



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
Crystalyne Curley (928) 286-7918
nlnb.communications@gmail.com

Delegate Crotty provides testimony on missing and murdered Indigenous women to the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs



PHOTO: Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty provides testimony on missing and murdered Indigenous women before the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in Washington D.C. on Dec. 12, 2018. *(Photo courtesy of the Navajo Nation Washington Office)*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi’i’áhi/To’Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ałnáoz’t’l’í) provided testimony on missing and murdered Indigenous women before the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs on Wednesday during an oversight hearing entitled, “Missing and Murdered: Confronting the Silent Crisis in Indian Country.”

The Committee invited individuals from Indian Country to provide testimony and recommendations to address the growing number of missing and murdered Indigenous women across the country. The oversight hearing also provided an opportunity for tribes to advocate for

the passage S. 1942, also known as Savanna's Act, which was named after Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind of North Dakota who was murdered in 2017.

"I am here today on behalf of the Navajo Nation to implore this Committee to intervene to stop the alarming rates of our tribal members who turn up missing or murdered," stated Delegate Crotty. "Our Nation continues to observe firsthand the disastrous outcomes that stem from the lack of resources that exist for tribes and states to maintain databases on Indigenous missing persons, or the failure across multiple jurisdictions to effectively communicate with tribes to coordinate efforts to reduce the loss of our children, our mothers, and all of our women."

Delegate Crotty, who also chairs the Naabik'íyáti' Committee's Sexual Assault Prevention Subcommittee said the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women also affects transgender women, not only in rural areas, but also in urban areas.

"In 2005 and 2009, three Navajo transgender women were missing in Albuquerque, and were later found murdered all within a block of one another. As you can see, this epidemic of violence against our women is not limited within our ancestral land areas, but it is also prevalent in urban areas," added Delegate Crotty, who also noted that there are only five FBI agents and six victim advocates that cover the entire 27,427 square-miles of the Navajo Nation.

S. 1942 was introduced by U.S. Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D – ND) to raise awareness of the high rates of missing and murdered women in Indian Country. The bill seeks to improve tribal access to federal databases that track missing and unidentified persons, specifically American Indians and Alaska Natives. It would also require the Department of Justice to consult with Indian tribes while developing national law enforcement and justice guidelines when responding to cases involving missing and murdered Native Americans.

Other provisions incentivize federal, tribal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to incorporate these guidelines into existing processes, provides tribes and law enforcement agencies with training and technical assistance relating to the implementation of the guidelines developed under this Act, and mandates annual reporting to Congress on known statistics relating to missing and murdered Native Americans in the United States.

As a member of the Navajo Nation Council, Delegate Crotty has remained committed to advocating for missing and murdered Indigenous children and women. In September she also advocated for the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

You may view Wednesday's hearing and witness testimony by clicking on the following link: <https://www.indian.senate.gov/hearing/oversight-hearing-missing-and-murdered-confronting-silent-crisis-indian-country>

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