



Deborah Kafoury Multnomah County Chair

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February 21, 2019

Judiciary Committee
RE: Support for HB2625

Dear Chair Williamson and committee members,

I am writing in support of HB 2625 with the hope it will increase the public safety resources and accounting for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Oregon.

Growing up in Northeast Portland, I remember coming down the stairs to find strangers at our breakfast table. My mother, Gretchen Kafoury, would shelter women with children who were fleeing a violent partner. At the time I didn't know the terrifying situations they had faced or the potential for deadly harm. Their lives could have easily ended in homicide or missing persons cases had my mother not opened our home.

In the decades since, our state has seen shelter advocates, law enforcement and data analysts work together to protect, support and account for victims and survivors. This is true in many communities, with the notable exception of one. The deaths, traumatic injuries and disappearances among Indigenous women has continued unabated. Without accurate accounting, missing and murdered Indigenous women are overlooked, undercounted, and made invisible, whether they live in rural Oregon or in downtown Portland.

By investing your support in HB2625, you are investing in the safety of some of the most vulnerable people in our community, state and country. You have the ability and the responsibility to take these first steps to address data inequities and to equip the Native American community and statewide law enforcement agencies with accurate information to tell their stories and change the outcomes for Native American women.

Perhaps the most important service my mother provided was acknowledging their suffering and doing what she could to make them safe. I respectfully ask you to do the same.

Sincerely,

Deborah Kafoury
Multnomah County Chair