

HB588- Missing and Murdered American Indian and Alaskan Native Women and Girls - Day of Awareness and Reporting Requirement

In FAVOR

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Yaateeh, Ashkii Auld yinishi. Toaheedlini nishlii, Auld basishchiin, Bitahni da shi cheii, Auld da shi nali. This is how I am Navajo. I am of the Water that Flows Together People and a citizen of the Navajo Nation. I come before this committee today to talk about my Bitahni sister, Ashlynne Mike. Who was kidnapped, trafficked and later found unalive. I just turned 12. Which means that Ashlynne was my same age just weeks ago. I am asking the Maryland delegation to please pass HB588 for my sister Ashlynne. I'd like to focus on the subject of human trafficking as it relates to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The kidnapping of Ashlynne highlights how easy it is to be at playing outside or walking home from the bus. Something as simple as getting off a bus and someone luring you with something fun. Ashlynne's case highlights how quickly a child can be taken. The US is a large place. One could easily drive from one state to the next. Does Maryland have reporting to verify if any of the people found are Native American relatives? I think it's important that we are counted. Ashlynne didn't do anything that is deserving of how she left this world. But as a Maryland resident AND a Navajo boy, I would like the state in which I live to be a safe place. I am a Native American that lives within the borders of Maryland. I want my voice to matter and count. I want my sisters and aunties voices to be heard and counted. They matter. I matter. Native voices matter. Pass this day of awareness in honor of my sister Ashlynne Mike. Ahe'hee