

## 2021 RES-025

### RECOGNIZING MAY 5, 2021 AS MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS AWARENESS DAY IN DANE COUNTY

**WHEREAS**, according to a 2016 report from the National Institute of Justice, 84% of American Indian and Alaskan Native women have experienced violence in their lifetime, more than half of whom experienced sexual violence; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, homicide is the third leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaskan Native women between 10 and 24 years of age and the fifth leading cause of death for American Indian and Alaskan Native women between 25 and 34 years of age; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2016, the National Crime Information Center reported nearly 6,000 cases of missing American Indian and Alaskan Native women and girls, yet the U.S. Department of Justice was tracking only 119 cases in the US missing persons database; and

**WHEREAS**, no reliable data exists on the actual number of missing Indigenous women and girls in the United States, instances of violence continue to be directed against Indigenous women, living on both reservations and in urban areas, at high rates; and

**WHEREAS**, the Urban Indian Health Institute found there have been at least six cases of missing and murdered tribal women and girls in Wisconsin in a 2018 report; and

**WHEREAS**, Wisconsin has been ranked as sixth in the nation in sexual trafficking, according to the Human Trafficking Institute, with urban centers being the hubs in the I-90/94 corridor, which has led to many Native women, girls, and two spirits being open to exploitation by traffickers; and

**WHEREAS**, Indigenous women experience racism and prejudice through invisibility, which is driven by a lack of media coverage. There are often nationwide manhunts, alerts, and round-the-clock news coverage when an affluent, white woman goes missing. However, news coverage can be minimal to nonexistent when an Indigenous woman or girl goes missing. Many missing and murdered Indigenous women today remain unnamed and their disappearances unknown or unheard of; and

**WHEREAS**, Indigenous women often hesitate or are unable to access help and needed services after experiences of gender-based violence because their unique needs are often not understood or met by mainstream agencies. Structural factors such as racism, stigma, and criminalization of substance use and mental health issues, culturally incongruent shelter policies, siloed programming, and gender inequality interact in complex ways, resulting in gaps, inefficient, and inadequate services for women who identify as American Indian; and

**WHEREAS**, the Wisconsin State Department of Justice formed the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force in 2020 to collect and study data and identify solutions; and

**WHEREAS**, Department of Interior Secretary Deb Haaland created the Missing and Murdered Unit within the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services to collect and analyze data, and to collaborate with different law enforcement agencies and governmental agencies; and

**WHEREAS**, some of the Wisconsin Indigenous women we know about include: Bad River Ojibwe members Angeline Whitebird-Sweet, murdered in 1989, Charlene Couture, missing since 2009, Sheila St. Clair, missing since 2015, and Tess White, murdered in 2016; Lac du Flambeau Ojibwe members Susan Poupart, murdered in 1990, LaVonne Frank, murdered in

1997, Donna (LaBarge) Peterson, murdered in 2004, and Emily Anne Marie Wayman, murdered in 2010; Ho-Chunk members Jennifer Wesho, murdered in 1989, Jacinda Muir, murdered in 2015, and Kozee Decorah, murdered in May 2020; Menominee members Lisa Ninham, missing since 1990, Rae Elaine Tourtilot, murdered in 1986, Ingrid Washinawatok, murdered in 1999, and Katelyn Kelley, murdered in July 2020, and Oneida member Lorraine Brown Bear, murdered in 2016; and

**WHEREAS**, we commemorate the lives of missing and murdered American Indian and Alaskan Native women and girls whose cases are documented and undocumented in public records and media and demonstrate solidarity with the families of the victims in light of these tragedies.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Dane County Board of Supervisors recognize May 5, 2021 to be Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Awareness Day in Dane County. This is a day we mourn and call attention to the many missing and murdered Native women and girls, as well as those who have experienced violence and assault and resolve to act to prevent further victimization.

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Analiese Eicher, Chair  
Dane County Board of Supervisor

Signed and sealed before me this

\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

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Scott McDonell,  
Dane County Clerk