

Alaska State Legislature

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Senator Donald C. Olson

CS FOR SENATE BILL 151(FIN)

“Missing/Murdered Indigenous People; Report”

Sponsor Statement for Version “H”

For decades, the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) has plagued our great state. These crimes take place from Utqiagvik to Anchorage, and the Aleutian Chain all the way to Southeast. While women and girls are the primary victims of violence and human trafficking, these crimes also impact men, boys, and elders. The absence of these lives is felt by family, friends, and their communities and has negatively impacted the health and well-being of generations of Alaskans.

Just last year this Legislature secured funding for two additional Department of Public Safety (DPS) MMIP investigators. These investigators have made significant progress in addressing cases that have historically gone unsolved, and we must continue momentum through the passage of legislation such as CSSB 151(FIN). Provisions of this bill directs DPS to employ at least two permanent MMIP Investigators who would solely investigate MMIP cases and requires cultural training to be incorporated into police office training.

This bill also establishes the MMIP Review Commission. This nine-member Commission brings individuals with diverse backgrounds and expertise together to review unresolved MMIP cases from different regions within the state. This Commission will submit a report to the legislature every three years with their recommendations and findings. Along with the Commission’s report, DPS must conduct a one-time needs assessment to determine how to increase protective and investigative resources for identifying and reporting MMIP cases within the state criminal justice system. This Act also requests DPS to collaborate with the Commission on public outreach purposes and lastly, requires DPS to submit a missing persons report to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System database (NamUs) within 60 days of the first report filed with local and state law enforcement agencies.

In closing, this legislation is necessary for the continued success of those who are working diligently to solve the tremendous amount of unresolved MMIP cases we have in Alaska, and I urge the body’s support and passage of CSSB 151(FIN).