

BIDEN PRESIDENT

October 4, 2019

Dear Friends,

I am humbled and proud to extend my well-wishes to you all as you gather for our nation's first-ever tribunal on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). I am grateful to the organizers and supporters of this forum, especially the Blackfeet Nation, the Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council, the Global Indigenous Council, and the Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Association. To the victims, survivors, their families and advocates—those who've worked tirelessly to elevate and address this international crisis—I want to thank you for your courageous leadership. For too long, the epidemic of violence against indigenous women and girls has proliferated, and it's past time for a comprehensive solution.

Native American women experience the highest levels of violence in our country. They often lack access to the justice, health care, and culturally sensitive social services they so desperately need. But I believe that progress is possible, because I have seen it throughout my career.

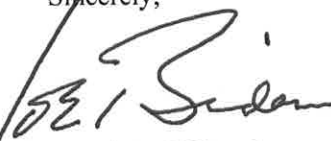
Last month marked the 25th Anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act. I believe now, as I did in 1994, that this epidemic, and how we decide to address it, cuts to the very core of how we measure ourselves as a society. This groundbreaking law was just the beginning of progress. In 2013, with strong support from partners in the House and Senate, I fought for the third reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, which recognized tribes' inherent power to exercise special criminal jurisdiction over non-Indian offenders who commit domestic violence, dating violence, or violate a protection order. However, critical systemic issues related to jurisdiction and data collection for MMIWG cases on reservation and village lands persist. That's why I support the 2019 reauthorization of VAWA that the House of Representatives has passed, which would expand tribal jurisdiction provisions to address crimes including sexual violence, child abuse, sex trafficking, and stalking.

The ongoing fight against the abuse of power has animated my entire career in public service. I know that the most powerful voices are those on the front lines, and I know that the strength of survivors and their families will see us through this epidemic—but only with greater attention, stronger commitments, and real follow-through from our leaders. As president, I will take a comprehensive approach, one that closes the data gap, supports tribes in building their own programs, expands tribal authority, grows coordination among law enforcement agencies, and expands access to culturally sensitive resources for victims and survivors.

In 2014, at the White House Tribal Nations Conference, I promised that I would stand by your side in this fight, whether I held office or not. Today, I renew that commitment.

All of the progress we've made on this issue is because of you. You've demanded attention. You've fought for changes to the law, and you continue to fight for the authority to ensure justice and fairness for everyone in your nations. I am grateful for and inspired by your courage, and I look forward to continuing work on this vitally important issue.

Sincerely,



Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

Biden for President • P.O. Box 58178 • Philadelphia, PA 19102

PAID FOR BY BIDEN FOR PRESIDENT

