of Montana should take steps to identify and track Native men, women, and children who are currently missing, establish a task force to break down jurisdictional barriers, and provide Montana's native communities with the ability to file missing persons reports in a timely manner.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Missing indigenous persons task force -- membership -- duties. (1) There is a missing indigenous persons task force. The task force is allocated to the department of justice for staffing services and administrative purposes only.

(2) Task force members, including the presiding officer, must be appointed by the attorney general or a designee of the attorney general. The task force membership must include but is not limited to:

- (a) an employee of the department of justice who has expertise in the subject of missing persons;
- (b) a representative from each tribal government located on the seven Montana reservations and the Little Shell Chippewa tribe;
- (c) a member from the Montana highway patrol; and
- (d) a representative from the attorney general's office.

(3) While respecting the government-to-government relationship between the state and each tribe, the primary duties of the task force are to:

- (a) administer the looping in native communities network grant program provided for in [section 2]; and
- (b) (i) identify jurisdictional barriers between federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement and community agencies; and

(ii) work to identify strategies to improve interagency communication, cooperation, and collaboration to remove jurisdictional barriers and increase reporting and investigation of missing indigenous persons.

(4) (a) The task force members must be appointed within 60 days after [the effective date of this act]. A vacancy on the task force must be filled in the manner of the original appointment.

(b) The task force shall develop and finalize the looping in native communities network grant application and award criteria no later than October 15, 2019.

(c) The task force shall select the recipient of the looping in native communities network competitive grant under [section 2(2)] and disburse the grant funds no later than March 15, 2020.

(d) The task force must select eligible grantees and disburse funds for any grants awarded pursuant to [section 2(3)] by June 30, 2020.

(e) The task force shall convene at least one meeting with tribal and local law enforcement agencies, federally recognized tribes, and urban Indian organizations for the purposes of subsection (3)(b) and to determine the scope of the problem of missing indigenous women and children.

(f) The task force shall prepare a written report of findings and recommendations for submission to the state-tribal relations interim committee provided for in 5-5-229, no later than September 1, 2020. The report must include a recommendation to the 67th legislature as to whether the task force should continue in existence.

Section 2. Looping in native communities network grant program. (1) There is a looping in native communities network grant program. The program is established to create a network in support of efforts by Montana tribes to identify, report, and find Native American persons who are missing. The grant program is administered by the missing indigenous persons task force established in [section 1].

(2) The grant program includes a competitive grant to be awarded to one tribal college to create and administer a central administration point for the looping in native communities network. The missing indigenous persons task force shall develop the application and the criteria to award the grant to a tribal college. The criteria must include:

(a) policies and standards for technology and equipment, including data storage and security of information entered into the network;

(b) standards for data verification;

(c) job qualifications and requirements for a data specialist to administer the network;

(d) development of a system to provide automatic initial alerts pursuant to law enforcement, tribal, and community organizations when a missing indigenous person report is made, including determining which law

enforcement agencies will receive the automatic initial alert;

(e) development of a standard reporting form that includes space to provide the information specified in subsection (4) to be used by the data specialist; and

(f) administrative rights for a designee at each participating tribal agency.

(3) The grant program may include additional smaller, noncompetitive grants to be awarded to a qualifying tribal agency at each reservation that submits a complete application. The purpose of the grants awarded under this subsection is to provide matching funds for some or all of the costs required for the tribal agency to set up and maintain access to the looping in native communities network.

(4) The standard reporting form required under subsection (2)(e) must allow a data specialist to enter information about the missing indigenous person, including but not limited to the missing person's:

(a) name and any aliases or nicknames;

(b) gender, age, height, weight, and other physical descriptive characteristics;

(c) last known location and related information, including the date of last contact with the missing indigenous person and the person with whom the missing indigenous person last made contact; and

(d) photographs, including photographs obtained from an online or social media profile.

Section 3. Looping in native communities network state special revenue account. There is a looping in native communities network account within the state special revenue fund established in 17-2-102. The purpose of the account is to provide matching funds to tribal agencies to implement the looping in native communities network. The account is administered by the department of justice.

Section 4. Transfer of funds. By July 15, 2019, the state treasurer shall transfer \$25,000 from the state general fund to the looping in native communities network state special revenue account established in [section 3].

Section 5. Appropriation. There is appropriated \$25,000 from the looping in native communities network state special revenue account established in [section 3] to the missing indigenous persons task force established in [section 1] for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019, for the purposes of providing matching funds to tribal agencies to implement the looping in native communities network grant program established in [section

2]. Any funds that are unencumbered by June 30, 2021, must revert to the general fund.

Section 6. Notification to tribal governments. The secretary of state shall send a copy of [this act] to each tribal government located on the seven Montana reservations and to the Little Shell Chippewa tribe.

Section 7. Effective date. [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

Section 8. Termination. [This act] terminates June 30, 2021.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
SB 0312, originated in the Senate.

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2019.

Secretary of the Senate

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2019.

SENATE BILL NO. 312

INTRODUCED BY J. SMALL, F. THOMAS

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