



Friends Committee on
National Legislation

A Quaker Lobby in the Public Interest

FCNL Statement to the House Judiciary Committee Pertaining to H.R. 1585, the “Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019.”

Tuesday, March 12, 2019

The Friends Committee on National Legislation urges members of the House Judiciary Committee to support the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019 (H.R. 1585) and its efforts to address violence against Native women.

The Friends Committee on National Legislation is a Quaker lobby in the public interest and has lobbied on Native American concerns since the 1950s. We lead an interfaith coalition that examines and improves the historic relationship between tribes and faith groups and speaks out on current concerns for tribes.

On some reservations, Native women face murder rates that are more than 10 times the national average. More than 80% of American Indian and Alaska Native women have experienced violence in their lifetime. Most of these cases are crimes of sexual violence committed by non-Indian perpetrators.

The 2013 reauthorization of VAWA recognized tribal authority over non-Indians with the Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction (SDVCJ). Although this jurisdiction was limited to only crimes of domestic violence, it proved to be extremely effective. Since the implementation of the SDVCJ, there were 143 arrests and 74 convictions. Of these non-Indian defendants, 85 of them had 378 previous encounters with tribal law enforcement but had been let go due to the lack of tribal jurisdiction. Now with the SDVCJ, these repeat offenders are finally facing justice. Of all these cases, no defendant has filed petition for a federal writ of habeas corpus. These findings show that the SDVCJ successfully protects Native victims, helps victims find justice, and proves that tribal court systems effectively uphold due process for non-Indian defendants.

Tribes do not have jurisdiction over crimes of sexual assault, stalking, sex trafficking, and child abuse. Victims of these crimes are left vulnerable to further harm and are without recourse. Domestic violence calls can be very dangerous for tribal officers. If an officer is assaulted during a domestic violence dispute, the tribe does not have jurisdiction over this assault. **Tribes must be able to protect all citizens from violence and provide security to the officers who are keeping tribal communities safe.** H.R. 1585 expands tribal jurisdiction to cover these violent crimes and protects tribal officers who are harmed while keeping the community safe.

This high prevalence of violence contributes to a crisis that is not widely acknowledged outside of Native communities, that is the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women. H.R. 1585 requires better communication better federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement to improve responses to missing cases. This bill will also improve data collection around missing cases and enhances tribal access to federal criminal databases.

Tribes need the jurisdictional authority to protect their people, to assure the safety of tribal law enforcement, and adequate resources to effectively respond to missing cases. **We urge you to support the tribal provisions of H.R. 1585 and pass this bill.**

Sincerely,
Lacina Tangnaqudo Onco
Congressional Advocate on Native American Policy
Friends Committee on National Legislation