



Representative CJ McCormick

House District 38

Alaska State Legislature

HB 234

Sponsor Statement

"An Act relating to police officer training; establishing the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Review Commission; relating to missing and murdered indigenous persons; relating to the duties of the Department of Public Safety; and providing for an effective date."

House Bill 234 addresses high statistics of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons in the State of Alaska by equipping the Department of Public Safety and law enforcement with critical resources needed to examine and investigate MMIP cases. HB234 codifies the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Review Commission into state law, establishes two full-time MMIP Investigator positions under the Department of Public Safety, mandates cultural training within the Police Standards Council and requires the Department of Public Safety to submit an annual MMIP needs assessment report to the Legislature.

HB234 mandates local and state law enforcement agencies submit all missing person reports and data to the National Missing Unidentified Persons Database within 30 days of the first report. This is currently state statute in 12 states including New York, Washington and Oklahoma. NamUs provides a tool for data sharing and comparing case information across jurisdictional boundaries and delivers an additional resource to help investigators match long-term missing persons, resolve cases, bring closure to families and improve the visibility of all missing persons in the state of Alaska.

Alaska ranks 4th in the nation for highest cases of Missing & Murdered Indigenous People. While this statistic is alarming, the historic and on-going challenges with data, reporting and law enforcement engagement of MMIP cases demonstrates the immediate need for action. Rural regions face a severe lack of access to law enforcement, compounded by rotational shifts and temporary placement of police and State Troopers into communities. Cultural trainings provide tools to positively facilitate the daily work of public safety officers within indigenous communities.

The exorbitant rates of MMIP cases in Alaska illustrate the imperative for proactive examination and shifts to public safety practices to keep individuals, families and communities in Alaska safe. Governor Dunleavy and the Department of Public Safety have identified this as a priority. I ask that you support HB234 alongside tribal entities, communities and your constituents across Alaska.