
SENATE BILL 5477

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

By Senators Torres, Trudeau, Braun, Muzzall, Billig, Boehnke, Conway, Dhingra, Frame, Hasegawa, Hunt, Kauffman, Keiser, Kuderer, Lias, Lovelett, Nguyen, Pedersen, Randall, Saldaña, Salomon, Shewmake, Van De Wege, Wagoner, Warnick, and C. Wilson

Read first time 01/19/23. Referred to Committee on Law & Justice.

1 AN ACT Relating to implementing the recommendations of the
2 Washington state missing and murdered indigenous women and people
3 task force; amending RCW 68.50.320; adding a new section to chapter
4 43.10 RCW; providing an effective date; providing an expiration date;
5 and declaring an emergency.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 43.10
8 RCW to read as follows:

9 The Washington state missing and murdered indigenous women and
10 people task force is established.

11 (1) The task force is composed of members as provided in this
12 subsection.

13 (a) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from
14 each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

15 (b) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one
16 member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of
17 representatives.

18 (c) The governor's office of Indian affairs shall appoint five
19 representatives from federally recognized Indian tribes in Washington
20 state.

1 (d) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of
2 representatives jointly shall appoint the following:

3 (i) One member representing the Seattle Indian health board;

4 (ii) One member representing the NATIVE project;

5 (iii) One member representing Northwest Portland area Indian
6 health board;

7 (iv) One member representing the American Indian health
8 commission;

9 (v) Two indigenous women or family members of indigenous women
10 that have experienced gender-based violence;

11 (vi) One member representing the governor's office of Indian
12 affairs;

13 (vii) The chief of the Washington state patrol or his or her
14 representative;

15 (viii) One member representing the Washington state office of the
16 attorney general;

17 (ix) One member representing the Washington association of
18 sheriffs and police chiefs;

19 (x) One member representing the Washington state association of
20 counties;

21 (xi) One member representing the association of Washington
22 cities;

23 (xii) One member representing the Washington association of
24 prosecuting attorneys; and

25 (xiii) One representative of the Washington association of
26 criminal defense lawyers.

27 (e) Where feasible, the task force may invite and consult with:

28 (i) An agent representing the federal bureau of investigation;

29 (ii) An agent representing the office of the United States
30 attorneys;

31 (iii) Federally recognized tribes located in a state adjacent to
32 Washington state; and

33 (iv) Any experts or professionals involved and having expertise
34 in the topic of missing and murdered indigenous women and people.

35 (2) The legislative members shall convene the initial meeting of
36 the task force no later than the end of 2023 and thereafter convene:

37 (a) A minimum of two subsequent meetings annually. The membership
38 shall select the task force's cochairs, which must include one
39 legislator and one nonlegislative member; and

1 (b) One summit annually with the state agencies involved with the
2 task force under subsection (1) of this section, federally recognized
3 Indian tribes in Washington state, federally recognized tribes
4 located in a state adjacent to Washington state, and urban Indian
5 organizations.

6 (3) The task force shall review the laws and policies relating to
7 missing and murdered American Indian and Alaska Native people. The
8 task force shall review current policies and develop recommendations
9 for the purpose of:

10 (a) Assessing systemic causes behind gender-based violence
11 including patterns and underlying historical, social and economic,
12 institutional, and cultural factors which may contribute to
13 disproportionately high levels of gender-based violence that occur
14 against American Indian and Alaska Native people and ways to improve
15 cross-border coordination between law enforcement and federally
16 recognized tribes that share a state border with Washington state;

17 (b) Assessing data tracking and reporting practices relating to
18 gender-based violence against American Indian and Alaska Native
19 people in Washington state;

20 (c) Making recommendations and best practices for improving:

21 (i) The collection and reporting of data by tribal, local, and
22 state law enforcement agencies to more effectively understand and
23 address issues of gender-based violence facing American Indian and
24 Alaska Native people;

25 (ii) Jurisdictional and data-sharing issues on tribal reservation
26 land and urban areas that impact gender-based violence against
27 American Indian and Alaska Native people;

28 (iii) The collaboration and coordination between law enforcement
29 agencies and federal, state, county, local, and tribal social and
30 health services; and

31 (iv) Strategies and practices to improve communication and
32 transparency with family members in missing and murdered indigenous
33 women and people cases;

34 (d) Reviewing prosecutorial trends and practices relating to
35 crimes of gender-based violence against American Indian and Alaska
36 Native people in Washington state;

37 (e) Identifying barriers to providing more state resources in
38 tracking gender-based violence against American Indian and Alaska
39 Native people and reducing the incidences of gender-based violence;

1 (f) Assessing and identifying state resources to support programs
2 and services for survivors, families of survivors, and tribal and
3 urban Indian service providers working with American Indian and
4 Alaska Native people that have experienced gender-based violence; and

5 (g) Identifying and making recommendations for increasing state
6 resources for trainings on culturally attuned best practices for
7 working with American Indian and Alaska Native communities for
8 tribal, local, and state law enforcement personnel in Washington
9 state.

10 (4) The task force, with the assistance of the Washington state
11 office of the attorney general, must consult with federally
12 recognized tribes in Washington state and in states bordering
13 Washington state, and engage with urban Indian organizations to
14 submit a status report including any findings, recommendations, and
15 progress updates to the governor and the appropriate committees of
16 the legislature by August 1, 2023, by August 1st each year
17 thereafter, and a final report by June 1, 2025.

18 (5) (a) The office of the attorney general administers and
19 provides staff support to the task force, organizes the summit
20 required under subsection (2) (b) of this section, and oversees the
21 development of the task force reports required under subsection (4)
22 of this section. The office of the attorney general may contract for
23 the summit.

24 (b) The office of the attorney general may, when deemed necessary
25 by the task force, retain consultants to provide data analysis,
26 research, recommendations, and other services to the task force for
27 the purposes provided in subsection (3) of this section.

28 (c) The office of the attorney general may share and exchange
29 information received or created on behalf of the task force with
30 other states, federally recognized Indian tribes, urban Indian
31 organizations, and other national groups working on missing and
32 murdered indigenous women and people issues.

33 (d) The office of the attorney general must coordinate with the
34 task force to create and update a missing and murdered indigenous
35 women and people resource. The resource must include:

36 (i) Instructions on how to report a missing indigenous woman or
37 person;

38 (ii) General information about the investigative processes in
39 missing and murdered indigenous women and people cases;

1 (iii) Best practices for family members in missing and murdered
2 indigenous women and people cases when working with law enforcement;
3 and

4 (iv) Other useful information and resources.

5 (6) Legislative members of the task force are reimbursed for
6 travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative
7 members are not entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses if they
8 are elected officials or are participating on behalf of an employer,
9 governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for
10 other nonlegislative members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

11 (7) To ensure that the task force has diverse and inclusive
12 representation of those affected by its work, task force members
13 whose participation in the task force may be hampered by financial
14 hardship may apply for a stipend in an amount not to exceed \$100 for
15 each day during which the member attends an official meeting of the
16 task force or performs statutorily prescribed duties approved by the
17 office of the attorney general. A person shall not receive
18 compensation for a day of service under this section if the person:

19 (a) Occupies a position, normally regarded as full-time in
20 nature, in any agency of the federal government, Washington state
21 government, or Washington state local government; and

22 (b) Receives any compensation from such government for working
23 that day. The office of the attorney general, by staffing the task
24 force, is authorized to assess eligibility for the stipend as limited
25 by available financial resources.

26 (8) This section expires June 30, 2025.

27 **Sec. 2.** RCW 68.50.320 and 2022 c 251 s 5 are each amended to
28 read as follows:

29 When a person reported missing has not been found within thirty
30 days of the report, or at any time the investigating agency suspects
31 criminal activity to be the basis of the victim being missing, the
32 sheriff, chief of police, county coroner or county medical examiner,
33 or other law enforcement authority initiating and conducting the
34 investigation for the missing person shall: (1) File a missing
35 person's report with the Washington state patrol missing and
36 unidentified persons unit; (2) initiate the collection of DNA samples
37 from the known missing person and their family members for nuclear
38 and mitochondrial DNA testing along with the necessary consent forms;
39 (3) ask the missing person's family or next of kin to give written

1 consent to contact the dentist or dentists of the missing person and
2 request the person's dental records; ~~((and))~~ (4) enter the case into
3 the national crime information center system through the Washington
4 state patrol electronic database; and (5) enter the case into the
5 national missing and unidentified persons system. Upon knowledge from
6 the national crime information center system, the Washington state
7 patrol's crime information center, or similar or subsequent
8 authority, that a person in custody at a jail, or being released from
9 custody, is the subject of a missing person's report, the jail shall
10 notify the agency of original jurisdiction for the missing person's
11 report.

12 The missing person's dentist or dentists shall provide diagnostic
13 quality copies of the missing person's dental records or original
14 dental records to the sheriff, chief of police, county coroner or
15 county medical examiner, or other law enforcement authority, when
16 presented with the written consent from the missing person's family
17 or next of kin or with a statement from the sheriff, chief of police,
18 county coroner or county medical examiner, or other law enforcement
19 authority that the missing person's family or next of kin could not
20 be located in the exercise of due diligence or that the missing
21 person's family or next of kin refuse to consent to the release of
22 the missing person's dental records and there is reason to believe
23 that the missing person's family or next of kin may have been
24 involved in the missing person's disappearance.

25 As soon as possible after collecting the DNA samples, the
26 sheriff, chief of police, or other law enforcement authority shall
27 submit the DNA samples to the appropriate laboratory. Dental records
28 shall be submitted as soon as possible to the Washington state patrol
29 missing and unidentified persons unit.

30 The descriptive information from missing person's reports and
31 dental data submitted to the Washington state patrol missing and
32 unidentified persons unit shall be recorded and maintained by the
33 Washington state patrol missing and unidentified persons unit in the
34 applicable dedicated missing person's databases.

35 When a person reported missing has been found, the sheriff, chief
36 of police, coroner or medical examiner, or other law enforcement
37 authority shall report such information to the Washington state
38 patrol.

39 The dental identification system shall maintain a file of
40 information regarding persons reported to it as missing. The file

1 shall contain the information referred to in this section and such
2 other information as the Washington state patrol finds relevant to
3 assist in the location of a missing person.

4 The files of the dental identification system shall, upon
5 request, be made available to law enforcement agencies attempting to
6 locate missing persons.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act is necessary for the immediate
8 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of
9 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes
10 effect June 1, 2023.

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