



TURTLE MOUNTAIN BAND OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS

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January 20, 2025
House Government and Veteran Affairs
600 East Boulevard
Bismarck, ND 58505

RE: Support for HB 1199

Chair Schauer and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jamie Azure, and I serve as the Tribal Chairman of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of an issue that holds tremendous importance for our communities. Today, I testify in strong support of House Bill 1199.

While I address you as a Tribal Chairman, I also stand here as a father of two amazing teenage daughters. Like any parent, the thought of their safety and well-being is paramount. Tragically, for too many parents in Native Nations, this fear becomes a devastating reality—one of uncertainty, loss, and heartbreak. Families endure the pain of missing loved ones and, in many cases, suffer without the closure they deserve.

For decades, Native American and Alaska Native communities have faced a crisis of violence—an epidemic that includes alarmingly high rates of assault, abduction, and murder of tribal members. The statistics surrounding Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) are staggering and deeply troubling:

- Nationally, Native women are more than **twice as likely** to be raped or sexually assaulted than women of any other group.
- On some reservations, Native women are murdered at rates **more than ten times the national average**.
- Nearly **one in three Native American women** will experience rape or attempted rape in her lifetime.

These numbers are not just statistics; they represent lives lost, families torn apart, and communities in mourning.

House Bill 1199 takes a critical step forward in addressing this crisis. It seeks to enhance resources, strengthen data collection, and improve collaboration to combat the tragedy of MMIW. By establishing and empowering the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons

(MMIP) Task Force, this bill will ensure that we can take meaningful action to save lives and provide closure to grieving families.

Data matters. Resources matter. Lives matter.

Through a united effort, we can and must do better to protect Native women, support affected families, and ensure that justice is served.

I respectfully urge this committee to support HB 1199. Let us work together to honor the lives of those we've lost and protect future generations from this ongoing crisis.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Azure

Chairman, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa

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