H-1035.1

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**HOUSE BILL 1713**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Mosbrucker, Gregerson, Caldier, Dye, Barkis, Corry, Sells, Lekanoff, Schmick, Orwall, Chandler, Hudgins, Ryu, Frame, Jinkins, Ortiz-Self, Peterson, Stanford, Van Werven, Tarleton, Valdez, Macri, Pollet, and Leavitt

AN ACT Relating to improving law enforcement response to missing and murdered Native American women; creating new sections; providing expiration dates; and declaring an emergency.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  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 are murdered at rates greater than ten times the national average. Many of these crimes, however, are often unsolved or even unreported because there are also very high rates of disappearance for Native American women.

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, as well as a recognition that the criminal justice system needs to better serve and protect Native American women. The legislature intends to find ways to connect state, tribal, and federal resources to create partnerships to find ways to solve this crisis facing Native American women in our state, while being mindful to include voices from both tribal and urban communities.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) Two missing and murdered Native American women liaison positions are established in the Washington state patrol. One liaison must reside in western Washington, and one liaison must reside in eastern Washington. The liaisons shall work to build relationships to increase trust between governmental organizations and native communities. The liaisons shall facilitate communications between:

(a) Indian tribes and tribal organizations and communities;

(b) Urban Indian organizations and communities;

(c) Tribal liaisons in other state agencies;

(d) Law enforcement agencies at the federal, state, local, and tribal level; and

(e) Nongovernmental entities that provide services to Native American women.

(2) The salary for the liaison positions is fixed by the Washington state patrol.

(3) To be eligible for hire as a liaison, an applicant must have significant experience living in tribal or urban Native American communities.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1)(a) A legislative task force on missing and murdered Native American women is established to monitor and improve law enforcement response to missing persons reports for Native American women, with members as provided in this subsection.

(i) The caucus leaders from the senate shall appoint one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

(ii) The caucus leaders from the house of representatives shall appoint one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of representatives.

(iii) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives shall jointly appoint:

(A) Two members representing families of missing and murdered Native American women, one from western Washington and one from eastern Washington;

(B) One member representing each of the following:

(I) The Washington state patrol;

(II) The Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs;

(III) The federal bureau of investigation;

(IV) The bureau of Indian affairs;

(V) The governor's office of Indian affairs;

(VI) The Seattle police department;

(VII) The Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians;

(VIII) A domestic violence advocacy group; and

(IX) Urban Indian organizations; and

(C) Two additional members if requested by the cochairs.

(b) The task force shall choose two cochairs from among its legislative membership. The legislative membership shall convene the initial meeting of the task force.

(2) The duties of the task force include, but are not limited to:

(a) Developing a best practices protocol for law enforcement response to missing persons reports for Native American women, as described in section 4 of this act;

(b) Developing a tool kit for tribal and urban Indian communities to educate families about what steps they should take if a loved one is missing, including how to report a person missing and what other actions they should take to involve law enforcement;

(c) Making recommendations to ensure that state and local jurisdictions are sharing information in response to missing persons reports for Native American women in ways already provided under state and federal law;

(d) Raising the public's awareness of the state and national crisis of missing and murdered Native American women;

(e) Building relationships to increase trust between governmental organizations and native organizations and communities to help facilitate the response to missing persons reports for Native American women; and

(f) Recommending ways that the state can provide support to the families of missing and murdered Native American women, with special consideration to the ways in which needs may differ between urban and tribal communities.

(3) Staff support for the task force must be provided by the senate committee services and the house of representatives office of program research.

(4) Legislative members of the task force must be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative members, except those representing an employer or organization, are entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

(5) The expenses of the task force must be paid jointly by the senate and house of representatives. Task force expenditures are subject to approval by the senate facilities and operations committee and the house of representatives executive rules committee, or their successor committees.

(6) The first meeting of the task force must occur prior to October 1, 2019. The task force shall submit a preliminary report regarding its initial findings and recommendations to the appropriate committees of the legislature and the governor no later than December 1, 2019.

(7) The task force must meet no less than once per quarter.

(8) The task force shall report its findings and recommendations to the appropriate committees of the legislature and the governor by June 30, 2021.

(9) This section expires December 1, 2021.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that federal, state, and tribal jurisdictions across the state do not have any standardized response to missing persons reports for Native American women. The steps taken to find a missing woman differ depending on where she goes missing and to which law enforcement agency her disappearance is reported. While the legislature does not want to mandate that law enforcement follow a set procedure in every case, the legislature finds that establishing a standard response protocol for reports of missing Native American women, reflecting best practices as developed by experts and stakeholders, will help law enforcement locate more missing women more quickly.

(2) The missing and murdered Native American women task force established in section 3 of this act shall develop a best practices protocol for law enforcement response to missing persons reports for Native American women. The protocol must include steps that law enforcement should take upon receiving a missing persons report for a Native American woman.

(3) The task force must develop a database of nonprofit or nongovernmental organizations that provide aid or support in locating missing Native American women.

(4) The best practices protocol and database described in this section must be completed no later than December 1, 2019. The task force shall submit a report with the protocol and the database to the appropriate committees of the legislature and the governor by December 1, 2019.

(5) This section expires January 1, 2020.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately.

**--- END ---**