



Legislation Text

File #: Res 31900, Version: 1

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION reclaiming the inherent responsibility of the City to protect its most vulnerable populations; acknowledging the disproportionately high rate of violence against women of Indigenous communities; urging City departments to deliver sustainable investments that address the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) crisis, and establish a new, racially appropriate framework of understanding an approach to ending violence against Indigenous women and girls; and calling on the Mayor of Seattle to drive systemic reform that requests and empowers and holds accountable related City departments to work in cooperation with Native Communities to build trust and engagement for stronger government-to-government relations.

WHEREAS, Indigenous people of the lands now known as the Americas have occupied these lands since time immemorial; and

WHEREAS, since time immemorial, the Coast Salish peoples and Chief Sealth (Seattle) governed the Salish Sea (Puget Sound) region; and

WHEREAS, the city of Seattle, chartered 150 years ago, is built on the homelands of the Indigenous and first peoples of this region; and

WHEREAS, principles of government-to-government policy consultation set forth in the United States Constitution were re-affirmed in a historic 1994 Memorandum by United States President Bill Clinton, who called upon all heads of departments to administer activities affecting Native Communities “in a knowledgeable, sensitive manner respectful of tribal sovereignty”, and with “[consultation] of Tribal governments prior to taking actions ... all such consultations are to be open and candid so that all interested parties may evaluate for themselves the potential impact of relevant proposals”; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes that “indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of ... their colonization and dispossession of

their lands, territories and resources”; and

WHEREAS, due to this history, in addition to systemic oppression and institutional racism, Indigenous people in the United States are subject to disproportionately high rates of structural violence, homelessness, poverty, income inequality, death, and poor health and education outcomes, associated with barriers to access to employment, education, housing, health and mental health treatment, social services, and criminal justice; and

WHEREAS, federal relocation and termination policies forced Indigenous people from their traditional lands into urban areas, resulting in separation from family, clan, community, cultural institutions, and sacred sites; and

WHEREAS, a lack of recognition and awareness of these issues, through the perpetuation of settler colonialism, has led to historical and intergenerational trauma that continues to adversely affect Indigenous individuals, families, and communities; and

WHEREAS, four in five American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls experience violence in their lifetimes; and

WHEREAS, a recent study found that American Indian and Alaska Native women are murdered at a rate ten times higher than the national average; and

WHEREAS, these root causes as well as underreporting and racial misclassification have resulted in poor data about these missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) worldwide; and

WHEREAS, no data has been collected and publicly released by The City of Seattle on rates of violence among American Indian and Alaska Native women living in urban areas, even though approximately 71 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives live in urban areas; and

WHEREAS, in Resolution 31801, adopted by the City Council on February 26, 2018, the Civic Development, Public Assets, and Native Communities committee called for a review of current methods for collecting data on American Indians and Alaska Natives (“Native Communities”), and potential strategies for

improving such data collection, and exploration of the need for capacity-building for organizations seeking to assist Native Communities; and

WHEREAS, to fill this gap, the Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI), a tribal epidemiology center located in Seattle and a division of the Seattle Indian Health Board (SIHB), conducted a study that was the first national attempt aimed at assessing the number of cases of MMIWG across 71 cities in the United States and found Seattle to be the city with the highest number of MMIWG cases among the study area; and

WHEREAS, the same MMIWG study revealed the severe lack of quality data and accessibility of data on violence against Native Communities including racial misclassification and inconsistent data collection and reporting practices among law enforcement agencies; and

WHEREAS, the voices of Indigenous people worldwide have united to raise awareness of MMIWG; and

WHEREAS, in Resolution 31538, The City of Seattle acknowledged its responsibility to oppose systematic racism perpetuating disproportionately adverse outcomes for Indigenous people; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE MAYOR CONCURRING, THAT:

Section 1. The City Council and the Mayor will work together to create sustainable investments in research and direct services, and create racially appropriate and accurate data collection methods regarding missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) casework that is maintained and operated by The City of Seattle (“City”).

A. The City will work with the Seattle Indian Health Board (SIHB) to review current methods for collecting, disseminating, and using data on Native Communities; and identify strategies for improving the City’s collection of data to more effectively understand and address issues facing Native Communities. The City intends to identify resources to support this work; and

B. The City will consult with SIHB on how to further improve American Indian and Alaska Native

data and SIHB access to City databases.

C. The City will consult with local tribes, tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations to identify strategies and develop recommendations for a citywide tribal consultation and urban confer policy that honors the government-to-government status of tribal nations, improves tribal-municipal collaborations and communications, and involves tribes, tribal organizations, urban Indian organizations, and organizations led by and serving Indigenous communities in the design and implementation of services that impact Native Communities.

D. By the first quarter of 2020, the Mayor will submit a report to the chair of the Civic Development, Public Assets, and Native Communities committee, or its successor committee, that includes its findings and recommendations on developing a citywide tribal consultation and urban confer policy to better serve Native Communities.

Section 2. The City intends to create a culturally attuned police liaison position to build relationships that increase trust and engagement between the Seattle Police Department (SPD) and Native Communities. It is intended that the liaison will:

A. Facilitate communications between and among the City and (1) urban Indian organizations, such as SIHB; (2) tribal liaisons in government agencies; and (3) tribal liaisons at other law enforcement agencies (e.g., Washington State Patrol); and

B. Coordinate with SIHB staff to develop guidelines and assist with trainings relevant to interactions between Seattle police and Native Communities, including interactions that might result in the identification and electronic recording of the race of urban Indigenous people. The City intends to identify resources to support this work; and

C. Consult with SIHB and SPD to develop new policies that reflect best practices on the collection, reporting, and analysis of data and information on missing Indigenous persons, including requirements that all information related to missing American Indian and Alaska Native people must be entered in an accurate and

timely manner into applicable databases.

Section 3. The City shall invest in Indigenous-led approaches to ending gender-based violence by:

A. Coordinating with SIHB to provide training and technical assistance to SPD regarding how to record the tribal enrollment information or affiliation, as appropriate, of a victim in the Records Management System (RMS) database and other appropriate databases;

B. The City's Human Services Department (HSD) shall examine all existing contracts and programs to determine the adequacy of HSD funding for gender-based violence, sexual assault prevention and treatment programs, homelessness response, mental health services, and substance use disorder services for (1) tribes, (2) tribal organizations, (3) urban Indian organizations, and (4) organizations led by and serving Indigenous communities; and

C. By the first quarter of 2020, HSD shall submit a report to the chair of the Civic Development, Public Assets, and Native Communities committee, or its successor committee, that includes its findings on funding adequacy and recommend strategies to increase funding for tribes, tribal organizations, urban Indian organizations, and organizations led by and serving Indigenous communities. The recommendations shall include strategies to ensure funding for these organizations is equitable and sufficient; and

Section 4. SPD, HSD, and the Department of Neighborhoods shall request that Seattle-King County Public Health work with those departments to develop a system to notify Seattle residents of the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System; and conduct specific outreach to Native Communities regarding the ability to publicly enter information, through the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System or non-law enforcement portals such as NavUs or through the Sovereign Bodies Institute, regarding missing persons, which may include family members and other known acquaintances.

Section 5. SPD is requested to work in consultation with the culturally attuned police liaison and SIHB, including its research division the Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI), to coordinate new information pertinent to MMIWG research and to:

- A. Develop guidelines that improve its response dates and follow-up responses to cases of missing and murdered American Indian and Alaska Native people; and
- B. Develop guidelines on ensuring access to culturally attuned victim services for victims and their families; and
- C. Conduct a forensic review of missing and murdered American Indian and Alaska Native people who may have had their race misclassified in a City data system.

Section 6. SPD will develop guidelines on inter-jurisdictional cooperation among law enforcement agencies at the tribal, federal, state, and local levels, including inter-jurisdictional enforcement of protection orders for members of Native Communities.

Section 7. SPD shall annually publish on its website statistics on missing and unidentified American Indian and Alaska Native persons.

Section 8. The Mayor and the Chief of Police of the Seattle Police Department, respectively, shall provide to the City Council a report that addresses each issue noted in this resolution, as well as the steps the City has taken to prevent the abduction and murder of American Indian and Alaska Native people.

Adopted by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2019, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of _____, 2019.

President _____ of the City Council

The Mayor concurred the _____ day of _____, 2019.

Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2019.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)