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PRESS RELEASE

Savanna's Act Passes U.S. Senate

Western Grassroots Organizations Support and Applaud Action on
Landmark Legislation

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Yesterday morning, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed Savanna's Act, S.227, and the House Judiciary Committee also unanimously passed its version of the bill, H.R. 2733, out of committee. Savanna's Act next heads to the floor for a vote of the full House of Representatives.

Savanna's Act is named after Savanna Greywind, a pregnant 22-year-old North Dakota woman and member of the Spirit Lake Nation, who was brutally murdered in 2017. Savanna's Act passed the Senate in 2018, but was blocked in the House. As [Section 2 of Savanna's Act](#) notes, Indigenous women face more violence than any other group. According to the National Institute of Justice, [at least 84 percent of Indigenous women](#) have been the target of sexual or other violence in their lifetimes.

Savanna's Act makes clear the responsibilities that law enforcement has in responding to missing and murdered Indigenous peoples, as well as to increase communication between federal, state, and tribal officials. It also increases data collection related to these cases by requiring the Department of Justice to maintain a nationwide database for missing and murdered indigenous women.

"Indigenous people have been continuously subjugated for centuries on this continent and the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous people is not new to our lands. My homelands of Fort Berthold have been overrun with oilfield workers and people who choose to intentionally harm our people. The issue of Missing and Murdered is up to ten times higher in our communities than missing populations nationally, and Fort Berthold is not immune to violence and human trafficking. After 500 years, it is time that the US Government upholds their promise of protecting our people. Thank you Senator Hoeven, Senator Cramer, and Representative Armstrong for working to stop the epidemic of violence against Native American women by cosponsoring Savanna's Act." Lisa DeVille, Mandaree, North Dakota Native Vote Chair from Mandaree, ND and a member of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation.

“It is unfortunate that a bill of such magnitude had to be reintroduced, it is another dehumanization of Indigenous People. For years our people, our women have gone missing. Funding limits investigations on reservations. The families of the missing and murdered face years of trauma, the victim no peace. For years I have never seen an Amber Alert for an indigenous person, our lives are not valued. This has to stop, there are too many missing and murdered. We cannot allow one more. Congress must take action. The federal government must allow funding for this bill, recognizing the need for protection of our most vulnerable population. Being human is bipartisan.” Paula Antoine, Dakota Rural Action Board member from Winner, SD and a member of the Lakota Nation.

“The Act is the first step towards acknowledging a safety net for our Native Women in America. It's been a long-time coming to address the plight of our Indigenous women.” Western Native Voice member Alaina Buffalo Spirit.

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North Dakota Native Vote (NDNV) counteract the ongoing colonization of our lands, minds, and bodies by identifying systems that continue to subjugate our communities. We work to learn disparities in civil rights, food systems, energy security/democracy, climate chaos, and policy that disproportionately affects our people and how we interact within and contribute to these systems.

Dakota Rural Action (DRA) organizes people and builds leadership while developing strong allied relationships. We protect environmental resources, advocate for resilient agriculture systems, and empower people to create policy change that strengthens their communities and cultures.

Western Native Voice is a non-profit, non-partisan social justice organization working to inspire Native leadership through community organizing, education, leadership, and advocacy. With 7% of Montana's population being Native American living almost evenly split between reservation and urban areas, WNV organizes in both rural and urban communities using a culturally tailored community organizing and citizen education model to build Native leadership.

The Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC) is a network of grassroots organizations that span seven of the Western states with more than 15,000 members, whose mission is to advance the vision of a democratic, sustainable, and just society through community action. Headquartered in Billings, Montana, WORC also has offices in Colorado and Washington, D.C.