



**SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS**  
**Friends Committee on National Legislation**  
*A Quaker Lobby in the Public Interest*

**FCNL Statement to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, Pertaining to The Business Meeting to Consider S. 1942 “Savanna’s Act.”**

Wednesday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**The Friends Committee on National Legislation urges members of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to support Savanna’s Act (S. 1942) and its effort to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls.**

The Friends Committee on National Legislation is a Quaker lobby in the public interest. We have 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 4 in 5 American Indian and Alaska Native women have experienced violence in their lifetime. This high prevalence of violence contributes to a crisis that is not widely acknowledged outside of Indian Country, that is the crisis of Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls.

S.1942 “Savanna’s Act” is named in honor of Savanna LaFontaine Greywind, a young Native woman who went missing and was found brutally murdered. Her story is one of few cases of violence to make the national spotlight. Her story is tragic and heartbreaking, and it saddens us to say that this level of violence is not uncommon among Native communities.

Savanna’s Act addresses two of the most perplexing conundrums afflicting tribal criminal justice – coordination among jurisdictions and agencies and access to databases. When a sister, a daughter, an aunt or a cousin has gone missing and is in danger of trafficking, rape, and murder, there is no time to deal with bureaucratic barriers. These are moments of crisis – plans must already be in place for rapid intervention and, hopefully, the prevention of further harm. Time is of the essence in missing cases, delays in response affect the safety of the victim and the ability to receive justice in the courts. We must create a pathway in which Tribal, Federal, and State law enforcement can work together to effectively respond to missing cases. Increased coordination between law enforcement agencies along with improved data collection will help with tracking missing Native cases.

While the anecdotes of missing Native women and girls are shared within Indian Country, hard statistical information on how many cases there are nationwide is difficult to find as this information is not tracked in national databases. Savanna’s Act will improve this data collection by calling for criminal databases such as the National Crime Information Center database; to collect tribal enrollment or affiliation information of missing victims. This bill also calls for tribal consultation to improve tribal access to criminal databases relevant to missing and murdered Native cases. We are encouraged to see that these

consultation requirements are included as tribes should always be involved in the decision-making process.

We urge the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to recognize the efforts of advocates to bring this crisis of Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls into the light. Congress must move this legislation forward to protect the safety of Native communities.

Sincerely,

Lacina Tangnaqudo Onco

Congressional Advocate on Native American Policy

Friends Committee on National Legislation