

# Honoring Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

MAY 2, 2019



# Partnering Sister Organizations



Alaska Native Women's Resource Center  
Indian Law Resource Center  
National Congress of American Indians  
Native Women's Society of the Great Plains  
Southwest Indigenous Women's Coalition



# National Day of Awareness Presenters

- ▶ **Welcome, Cherrah Giles, ChairWoman, NIWRC Board of Directors**
  - ▶ **NCAI Violence Against Women Task Force Co-Chairs**
    - Michelle Demmert, Tlingit, Eagle, Kaax'ooos hittaaan clan
    - Juana Majel Dixon, Pauma Band of Luiseno Indians
  - ▶ **The Voice of a Mother Calling for Justice**
    - Malinda Limberhand, Mother of Hanna Harris, Missing and Murdered, July 2013
  - ▶ **Honoring the Missing and Murdered Through Action**
    - Virginia Davis, Senior Policy Advisor, NCAI
  - ▶ **Honoring Native Women**
    - Tami Jerue, Executive Director, Alaska Native Women's Resource Center
    - Carmen O'Leary, Executive Director, Native Women's Society of the Great Plains
    - Leanne Guy, Executive Director, Southwest Indigenous Women's Coalition
  - ▶ **International Update on Efforts to Address MMIW**
    - Christopher Foley, Staff Attorney, Indian Law Resource Center
- Moderated by Rose M. Quilt, J.D. (Yakama), Director of Policy & Research, NIWRC

Welcome  
Honoring Our  
Native Women  
Missing & Murdered

A National Day of  
Awareness  
May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019



Cherrah Giles, NIWRC Board Chair





Michelle Demmert

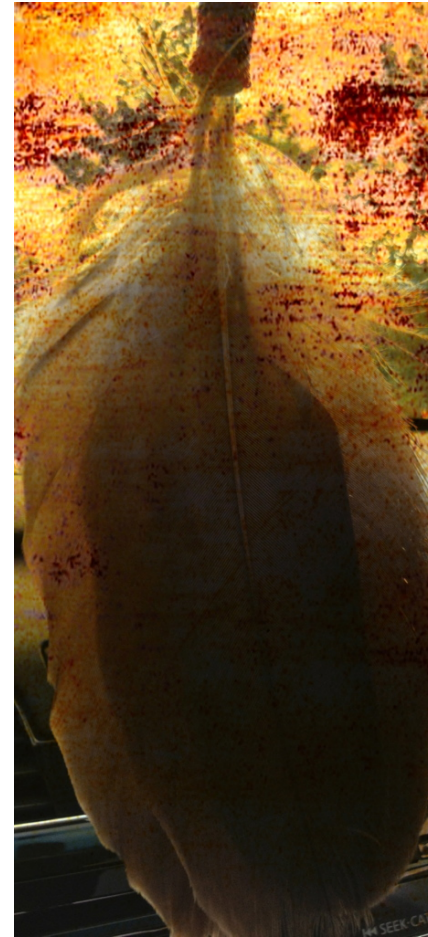


Juana Majel Dixon

# NCAI Task Force on Violence Against Women, Co-Chairs

## In the United States: An Alarming Pattern of Missing and Murdered in the U.S.

- ▶ Native women are murdered and go missing at a higher rate than any other ethnic group.
- ▶ Many of these cases are part of the spectrum of domestic violence.
- ▶ On some reservations women are murdered at a rate 10 times higher than the national average.
- ▶ Homicide is a leading cause of death of Native women (VAWA).
  - ▶ From 1979 to 1992, third leading cause of death, ages 15 to 34.
  - ▶ 75% were killed by family members or acquaintances.



# Honoring Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

## Public Awareness



## Public Honoring

- ▶ Honor the women
- ▶ Support their loved ones
- ▶ Support community healing





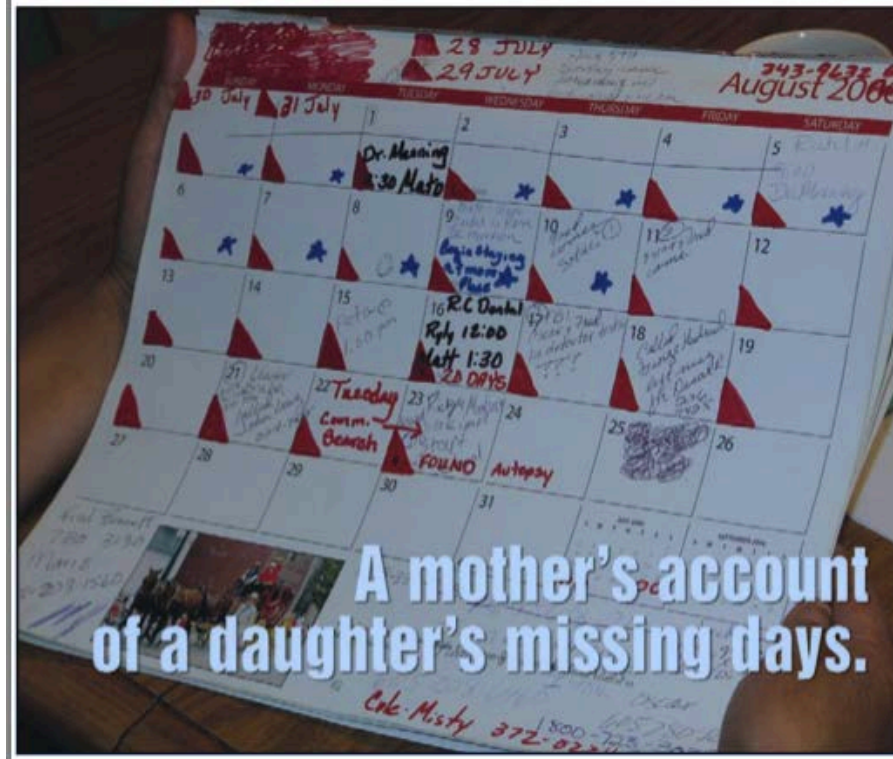
# Lack of Consequences for Violent Crimes Against Native Women

- ▶ Native women as a population are vulnerable to violent crimes.
- ▶ The National Institute of Justice reports that more than four in five AIAN adults (83 percent) have experienced some form of violence in their lifetime. Among AIAN women, more than 1 in 2 have experienced physical violence by intimate partners or sexual violence in their lifetime, and more than 1 in 12 have experienced it in the past year.
- ▶ Vulnerability is due in part to the lack of legal consequences reflected in the minimal to zero number of federal prosecutions of domestic violence and sexual assault abusers.
- ▶ Federal Prosecution: Between 2004 and 2007, the United States declined to prosecute 62% of Indian Country criminal cases referred to federal prosecutors, including 72% of child sexual crimes, and 75% of adult rape cases.
- ▶ Due to this reality tribal domestic violence programs are encouraged to have a protocol prepared to respond if a Native woman goes missing.



## A Pattern of Failed Response

- ❖ Native woman is missing
- ❖ Report is made
- ❖ Inadequate response by criminal system
- ❖ Community search
- ❖ Community justice walk



# Malinda Limberhand



- ▶ A National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls
- ▶ May 5th is the birthday of my daughter Hanna Harris who went missing on July 4, 2013 and was murdered.
- ▶ Organize for changes needed at the tribal, state, and national level
- ▶ Increase public awareness: wear red, post your efforts on social media
- ▶ Honor our Native women and girls

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 4, 2019

Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. ROUNDS, Ms. WARREN, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. LANKFORD, and Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

**RESOLUTION**

Designating May 5, 2019, as the “National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls”.

Whereas, according to a study commissioned by the Department of Justice, in some Tribal communities, American Indian women face murder rates that are more than 10 times the national average murder rate;

Whereas, according to the most recently available data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2017, homicide was the sixth leading cause of death for Amer-



Organizing for Changes Needed



# Honoring the Missing and Murdered Through Action

- ▶ Education and awareness
- ▶ Reform of law enforcement response
- ▶ Increased support of Indian tribes to respond
- ▶ Development of tribal, state, and federal protocols

First Capitol Hill MMIW Briefing



Virginia Davis, NCAI

# Alaska Native Women's Resource Center



Tami Truett Jerue, Executive Director

## Efforts to Address MMIWG

- ▶ Raising Awareness
- ▶ Breaking the Silence
- ▶ Support for Alaska Tribes efforts to respond: addressing the absence of law enforcement in Alaska villages and other barriers.
- ▶ Assist Alaska Tribes in their protocol efforts at local, state and federal level

# Native Women's Society of the Great Plains





NWSGP Face Book Page  
<http://www.nativewomensociety.org>



Carmen O'Leary, Executive Director, NWSGP

# Southwest Indigenous Women's Coalition



Leanne Guy, Executive Director, SWIWC



Efforts to address MMIW





# Southwest Indigenous Women's Coalition



# Indian Law Resource Center

- ▶ International Recognition
- ▶ UN Commission on the Status of Women



Christopher Foley, ILRC



“

*The system is broken. I lost my daughter and I know my granddaughters face the same danger. We all do.*

”

—MOTHER OF A MISSING NATIVE WOMAN FOUND MURDERED

The Missing and Murdered Native Women Crisis

# Resources

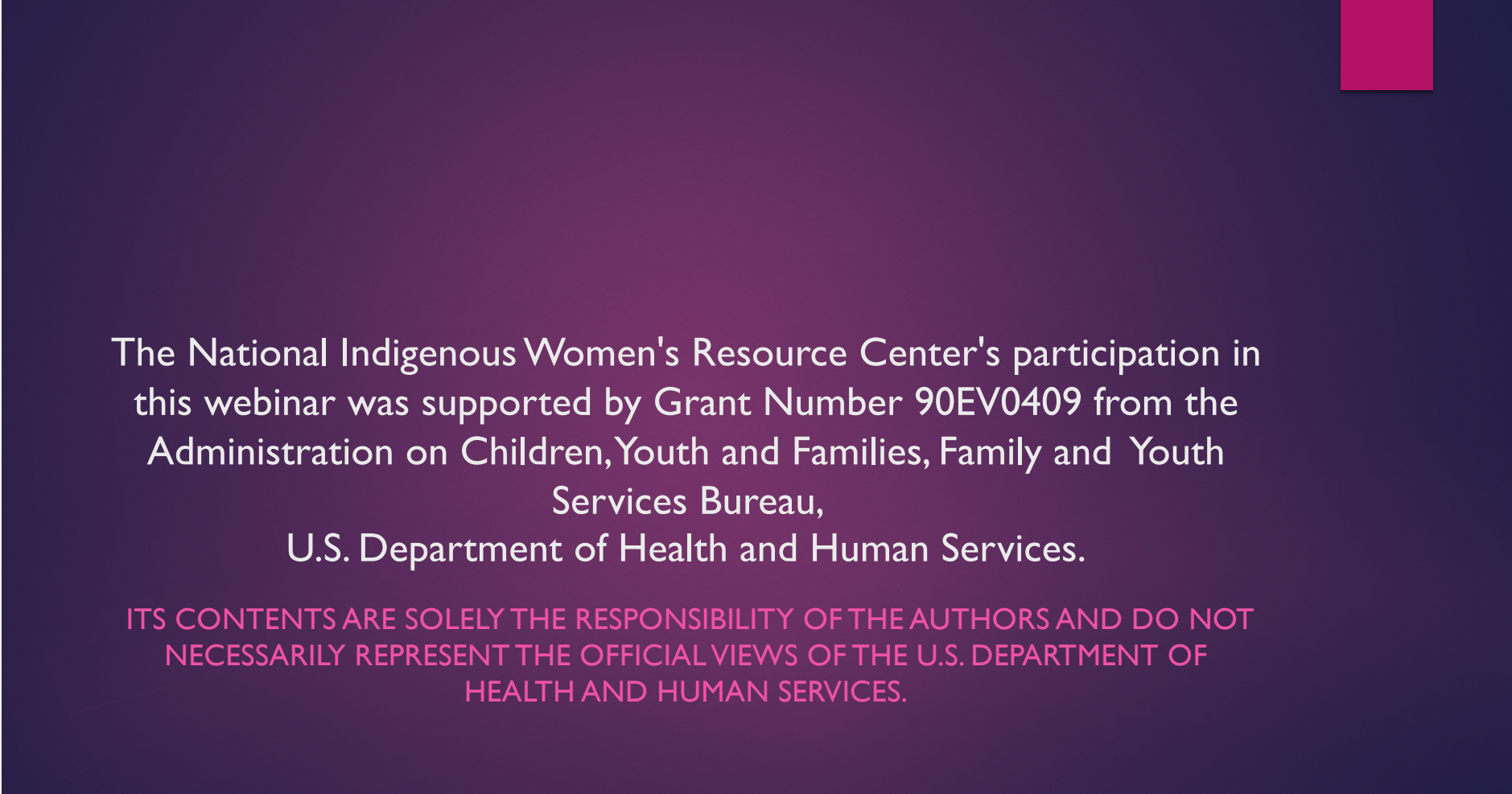
- ▶ Alaska Native Women's Resource Center: [www.aknwrc.org](http://www.aknwrc.org)
- ▶ Indian Law Resource Center: [www.indianlaw.org](http://www.indianlaw.org)
- ▶ National Congress of American Indians: [www.ncai.org](http://www.ncai.org)
- ▶ National Indigenous Women's Resource Center: [www.niwrc.org](http://www.niwrc.org)
- ▶ Native Women's Society of the Great Plains: [www.nativewomenssociety.org](http://www.nativewomenssociety.org)
- ▶ Southwest Indigenous Women's Coalition: [www.swiwc.org](http://www.swiwc.org)
- ▶ ATCEV: [www.atcev.org](http://www.atcev.org)
- ▶ StrongHearts Native Helpline: <http://www.strongheartshelpline.org/>
- ▶ **S. Res. 144** Designating May 5, 2019, as the "National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls": <https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/sres/144/BILLS-116sres144is.pdf>
- ▶ Subcommittee Hearing: ***Unmasking the Hidden Crisis of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women (MMIW): Exploring Solutions to End the Cycle of Violence*** link: <https://naturalresources.house.gov/hearings/unmasking-the-hidden-crisis-of-murdered-and-missing-indigenous-women-mmiw-exploring-solutions-to-end-the-cycle-of-violence>
- ▶ Senate Committee on Indian Affairs: ***Missing and Murdered: Confronting the Silent Crisis in Indian Country*** link: <https://www.indian.senate.gov/hearing/missing-and-murdered-confronting-silent-crisis-indian-country>





Additional  
Resources

- ▶ **EXPLORE:** NIWRC's *Organizing a Groundswell to End the Injustice of Murdered and Disappeared Native Women and Girls* in the Advocate! Beyond the Shelter Doors e-newsletter and **NIWRC's Online Resource Library**.
- ▶ **DOWNLOAD:** *Tribal Community Response When a Woman is Missing: A Toolkit for Action* from the **NIWRC Resource Library**.
- ▶ **DATABASE:** The Sovereign Bodies Institute Missing and Murdered Women's Database.
- ▶ **REPORT:** Report from Urban Indian Health Institute: *Missing And Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls: A snapshot of data from 71 urban cities in the United States* (2018).
- ▶ **DATABASE:** NamUS-National Missing and Unidentified Persons System.
- ▶ **Report:** *CDC Report | Racial and Ethnic Differences in Homicides of Adult Women and the Role of Intimate Partner Violence:*  
[https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6628a1.htm?s\\_cid=mm6628a1\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6628a1.htm?s_cid=mm6628a1_w)



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Thank you  
Feel Free to Contact Us

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