

HB 2625 -1, -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Judiciary

Prepared By: Gillian Fischer, Counsel

Meeting Dates: 2/21, 3/7

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Department of State Police to study how to increase criminal justice and investigative resources towards investigations of missing Native American women in this state. Requires the Department of State Police to report on the results of the study to an appropriate legislative committee no later than September 15, 2020.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Need for rebuilding trust between the Native American community and law enforcement agencies
- Available statistical and census data on missing and murdered Native American women often inaccurate because of frequent misidentification of race of Native American victims
- Lack in cultural competence of law enforcement who do respond to reports

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Clarifies that for the purposes of this provision Native American women includes Alaska Native women.

-2 Amends scope of study to include how to increase resources and systems for reporting, identification, investigation, and rapid response to future and past cases of missing and murdered Native American women in this state, including cases involving Indian country.

BACKGROUND:

Murder is the third leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native women. According to the proponents of this bill there is no adequate system in place of reporting and investigating these deaths leading to inaccurate and underreported statistics. According to the 2018 Urban Indian Health Institute Report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls in 2016 there were 5,712 cases of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls, which took place at similar rates on the reservation and in urban areas. Of these 5,712 cases, only 116 were logged in the Department of Justice (DOJ) database. This bill would require the Department of State Police to study how Department resources addressing the investigation of these missing and murdered Native American women can be increased.