

RESOLUTION OF THE MISSOULA DEMOCRATIC PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE CALLING FOR CONCERTED ACTION TO ADDRESS THE CRISIS OF MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN

WHEREAS, Missoula County includes a portion of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes reservation, while the Missoula Valley, where most of the people of Missoula County live, is located near the center of Séliš (Salish), Ksanka (Kootenai), and Q̓lispé (upper Kalispel or Pend d'Oreille) homelands. For thousands of years, it has always been, and remains today, a place of the highest importance to them, and to the many other Indigenous people who traversed and visited the region, including the lower Kalispel, Spokane, Coeur d'Alene, Nez Perce, Blackfeet, and Shoshone, and is today the home of citizens and descendants of those Nations, and other Indigenous people; and

WHEREAS, because of a toxic combination of historical trauma, colonialism, racism, and misogyny, Indigenous women are frequently subjected to violent crimes, harassment, abduction, trafficking, and murder, by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous men; and

WHEREAS, for many reasons, including complex jurisdictional issues and lack of data collection, law enforcement has historically been, and continues to be, less responsive regarding crimes against Indigenous women than regarding crimes against other persons; and

WHEREAS, because so many crimes against Indigenous women are perpetrated by non-Indigenous men, jurisdictional issues play an important role in the disparate responses when the crimes are committed within Indian Country; and

WHEREAS, an alarmingly high percentage of referred cases of violence against Indigenous women within Indian Country are not prosecuted and many crimes are not even reported; and

WHEREAS, the effects of historical trauma, racism, and misogyny have an impact on law enforcement outside Indian Country, including in Missoula County; and

WHEREAS, inadequate law enforcement responses can discourage victims and their families from reporting crimes, which in turn allows the perpetrators of such crimes to believe that they can victimize Indigenous women with impunity; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous women can be and are victimized without regard to whether they reside in Indian Country, or are citizens of any particular Nation; and

WHEREAS, the plight of missing and murdered Indigenous women has all too often been ignored by society at large, and minimized by law enforcement's use of euphemisms that mask the offenses suffered by missing and murdered Indigenous women; and

WHEREAS, it falls to all of us, Indigenous and not, to bring this situation to light, and work together towards solving the interrelated problems that have let crimes against Indigenous women go unnoticed, unpursued, and unpunished;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Missoula County Democratic Party Central Committee demands the following actions from our government officials:

1. **Congress** should pass, without delay, Savanna's Act and the SURVIVE Act, both of which will enhance coordination among law enforcement agencies responsible for investigating crimes within Indian Country.
2. **Congress** should direct the U.S. Attorneys to make prosecution of violence against Indigenous women a priority, and provide adequate funding for the U.S. Department of Justice, and for the federal courts, to staff the issue appropriately.
3. **Senator Tester, Senator Daines, and Representative Gianforte** should encourage the appropriate committees in Congress to hold hearings regarding ways to resolve the jurisdictional issues that interfere with the investigation and prosecution of offenders against missing and murdered Indigenous women.
4. **The Montana Legislature** should pass Hanna's Act, and the other bills relating to missing persons recommended by the interim State-Tribal Relations Committee, and send them to the Governor Bullock without delay.
5. **Governor Bullock and Attorney General Fox** should establish a panel of experts, including representatives of each of the Native Nations in Montana, charged with finding additional ways to help state and local officials be more effective in investigating and prosecuting crimes against Indigenous women in

Montana, including at or in connection with temporary man camps set up to facilitate constructions projects, like pipelines. This panel should include a coordinator to collect data from neighboring states and provinces, making sure that the data accurately characterizes the crimes involved. Data gathered should be made freely available, with redactions to protect privacy, to researchers as well as those directly charged with addressing the issues.

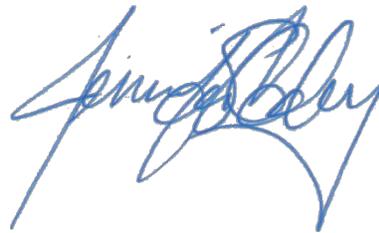
6. **Governor Bullock** and **Attorney General Fox** should reach out to their counterparts in British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan to improve coordination in the search for missing Indigenous women from either side of the U.S.-Canada boundary; and
7. **Sheriff McDermott** should reach out to each of the Native Nations in Montana to establish and improve systems for better coordination of investigations when either the victim or the alleged perpetrator(s) may have some connection to Missoula County.
8. **Mayor Engen** should direct the Missoula Police Department, in concert with **Sheriff McDermott**, and **County Attorney Pabst**, to ensure training for officers and staff to better understand the conditions and context that affect Indigenous victims and survivors of crime and their families and thus their relationship to law enforcement.
9. **Missoula County Democratic Party Communications Director Hunt** shall provide copies of this Resolution to Senator Tester, Senator Daines, Congressman Gianforte, U.S. District Court Chief Judge Christensen, U.S. Attorney Alme, Governor Bullock, Attorney General Fox, each member of the legislature from Missoula County, Sheriff McDermott, County Attorney Pabst, Mayor Engen, all other central committees, and invite each of them to report their progress in addressing the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women to the Missoula County Democrats, and to the public at large.
10. **Missoula County Democratic Party Communications Director Hunt** shall keep the Central Committee informed as the legislation mentioned above

proceeds, and will provide contact information to Central Committee members who wish to contact state or federal legislators regarding particular legislation.



Adopted January 8, 2019

David Kendall, Chair
Missoula County Democrats



Jennifer Cady, Vice-Chair
Missoula County Democrats