

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 2

2 **56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2024**

3 INTRODUCED BY

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO CONVENE A MISSING AND
12 MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND RELATIVES TASK FORCE.
13

14 WHEREAS, the welfare of New Mexican indigenous women,
15 children and relatives is connected to the broader well-being,
16 health and safety of all New Mexicans; and

17 WHEREAS, the missing and murdered indigenous women and
18 relatives crisis in New Mexico and beyond is inextricably
19 rooted in the larger, complex history of state-sanctioned
20 colonial violence against indigenous people; and

21 WHEREAS, the New Mexico missing persons information
22 clearinghouse data research analysis conducted in New Mexico
23 between 2014 and 2019 reported nine hundred eighty-six missing
24 person cases, ninety-seven percent of which remained unsolved
25 and sixteen percent of which involve indigenous persons; and

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1 WHEREAS, the 2019 New Mexico missing and murdered
2 indigenous women task force, established during the 2019
3 legislative session, reported that Albuquerque and Gallup, New
4 Mexico, are among the top ten cities in the United States for
5 the highest number of missing and murdered indigenous women and
6 girls; and

7 WHEREAS, Native American women in New Mexico have the
8 highest rate of homicide victims among all racial and ethnic
9 groups; and

10 WHEREAS, tribal nations across the United States face
11 continued external threats that jeopardize tribal sovereignty
12 and the well-being and safety of indigenous women, children and
13 relatives; and

14 WHEREAS, it is critical that data be accurately reported
15 and captured and that more research be done to fully understand
16 the scope of the missing and murdered indigenous women and
17 relatives crisis to formulate appropriate recommendations for
18 justice; and

19 WHEREAS, law enforcement responses to missing and murdered
20 indigenous women and relatives are impacted by a lack of
21 clarity around jurisdiction, particularly in rural parts of the
22 state where land status varies mile to mile and in urban
23 populations and border towns with large indigenous populations;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, jurisdictional restrictions among tribal, state

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1 and municipal boundaries create barriers that restrict the ease
2 of access and accuracy of the information collected and
3 available between agencies when reporting missing and murdered
4 cases; and

5 WHEREAS, the 2019 task force, in partnership with the
6 Native American budget and policy institute, reported to the
7 governor and legislature on the task force findings and
8 recommendations in December 2020, which led to the development
9 of two pieces of legislation for the 2022 legislative session;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, during the 2022 legislative session, Senate Bill
12 12 and Senate Bill 13 both passed and were signed into law.
13 Senate Bill 12 created the missing indigenous persons
14 specialist position within the office of the attorney general.
15 Senate Bill 13 created the annual "missing in New Mexico
16 event"; and

17 WHEREAS, in response to this ongoing crisis, Governor
18 Michelle Lujan Grisham signed Executive Order 2021-013, which
19 created the New Mexico missing and murdered indigenous women
20 and relatives task force after the task force that was created
21 during the 2019 legislative session reported its findings and
22 recommendations to the governor and the legislature and was
23 ended; and

24 WHEREAS, the 2021 task force was created to develop a
25 state response plan addressing systemic changes that support

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1 prevention, reporting and investigation of incidents of missing
2 and murdered indigenous women and relatives; and

3 WHEREAS, the 2021 task force developed a state response
4 plan and in May 2022 released that plan, which outlined steps
5 that all stakeholders must take to address the crisis in New
6 Mexico; and

7 WHEREAS, on October 20, 2023, *Source New Mexico* first
8 reported that the missing and murdered indigenous women and
9 relatives task force had been ended, leaving questions
10 unanswered;

11 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
12 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the attorney general be requested to
13 convene a missing and murdered indigenous women and relatives
14 task force and house it within the office of the attorney
15 general; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be created to
17 update the 2022 state response plan and provide ongoing
18 legislative recommendations on how to address the missing and
19 murdered indigenous women and relatives crisis in New Mexico;
20 and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force consist of no
22 more than forty members appointed by the attorney general, with
23 the attorney general or the attorney general's designee serving
24 as the chair; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force membership

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1 include the following:

2 A. no more than ten representatives from the
3 department of public safety, including the department's missing
4 persons clearinghouse; the children, youth and families
5 department; the office of the attorney general; the United
6 States bureau of Indian affairs; the United States bureau of
7 Indian affairs' office of justice services; the New Mexico
8 sheriffs' association; and the municipal police departments of
9 the cities of Albuquerque, Gallup, Farmington and Santa Fe;

10 B. two legislators, including one senator and one
11 representative nominated by the majority floor leaders of the
12 house of representatives and senate and who serve on any of the
13 following legislative interim committees: the committee that
14 studies courts, corrections and justice, the committee that
15 studies Indian affairs and the legislative health and human
16 services committee;

17 C. no more than three pueblo representatives from a
18 northern pueblo, a southern pueblo and the all pueblo council
19 of governors;

20 D. no more than two representatives from the
21 Jicarilla Apache Nation;

22 E. no more than two representatives from the
23 Mescalero Apache Tribe;

24 F. no more than three representatives from the
25 Navajo Nation office of the president and vice president, the

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1 Navajo Nation council or representatives of Navajo Nation
2 chapter houses;

3 G. no more than five representatives from an urban
4 Indian center; a local nongovernmental organization that
5 provides counseling services to indigenous people who have been
6 victims of violence; a statewide or local nongovernmental
7 organization that provides legal services to indigenous women
8 and girls who have been victims of violence; a local
9 nongovernmental organization that provides direct services to
10 homeless individuals; or a local nongovernmental organization
11 that provides direct services to survivors of sex trafficking;

12 H. no more than four representatives from other
13 nonprofit organizations not mentioned in Subsection G of this
14 resolving clause;

15 I. no more than five representatives who are
16 indigenous survivors of violence or family members of an
17 indigenous relative who has been a victim of violence; members
18 of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and
19 two-spirit plus community; and indigenous youth; and

20 J. no more than four representatives who have
21 experience working as a tribal prosecutor, a tribal criminal
22 investigator, a tribal emergency dispatcher, a tribal police
23 chief or a tribal social worker or program director; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force members serve
25 at the pleasure of the attorney general and shall not be

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1 compensated for their service, other than for per diem for
2 members traveling more than one hundred miles to the designated
3 meeting location or for contractual services that the attorney
4 general deems necessary, subject to appropriations; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
6 transmitted to the attorney general, the twenty-three federally
7 recognized Native American tribes of New Mexico and the
8 governor.