



**House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee  
The Honorable Melissa Wells, Chair  
The Honorable Ken Kerr, Vice Chair  
Lowe House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401**

**March 17, 2026**

**FAV | HB 588 – Missing and Murdered American Indian and Alaskan  
Native Women and Girls - Day of Awareness and Reporting Requirement**

Greetings Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and honorable members of the committee. My name is Gregory Yancey. I serve as Chief of Staff for the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives. We have the proud honor of hosting the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs among our Ethnic Commissions. First and foremost, I want to thank Delegates Terri Hill, Acevero, Feldmark, Guzzone and others for their leadership and responsiveness to our American Indian community on this serious matter.

HB588 shouts a call for awareness, action, and humanity. In 2013, Hanna Harris, a Northern Cheyenne tribal member, was murdered in Lame Deer, Montana. According to some reports, the concerns of Hanna's family members were downplayed and her body was severely decomposed when discovered. In honor of her birthday, May 5th, many in the indigenous community recognize a Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW). Similarly, on May 5, 2017, the National Day of Awareness for MMIW was recognized by the US federal government. Currently, five states (Alaska, Minnesota, Montana, North Carolina, and South Carolina) recognize MMIW.

The statistics are limited, yet still alarming. According to the US Department of Justice, nearly half of all indigenous women experience some form of domestic violence. According to the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC), 4 out of 5 indigenous women experience some sort of violence, and they encounter a murder rate that is 10 times the national average. Marginalized communities

disproportionately feel the injury of systemic failure, lack of access to resources, and underreporting.

The legislation also brings more notice, more accountability, and more light to expose perpetrators of violence against the American Indian community. Please support HB588 and our indigenous community.

Respectfully,

Gregory Yancey -GOCI-