



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Alaska Native Voices Are Appointed to the Not Invisible Act Commission**

In October 2020 the Not Invisible Act (NIA) was passed into law. The NIA outlines the formation of a Joint Commission on Reducing Violent Crime Against Indians. Yesterday during the U.S. Department of Interior May 5<sup>th</sup> awareness event for the National Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples Day, Secretary Deb Haaland announced the formation of the Commission as well as the appointed Representatives to serve on it.

The *Not Invisible Act*, sponsored by Secretary Deb Haaland when she served in Congress, mandates the creation of the commission that includes representatives of Tribal, state, and local law enforcement; Tribal judges; health care and mental health practitioners with experience working with Indian survivors of trafficking and sexual assault; urban Indian organizations focused on violence against women and children; Indian survivors of human trafficking; and family members of missing and murdered Indian people. This bill aims at addressing the crisis of missing, murdered, and trafficked Native people by engaging law enforcement, tribal leaders, federal partners, and service providers and improving coordination across federal agencies. This bipartisan bill establishes an advisory committee of local, tribal, and federal stakeholders to make recommendations to the Department of Interior and Department of Justice on best practices to combat the epidemic of disappearances, homicide, violent crime and trafficking of Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

We are proud to share that both Tami Truett Jerue, AKNWRC Executive Director, and Michelle Demmert, AKNWRC's Law and Policy Director, were both appointed to the Commission. Ms. Jerue will represent the "Regional Indian Organization's" voice, while Ms. Demmert was appointed as a "Tribal Judge" voice. Vivian Korthius, CEO of the Association of Village Council Presidents as the "Alaska Tribal nominee" voice rounds out the third Alaska Native representative on the 37 seat Commission.

"I am honored and humbled to be appointed to this Commission. We have 18 months to do a lot of work and make recommendations for change and improvements to address the MMIW crisis and the disproportionate rates of gender-based violence in our communities," stated Tami Truett Jerue.

The Commission will hold hearings, take testimony, and receive evidence to develop recommendations for the federal government to combat violent crime against Indians and within Indian lands. Please be sure to watch for information on these hearings. This will be an important place for Alaska Tribes, Native's and other interested persons to attend and provide information.

The Commission is an important moment in history for Indigenous women and people. We have to be the change that we want to see and with this Commission, and the strong Alaska Native Voices appointed to it, we have a real opportunity to create significant change for our Alaska Native communities. We are excited to see what this Commission will be able to do and thankful that it is full of our voices.

**About the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center:**

Organized in 2015, the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center is a tribal nonprofit organization dedicated to ending violence against women with Alaska's 229 tribes and allied organizations. AKNWRC board members are Alaska Native women raised in Alaska Native Villages and have 153 years of combined experience in tribal governments, nonprofit management, domestic violence, and sexual assault advocacy (both individual crisis and systems and grassroots social change advocacy at the local, statewide, regional, national and international levels), and other social service experience. AKNWRC's philosophy is that violence against women is rooted in the colonization of indigenous nations.

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