

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROCLAIMING MAY 5, )	RESOLUTION NO. 20-5101
2020 AS A DAY OF AWARENESS FOR )	Introduced by Council President Lynn
MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS )	Peterson
WOMEN AND GIRLS	

WHEREAS, Metro stands with other tribal, local, regional, state, and national governments and organizations in support of National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women; and

WHEREAS, the lasting effect of colonization and history of oppressive policies directly correlates to the rise of violence against Indigenous women and girls in the United States, Canada, and Central America; and

WHEREAS, the disappearances and murders of Indigenous women and girls are often directly connected to domestic and other forms of violence, sexual assault, trafficking, and a history of childhood, intergenerational, and historical trauma; and

WHEREAS, these acts of violence and corresponding oversight and neglect of government law enforcement is a continued form of genocide and is a direct threat to tribal sovereignty, thus compromising Indian Country’s self-determination and self-governance; and


WHEREAS, Metro recognizes that the issues of missing and murdered Indigenous women are not isolated to reservations or rural communities, but impact urban areas like the Portland metropolitan region; and

WHEREAS, Metro supports the passage of House Bill 2625 at the Oregon Legislature, directing the Department of State Police to study how to increase and improve criminal justice resources for missing and murdered Native American women in Oregon. Metro Council passed a resolution in support of this bill on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council proclaims May 7, 2020, as Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in the greater Portland Region. We encourage other businesses, organizations, public institutions, and community members to observe this day and learn and teach others about the acute crisis facing Indigenous women.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 7th day of May 2020.

Approved as to Form:

DocuSigned by:  
  
 Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney

  
 Lynn Peterson, Council President

## **STAFF REPORT**

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 20-5101, FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROCLAIMING MAY 5, 2020 AS A DAY OF AWARENESS FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

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Date: May 5, 2020  
Department: Council Office  
Meeting Date: May 7, 2020

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Presenter: Andre Bealer

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### **ISSUE STATEMENT**

American Indian and Alaskan Native women are murdered and sexually assaulted at a larger rate as high as 10 times in areas across the United States. These crimes are largely committed by non-native individuals. As of 2018, there exists no database system in the United States to track how many Indigenous women have been abducted or murdered.

The Metro Council has an opportunity to stand with other tribal, local, regional, state, and national governments and organizations in honoring May 5, 2020 as a Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

### **ACTION REQUESTED**

Consideration and vote on Resolution No. 20-5101.

### **IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES**

- 1) Renewing the Metro Council's proclamation related to a Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
- 2) Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:
  - a. "Metro and other public agencies recognize that racial equity is a cornerstone of good governance to ensure the success of everyone, especially historically marginalized communities, by working together to end the avoidable inequities that prevent the realization of an individual's full potential and are detrimental to us collectively." (Page 13)
  - b. "By addressing the barriers experienced by people of color in the Portland metropolitan region, we will effectively also identify solutions and remove barriers for other disadvantaged groups. The result will be that all people in the region will experience better outcomes." (Page 52)

### **POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER**

Council approval of this resolution reaffirms Metro's support in bringing awareness to the continued negative impacts of Native American women.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends the Metro Council adopt Resolution No. 20-5101.

## **STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

### **1. Known Opposition/support/community feedback**

No opposition known at this time.

### **2. Legal Antecedents**

Resolution No. 19-4992 and Resolution No. 18-4891.

### **3. Anticipated effects**

May 5, 2020 will be honored as a Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in greater Portland.

### **4. Financial implications**

None.

## **BACKGROUND**

According to the Urban Indian Health Institute's 2018 report, *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls: A snapshot of data from 71 urban cities in the United States*, of the 5,712 reports of missing American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls in 2016 only 116 cases were logged in the US Department of Justice's federal missing persons database. This same report noted that the Center for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that murder is the third-leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native women and that rates of violence on reservations can be up to ten times higher than the national average.

A recent primer on missing and murdered Indigenous women by Luhui Whitebear highlighted when compared to the national averages Indigenous women are:

- 2.5 times more likely to be assaulted;
- 2 times more likely to be stalked;
- 5 times more likely to experience interracial violence;
- 10 times more likely to be murdered (on some reservations);
- More than 1 in 3 Indigenous women will be raped in her lifetime; and
- 6 in 10 Indigenous women will be physically assaulted.

There remains insufficient data on the total number of missing Indigenous women in the United States. Based on the Urban Indian Health Institute's report, "reasons for the lack of quality data include underreporting, racial misclassification, poor relationships between law enforcement and American Indian and Alaska Native communities, poor record-keeping protocols, institutional racism in the media, and a lack of substantive relationships between journalists and American Indian and Alaska Native communities" (pg. 4).

HB 2625, sponsored by Representative Tawna Sanchez (Oregon House District 43), was signed into law during the 2019 legislative session which directs the Department of State Police to study how to increase criminal justice and investigative resources towards future and past cases of missing and murdered Native American women in Oregon. Metro Council passed a resolution in support of this bill on April 23rd, 2019.

At the federal level, several bills are currently introduced to address the data collection gap including the re-introduced "Savannah Act", H.R.273 and S.227 (named for Savannah

LaFontaine-Greywind who was abducted and murdered in North Dakota) and the Not Invisible Act (H.R.2438, S.982) to better coordinate on-going advisory bodies with this work.

**ATTACHMENTS**

None