



GREAT PLAINS TRIBAL CHAIRMAN'S ASSOCIATION

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June 17, 2019

RE: Urgent need for strong, enforceable stand-alone MMIW legislation based upon the GPTCA/RMTLC/GIC tribal alliance's previously proposed amendments to *Savanna's Act*.

Dear Senator Tester:

As Executive Director of the Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association (GPTCA), I would first like to thank you for your continued dedication and commitment to combating the MMIW tragedy that is devastating our tribal communities, both on our reservations and in urban environments. Your work and your willingness to listen to us is greatly appreciated.

To that end, I write to both support and urge you to move forward with stand-alone legislation based around the proposed amendments to *Savanna's Act* that are supported and recommended by the GPTCA, the Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council (RMTLC), the Global Indigenous Council (GIC), and several other tribal entities and tribal governments across Indian Country. The crisis is such that we need strong legislation with enforceable articles that can be implemented expeditiously. Much of the legislation introduced so far seeks to create committees, commissions and task forces, all of which are important. However, those bodies will take time to organize and become operational, and time is a commodity we do not have, as the MMIW epidemic is accelerating and the toll upon our people is counted in the lives of victims and the heartbreak of families.

We are in the eye of this storm, and due to that constant exposure and experience of our communities, we know what will be effective. The recommendations the tribal alliance proposed for *Savanna's Act* are crucial for addressing the crisis. Stand-alone legislation based upon those

recommendations would impact the epidemic. Two other areas that it is vital to address that could complete the legislation concern “man camps” and the known “tracks” of trafficked Native women and minors that lead to port cities in the Great Lakes region, such as Duluth, Minnesota, where our relatives – the victims of these heinous acts – are forced onto container ships for extended periods in both US and Canadian waters, which contributes to the cycle of trafficking on both sides of the border. Look no further than Duluth, Minnesota and Thunder bay, Ontario.

None of the legislation proposed so far addresses the ports/container ship dynamic, or the extractive industry “man camps.” What data there is and the accounts of surviving victims in our communities, demonstrates that sexual violence against Native women and children increases dramatically with the establishment of “man camps” in proximity to Indian reservations. From zoning loopholes, to how these “man camps” are policed and under which jurisdiction they fall, through to the corporations employing these transient workers being compelled to enforce that sex-offenders among their employees register with the requisite local authorities, are among the aspects that must be addressed. The tribal nations of the GPTCA and RMTLC are at extreme risk from this threat, and the I-90 trafficking corridor from Billings, Montana to Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The GPTCA is composed of the 16 Tribal Chairmen, Presidents, and Chairpersons of the federally recognized sovereign Indian Tribes within the Great Plains Region of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (the states of North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska), which includes the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Oglala Sioux Tribe, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Yankton Sioux Tribe, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Santee Sioux Tribe, Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe, the Ponca Nation of Nebraska, the Omaha Tribe, the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, Turtle Mountain Chippewa, and the Three Affiliated Tribes (Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara).

We agree that the *Reduce, Return and Recover Act* would be an appropriate title for this legislation.

Wopila!
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "A. Gay Kingman".

A. Gay Kingman, Executive Director,
Great Plains Tribal Chairman’s Association.