



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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Nez-Lizer support bipartisan missing and murdered Indians bill

WINDOW ROCK – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer praised the bipartisan efforts of Reps. Norma J. Torres, D-Calif., Dan Newhouse, R-Wash., and Deb Haaland, Pueblo of Laguna, D-N.M. in protecting American Indian women, men, and children from violent crimes through their leadership in introducing Savanna’s Act.

The measure addresses the silent crises of missing and murdered Indian women, men, and children across Indian Country and in urban cities across the country by creating new guidelines for the investigation and prosecution of such cases, and by incentivizing their implementation.

“I want to thank Representatives Torres, Newhouse, and Haaland, for their steadfast leadership and hard work to protect American Indian women and their families from violent crimes,” President Nez said. “It is my hope that we stop the increasing rates of missing or murdered tribal members throughout Indian Country by supporting this bill.”

“Everyone deserves to feel safe in their own community, but Native American and Alaskan Native women continue to face murder rates that are 10 times higher than the national average. It’s heartbreaking cases like Savanna Greywind, Ashlynn Mike, Judith Apache, and countless Native women and their families that are left behind that drive us to work for solutions to the silent crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women. This long-standing epidemic will take time, resources, and dedication to resolve it – and we will find solutions. In this updated version of Savanna’s Act, I worked hard to prioritize the safety of Native women, including urban areas, to protect Indigenous women throughout the country,” said Congresswoman Deb Haaland, Co-Chair of the Congressional Native American Caucus.

The murder rate is 10 times higher than the national average for American Indian women, with eighty-four percent experiencing some form of violence during their lifetime. There is still no reliable way of knowing how many Native women go missing each year because the databases that hold statistics of these cases are outdated. In addition, issues have arisen due to the lack of coordination between law enforcement agencies.

“In recent years, our communities have had to struggle with the loss of our missing loved ones, and this bill would provide much-needed resources to help address the alarming rate of missing and murdered Indigenous peoples,” Vice President Myron Lizer said.

“Missing and murdered Indigenous women issues have been a priority for Second Lady Dottie Lizer and I, so we stand firmly in support of this bill. We hope this timely measure will continue to strengthen public safety for the thousands of Navajo families across the Navajo Nation,” First Lady Phefelia Nez said.

Second Lady Dottie Lizer expressed her great appreciation and welcomed the language changes in the bill that require U.S. Attorneys, in consultation with Indian tribes, to create and implement law enforcement guidelines to address cases of murdered and missing Indians.

“Additionally, we welcome the language changes that establish best practices resources by requiring the Attorney General to publicly list the law enforcement agencies that comply with the provisions of the legislation and the expansion of U.S Department of Justice grant programs, and funding increases for those grants, for law enforcement incentives, protocols, and training as well as data collection,” Second Lady Lizer added.

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