

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls

Rep. Debra Lekanoff (Tlingit), 40th Legislative District

MURDER

The third-leading cause of death
among American Indian/Alaska
Native women.

THIS IS AN UNDERCOUNT. WE KNOW THERE ARE MORE VICTIMS.

506 MMIWG cases were identified across 71 selected urban cities

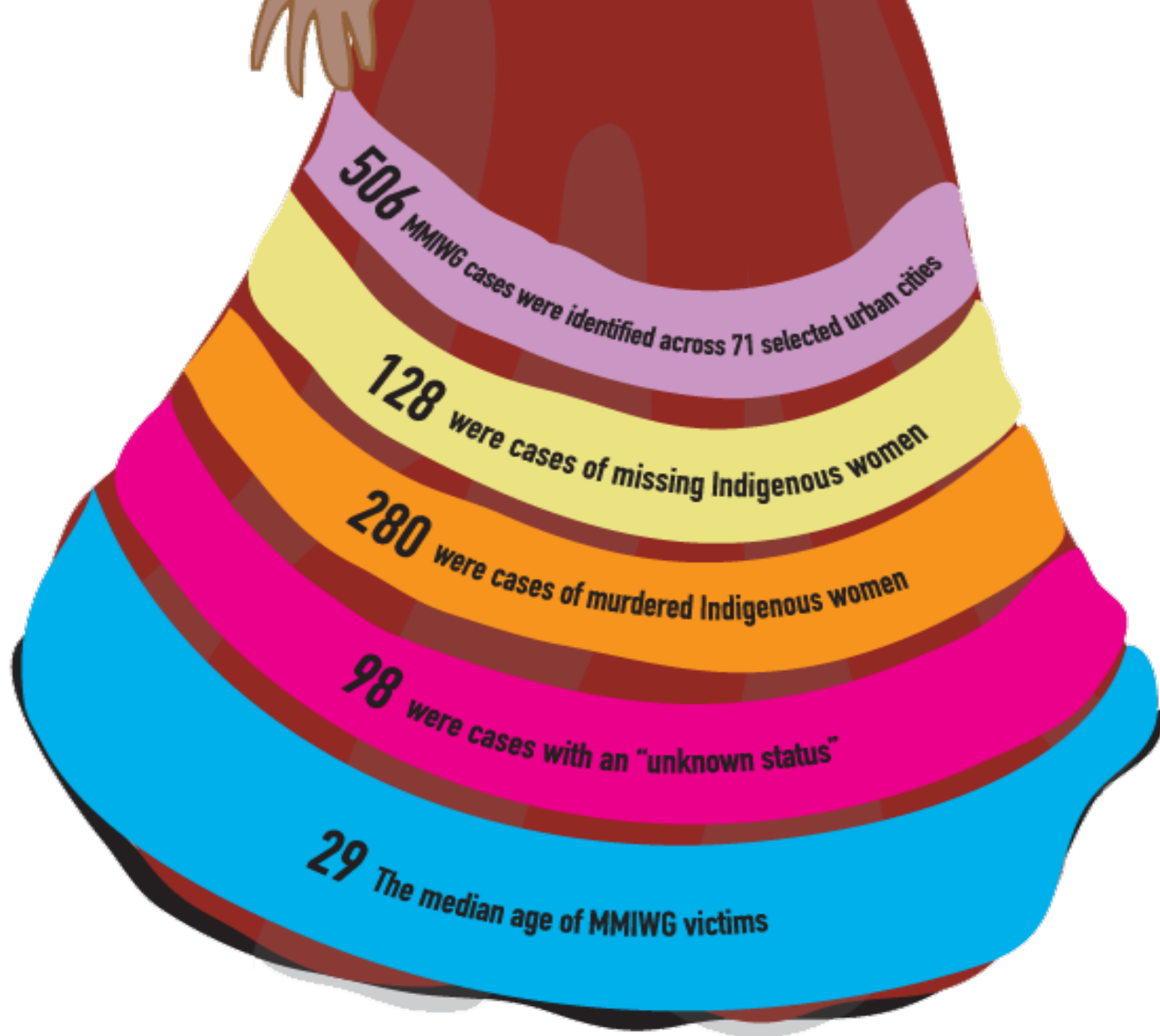
128 were cases of missing Indigenous women

280 were cases of murdered Indigenous women

98 were cases with an "unknown status"

29 The median age of MMIWG victims





"Until there is cooperation and better tracking systems at all government levels, the data on missing and murdered indigenous women will never be 100 percent accurate, which is what we need to strive for in order to protect our mothers, daughters, sisters, and aunties."

-Abigail Echo-Hawk (Pawnee)

Chief Research Officer of Seattle Indian Health Board and Director of Urban Indian Health Institute

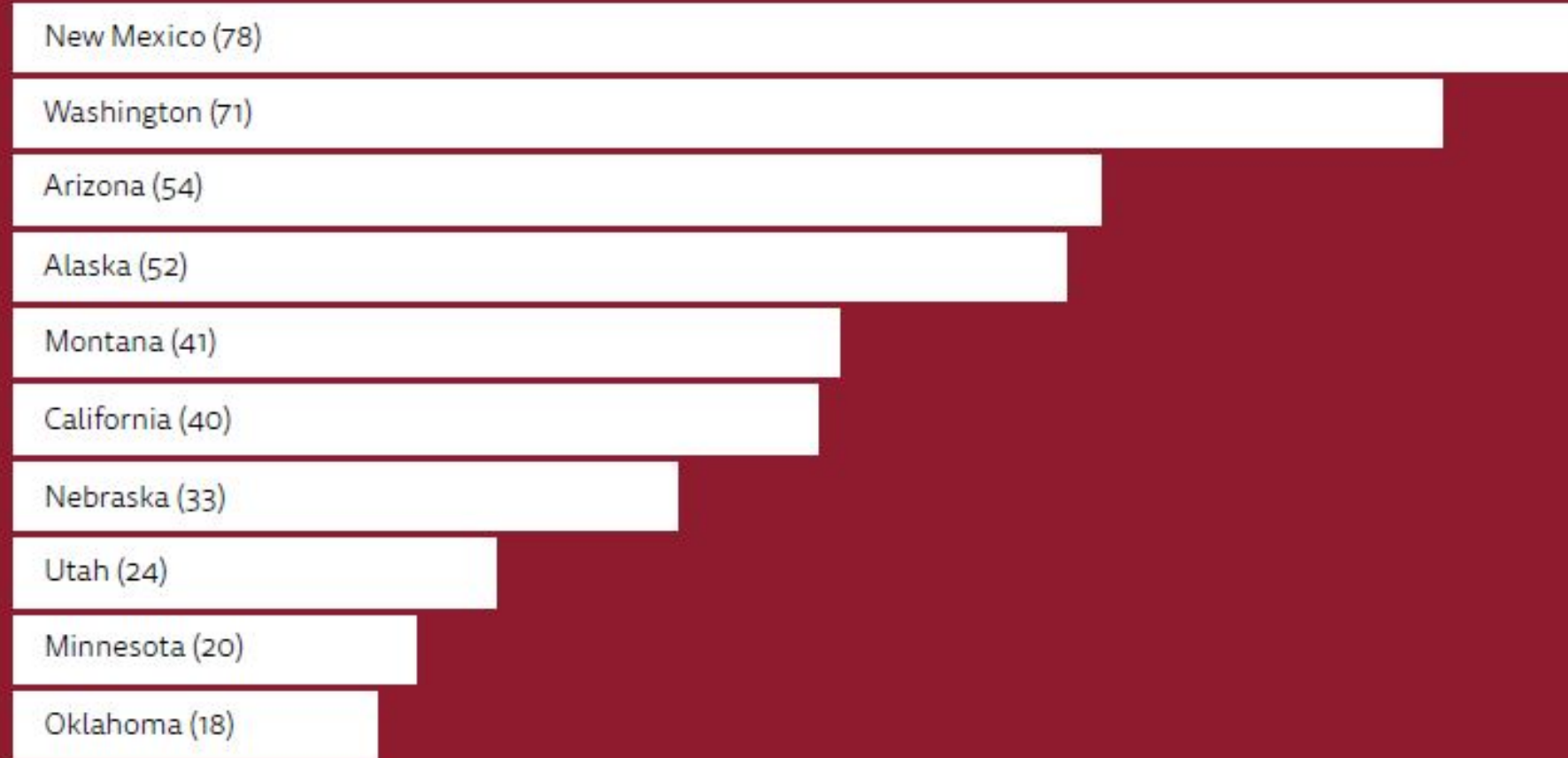
TOP 10 CITIES WITH HIGHEST NUMBER OF MMIWG CASES



See Appendix for data from all 71 cities surveyed.



TOP 10 STATES WITH HIGHEST NUMBER OF MMIWG CASES



**Urban Indian
Health Institute**

A Division of the Seattle Indian Health Board



Chad, you
NY Cole for the
Best Sister Even
Boy



Washington State Policy Efforts

HB 2951 – 2017-18

Ordering a study to determine how to increase reporting and investigation of missing Native American women.

- ▶ Directed the Washington State Patrol to conduct a study to determine how to increase state resources for reporting and identifying missing Native women.
- ▶ Held several community convenings across Washington State.
- ▶ Released a report to legislature in May 2019.

HB 1713 – 2018 -19

Improving law enforcement response to missing and murdered Native American women.

- ▶ Authorizes two tribal liaisons within the Washington State Patrol to improve Tribal-state law enforcement relations.
- ▶ Directs Governor's Office of Indian Affairs to train Washington State Patrol on principles of government-to-government relationships.
- ▶ Directs Washington State Patrol to develop best practices for local enforcement protocol for cases of missing Indigenous people.

Nationwide State Level Policy Efforts

9 bills in 8 states have passed with policy and system changes to address MMIWG issues including taskforces, trainings, procedural changes, and community engagement.

9 Pieces of
legislation in
8 states

Federal Level Policy Efforts

- Savanna's Act *H.R.2733/S.227*
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) *H.R.1585/S.*
- Studying the MMIW Indian Crisis Act/Review of Law Enforcement at Federal Level on Why We Got Here and Where We Can Go *H.R.2029/S.336*
- Not Invisible Act *H.R.2438/S.982*

4 Federal bills
to address
MMIWG

We need Native women leading the MMIW movement.



Patsy Whitefoot (Yakama/Diné), MMIW activist and leader

Support holistic approaches and the policy efforts of tribes and urban Indian organizations to address the MMIW epidemic.

Holistic Approaches

- Community-led data collection and reporting
- Culturally attuned trainings for law enforcement agencies
- Public safety outreach in tribal and urban Indian communities
- Sexual assault services
- Gender-based violence
- Behavioral health
- Homelessness
- Engage communities most impacted
- Invest in Indigenous approaches
- Mandate improvements in data collection and reporting
- Strengthen accountability

Policy Recommendations

- Address jurisdictional challenges in Indian Country
- Increase tribal funding carve outs for direct services to prevent and address violence against American Indian and Alaska Native people
- Invest in tribal emergency management systems
- Increase public safety through community awareness and public outreach and education campaigns
- Invest in capacity and infrastructure, including trainings and technical assistance for tribal law enforcement and smaller municipal police departments to improve data collection and reporting abilities by addressing gaps in personnel, limited subject matter expertise, and technology infrastructure

Policy Recommendations

- Advocate for urban Indian inclusivity:
 - **Add inclusive legislative language** that explicitly names urban Indian communities and organizations in bill language, definitions, and data.
 - **Add urban confer policies** alongside tribal consultations, in circumstances where it does not threaten tribal sovereignty, to ensure development and implementation of programming is appropriately informed by communities most impacted by MMIWG.
 - **Reallocate a portion of state and county formulary and discretionary funding** for direct services and research conducted by tribal epidemiology centers and urban Indian organizations to ensure urban Indian people have access to culturally relevant services and providers.

What we are doing today

- City legislation
- Additional State legislation
- Community guidance committee
- Tribal engagement
- Community mobilization
- Education and awareness

How can the Women's Commission help protect Native women and girls.

What the Women's Commission can do

- Engage with policymakers and advocate for future legislation
- Ask U.S. Rep. Newhouse (WA-4) to add tribal and urban American Indian and Alaska Native women from across Washington State to the proposed field hearing at Yakama Nation
- Engage with Washington State tribal communities by hosting a hearing with Lummi Nation

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