

**Confederated Tribes *of the*
Umatilla Indian Reservation**

Board of Trustees



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Testimony of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Senate Committee on Judiciary, Oregon Legislative Assembly
HB 2625 April 30, 2019

Chair Prozanski and members of the committee:

My name is Woodrow Star. I am a member of the Board of Trustees of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and a retired career law enforcement officer. I am joined today by Naomi Stacy, the lead attorney in our Office of Legal Counsel.

We fully support HB 2625. Studying how to increase resources to improve reporting, identification, and investigative systems is an important step forward in dealing with the complexities of missing and murdered Native women in the State of Oregon.

This bill is a vehicle to begin addressing two primary hurdles in missing and murdered Indian women cases - coordination among tribal, state, and federal jurisdictions; and collection, identification, and interjurisdictional access to relevant criminal databases.

When a Native woman has gone missing and is in danger of being trafficked, raped, or murdered, there is no time to deal with jurisdictional barriers. Systems must already be in place for rapid law enforcement response and sharing of information across jurisdictions. Time is critical in cases of missing women. Inability to share accurate information, delays in response, and coordination problems affect the safety of the victim and the ability to hold perpetrators accountable.

By beginning to study the issue and the State's resources and systems related to it, we can begin to create an interjurisdictional system in which Tribal, Federal, and State law enforcement work together to effectively respond to these cases. Improved reporting, sharing of information, and overall increased coordination between law enforcement agencies will help with tracking missing Native women cases.

While the anecdotes of missing Native women are shared throughout Indian Country, hard statistical information is lacking. Our hope is that HB 2625 will improve this data collection by studying the adequacy of existing systems and resources.

This bill also calls for coordination with tribal nations and federal agencies to improve the justice system as it relates to missing and murdered Indian women. We are encouraged to see these kinds of coordination requirements. Given our experience, we stand ready to be involved in those efforts. CTUIR has played an important role in developing non-Indian domestic violence provisions in the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) that allow tribal nations to prosecute limited non-Indian domestic violence crimes as an exercise of inherent sovereign power. The CTUIR was also among the first three tribes to be authorized to implement non-Indian jurisdiction in February of 2014.

Thank you for your efforts to improve the safety of Native women in Oregon and we look forward to helping you in that endeavor.