

February 12, 2020

Dear Alaska Legislators,

My name is Mona Norton. My niece was Ashley Johnson-Barr. I'm writing to help support Senate Bill 101, sponsored by Senator Donny Olson. SB 101 "An Act establishing March 12<sup>th</sup> as Ashley Johnson-Barr Day" which was my niece's birthday.

This day, should it pass, would engrave and enlighten many who suffered injustice at the hands of those who were supposed to protect us; for example: Russian Orthodox Priests, and foremost, our family; people who we are related to.

Across the nation there is increasing attention to the epidemic of missing and murdered Native women and girls, and it is important to provide our state several tools that build on that momentum. Senator Lisa Murkowski has introduced legislation called Savanna's Act. This proposed legislation was introduced to combat the epidemic of murdered and missing Native women and girls by improving the federal government's response to addressing the crisis. The bill increases coordination among all levels of law enforcement, increases data collection and information sharing, and empowers tribal governments with the resources they need in cases involving missing and murdered indigenous women and girls wherever they occur. In coordination with Savanna's Act, SB 101 creates an opportunity to increase awareness, healing and prevention for our impacted communities and families.

No more Missing and Murdered Native Americans! #Savanna'sAct S.227! No more silence across our Nation! By passing SB 101, communities will have a designated day that provides space for collective healing and a platform for civic action.

For years, many of us have remained silent in the face of abuse and violence, but silent no more! No more silence carrying the burdens of abuse and violence because we have to "turn the other cheek", to "keep peace" in the family because "he wouldn't do that!" No more being "disowned" by your family because now family can say outloud that "what happened to you wasn't your fault!"

The impact this had on my family, village, region as well as statewide when she went missing! No more! Last year, my 2019 Christmas card read: It's been a tough, emotional year when my niece, Ashley Johnson-Barr was taken, raped and murdered! Hardly anyone I know would write that in their yearly Christmas card, but so many families relate to the loss, grief and pain. I called Ashley Purtiful because she was pretty and beautiful. It's been hard not to see her come through my door when her dad sends her over to pick up what they need. Although, it's nice to see her siblings, I can't imagine the heartbreak they all feel through the loss of their sister. My brother has been attending monthly hearings which became more frequent when the State & Feds agreed on a trial date. The first one is scheduled for January 24, 2020, followed by another one on May 11, 2020. Prayer Warriors, continue to pray for my brother and his family. Like many in my hometown and across Alaska, I promote #JusticeforAshley and #Savanna'sAct

No more! Moving forward, we will not dwell on what happened to Ashley's body! No more! Moving forward, we will be silent no more! This tough topic will be discussed! This tough topic will be openly talked about and we will listen and give the person time to heal, to cry, to move forward.

SB 101 and Savanna's Act, should they pass, are not just for Ashley or Savanna. It represents those Missing and Murdered Alaska Native and American Indian Women from our past, present. I'm talking about the families of Vickie Weber, Sophie Sergie, Kathleen Henry, and Della Brown. As well as "cold cases!" Senseless murders of our loved ones.

No more! No more invisible epidemic!

Thank you for your consideration,

  
Mona Norton

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