



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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Delegate Crotty, MMDR working group continue to lead advocacy for Navajo families at N.M. MMIW Task Force meeting



PHOTO: 24th Navajo Nation Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty participated at the New Mexico Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force Meeting on Feb. 21, 2020 in Albuquerque, N.M. Delegate Crotty pointed out specific issues with the N.M. Department of Public Safety's missing persons clearinghouse report and provided recommendations.

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Today, Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty of the 24th Navajo Nation Council and the Missing & Murdered Diné Relatives working group shared updates with the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force. Delegate Crotty and the working group utilized the meeting to share updates and draw focus to law enforcement agencies and the N.M. Human Trafficking Task Force.

During the meeting, the task force allowed time for questions and comments from tribal communities. Delegate Crotty raised concerns to the task force regarding N.M. Department of Public Safety's missing persons clearinghouse report. The report indicated that the department utilizes race as an identifier, but do not include any tribal affiliation information of missing Native American persons.

“What I did not hear in the report is how many indigenous people are missing and how their office is working with the families. Also, in response to a comment that was made about law enforcement not making mistakes, I think the question should be ‘how can we do better,’ and work on best practices for missing persons cases and working with the victim’s families,” said Delegate Crotty.



PHOTO: Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty and members from the Missing & Murdered Diné Relatives met with First Nations Community HealthSource staff on Friday, Feb. 21, 2020 to discuss services for Navajo human and sex trafficking survivors and the need for transitional housing in Albuquerque, N.M.

The N.M. Department of Public Safety’s report also stated that their office is located in Santa Fe. Delegate Crotty pointed out that the location of the office poses a problem to many families that may need to drive hours before they can work with the office on their loved one’s missing persons case.

At the meeting, the N.M. MMIW Task Force shared the scope of its final report and information on a data gathering plan. The state mandated the final report and plan by resolution in Jan. 2019. The task force’s objective is to determine the scope of the MMIW issue, seek recommendations, and to set goals for a final report on their findings. Its work is due to the governor and state legislature in Nov. 2020.

The mandate also directs the task force to conduct a study on increasing state resources for reporting and identifying MMIW cases in the state. Additionally, the task force’s report will look at collaborations and partnerships with N.M. tribal governments, law enforcement agencies, and the United States Department of Justice to determine the scope of the issue and improve information sharing.

After the meeting, Delegate Crotty and Meskee Yatsayte, founder and volunteer advocate for the Navajo Nation Missing Persons Updates, visited the First Nations Community HealthSource. FNCH is an urban Indian health center located in Albuquerque. During their visit, Delegate Crotty and Yatsayte heard from the program regarding the handling of human trafficking cases and unsheltered indigenous relatives.

FNCH said they serve over 350 Native Americans who are experiencing homelessness in Albuquerque, 70 percent of which identify as Navajo. Delegate Crotty received two recommendations from FNCH: to advocate for additional transitional housing for trafficking survivors and to support greater protections for Navajo foster children facing placements in non-indigenous households.

Earlier this week, Delegate Crotty presented on the Navajo Nation's missing and murdered crises to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Gallup on Tuesday. On Wednesday, Delegate Crotty gave similar presentations at the 6th International Meeting on Indigenous Women's Health held in Albuquerque.

"It's important that we continue to educate our federal and state partners on issue relating to MMDR because we want to prioritize accountability for services they provide to Navajo communities, and to also elevate the voices of the families affected by MMDR. Too often, the testimony of families is overlooked when they are the ones who are the key to developing solutions and understanding gaps in critical services," said Delegate Crotty.

The MMDR working group was established in Mar. 2019 through the leadership of Delegate Crotty, a longtime advocate against sexual and domestic violence, human trafficking, and other social and public safety issues that affect the Navajo Nation. The group is comprised of several volunteer members who are taking a multidisciplinary approach to the missing and murdered crisis on the Navajo Nation.

To find out more about the Missing & Murdered Diné Relatives crisis and how the Navajo Nation is responding, please visit www.navajommdr.com. Fill out a contact form to be added to the mailing list, or to request a presentation in your community or organization.

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