



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Statement of the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center on the First National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls May 5th, 2017

The current reports of abduction and murder of American Indian women and girls are alarming and represent one of the most severe aspects of the spectrum of violence committed against Native women. The murder rate of Native women is more than ten times the national average. Often, these disappearances or murders are connected to crimes of domestic violence, sexual assault, and sex trafficking.

The NIWRC recognizes that before this crisis will be sufficiently addressed it must first be acknowledged. This past year, over 200 tribal, state and national organizations joined with NIWRC and signed on in support of a resolution to create a National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls. The Montana delegation Senator Steve Daines, Senator Jon Tester, and then Congressman Ryan Zinke introduced the resolution in memory of Hanna Harris, a Northern Cheyenne tribal member, who was murdered in July 2013. The resolution was introduced in April 2016 on the same day that RoyLynn Rides Horse, a Crow tribal member, passed away after having been beaten, burned, and left in a field to die. This past Wednesday, May 3, 2017, the United States took a historic step forward and passed the Senate resolution #60 by unanimous consent.

The NIWRC was honored to have worked with so many sister organizations at the tribal, state and federal levels to see the passage of this historic resolution. Today, May 5th 2017, organized community actions are taking place across tribal nations in honor of missing and murdered Native women and girls. The national office of NIWRC is honored to walk with Melinda Harris, mother of Hanna Harris, Senator Steve Daines, staff of Senator Jon Tester and so many others at a walk organized at Lame Deer, Montana. Tribal actions are being held at the Muscogee Creek Nation, the Mohawk Nation, the Oglala Sioux Indian Nation, the Northern Cheyenne Indian Nation, and many other locations.

We ask all of those concerned about safety and justice for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women to join together today to honor Native American women and girls who have disappeared and those who have been murdered. Together we can work to bring an end to this crisis endangering not only Indigenous women and girls but Indian nations.

The NIWRC is committed to organizing to increase safety and access to justice for American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls, to bringing awareness to this critical issue, and to preventing future acts of violence in our Nations.

Lucy Simpson
Executive Director, NIWRC

Cherrah Giles
Board Chair, NIWRC

About the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center

The National Indigenous Women's Resource Center, Inc. is a non-profit organization that provides technical assistance and training, policy development and system management, materials, and resource information on violence against Native women and the development of tribal strategies and responses to end the violence.
(www.niwrc.org)