

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF TO HB 1535

Date of Hearing: February 4th, 2025

Erin J. Belgarde 114 2nd Ave NE, Rolla ND 58367

Committee Chair and members of the committee, my name is Erin J. Belgarde. I am a resident of Rolla, North Dakota. I write in support of House Bill 1535. I am an Indigenous female who sits on the MMIP Chapter for the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians Tribe.

Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, & Two Spirits (MMIWG2S) is a crisis that refers to the disproportionate amount of violence and abuse that occurs to Indigenous people in the US. While stats on MMIWG2S are low, the few facts on it are astonishing.

- The third leading cause of death for an American Indian/Alaska Native youth 1-24 years old in 2020 was homicide.
- 97% of AI/AN women and 90% of AI/AN men reported that they had a non-AI/AN assaulter in their lifetime.
- 1 in 3 American Indian and Alaska Native women have experienced rape or sexual assault in their lifetime.

These statistics are alarming. The MMIP movement is slowly gaining momentum, this has been a problem for decades. Now that we know better, we need to do better. This feather alert is an excellent step in the right direction.

Please support HB 1535

Respectfully, Erin J. Belgarde 114 2nd Ave NE, Rolla ND 58367