



House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
The Honorable Melissa Wells, Chair
The Honorable Ken Kerr, Vice Chair

March 17, 2026

FAVORABLE – HB 588 – Missing and Murdered American Indian and Alaskan Native Women and Girls – Day of Awareness and Reporting Requirement

Dear Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and Distinguished Members of the Committee, On behalf of the South Asian Commission, I am writing to express our strong support for HB 588. This important legislation directs the Governor to proclaim May 5th each year as Missing and Murdered American Indian and Alaskan Native Women and Girls Awareness Day and requires the Department of State Police to provide data and reporting to the General Assembly. As Chair of the South Asian Commission, I believe this measure represents an important step toward bringing attention to an issue that has for too long received insufficient recognition. A formal day of awareness would highlight the serious challenges faced by Indigenous communities and ensure that the safety and dignity of women and girls remain a priority. Across the country, violence against Indigenous women and girls has often gone underreported or unnoticed. Establishing an official day dedicated to awareness helps bring visibility to this crisis and reinforces the state's commitment to recognizing and addressing these injustices. It also provides an opportunity for communities, advocates, and policymakers to engage in meaningful dialogue and education.

Another critical component of this bill is the focus on improved data collection and reporting. Reliable and transparent information is essential in addressing systemic issues related to missing persons cases. HB 588 strengthens accountability by:

- Enhancing the tracking of cases involving missing Indigenous individuals.
- Requiring the Department of State Police to provide relevant reports to the General Assembly.
- Helping ensure that Native American communities are accurately represented in statewide data and public safety discussions.

By establishing clearer reporting requirements, this legislation helps create a stronger framework for accountability and policy development. Every individual affected by these tragedies deserves recognition, and their stories should serve as a call to action to improve coordination, awareness, and prevention efforts.

The South Asian Commission also extends its appreciation to Delegate Terri Hill and the co-sponsors of this bill for their leadership in advancing this important initiative.

For these reasons, the South Asian Commission respectfully requests a **favorable report on HB 588**.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of this testimony.
Sincerely,

Gurpreet (Preet) Takhar
Chair, South Asian Commission