AN ACT Relating to increasing services to report and investigate missing Native American women; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. The legislature finds that Native American women experience violence at much higher rates than other populations. A recent federal study reported that Native American women face murder rates over ten times the national average. However, many of these crimes often are unsolved and even unreported because there are also very high rates of disappearances among Native American women. Furthermore, there is no comprehensive data collection system for reporting or tracking missing Native American women. This gap in reporting and investigation places Native American women even more vulnerable to violence.

The legislature further finds that although violence against Native American women has been a neglected issue in society, there is a growing awareness of this crisis of violence against Native American women, and a recognition of the need for the criminal justice system to better serve and protect Native American women. The legislature intends to find ways to connect state, tribal, and
federal resources to create partnerships in finding ways to solve this crisis facing Native American women in our state.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. (1) The Washington state patrol must conduct a study to determine how to increase state criminal justice protective and investigative resources for reporting and identifying missing Native American women in the state. The state patrol must work with the governor's office of Indian affairs to convene meetings with tribal law enforcement partners to determine the scope of the problem, identify barriers, and find ways to create partnerships to increase reporting and investigation of missing Native American women. Collaboration with federally recognized tribes must be conducted in respect for government-to-government relations. The state patrol also must work with the federal department of justice to increase information sharing and coordinating resources that can focus on reporting and investigating missing Native American women in the state.

(2) By June 1, 2019, the state patrol must report to the legislature on the results of the study, including data and analysis of the number of missing Native American women in the state, identification of barriers in providing state resources to address the issue, and recommendations, including any proposed legislation that may be needed to address the problem.

(3) This section expires December 31, 2019.