

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Children, and Two-Spirit Individuals

- 1. WHEREAS**, Indigenous Women, Children and Two-Spirit Individuals have been disproportionately affected by violence, with alarming rates of disappearance, homicide, and assault, in California and nationwide; and
- 2. WHEREAS**, the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous Women, Children and Two-Spirit Individuals (MMIWC2SI) is a grave violation of human rights and a deep-rooted injustice, resulting in significant trauma and suffering that requires urgent attention and comprehensive action; and
- 3. WHEREAS**, the misclassification and underreporting of cases of missing and murdered Indigenous Women, Children, and Two-Spirit Individuals represent an ongoing data collection problem that exacerbates the difficulty of locating victims and documenting the magnitude of the crisis; and
- 4. WHEREAS**, California has established a Feather Alert Program to help law enforcement agencies investigate the suspicious or unexplainable disappearance of Indigenous persons, and to provide information to the public to aid in the swift recovery of missing Indigenous persons; now therefore be it

1. **RESOLVED**, that the California State PTA and its districts, councils, and units raise public awareness of the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous Women, Children and Two-Spirit Individuals (MMIWC2SI); and be it further

2. **RESOLVED**, that the California State PTA and its districts, councils, and units educate our communities about the extent to which this crisis among children and women disrupts Indigenous families in California; and be it further

3. **RESOLVED**, that the California State PTA and its districts, councils, and units advocate for better data collection and more accurate reporting, because misclassification and underreporting of MMIWC2SI incidents currently exacerbate the crisis; and be it further

4. **RESOLVED**, that the California State PTA and its districts, councils, and units increase knowledge among school officials and local families about the Feather Alert Act and how it can be used to help address this problem if implemented effectively in both urban and rural communities; and be it further

5. **RESOLVED**, that the California State PTA forward this resolution, with appropriate modifications, to National PTA.

BACKGROUND SUMMARY:

For many years, in California, and across the US, Indigenous women, children, and “Two-Spirit Individuals” have been disproportionately at risk for going missing – being abducted, often being abused, and sometimes being enslaved or murdered. This creates multiple layers of generational trauma.

(The precise meaning of “Two-Spirit Individuals” varies from nation to nation, and generally refers to individuals who embody multiple genders.)

Until recently, law enforcement has not prioritized tracking these cases. As a result, cases are frequently misclassified, underreported, or simply unreported altogether.

California is not exempt from the underreporting and the crisis that Indigenous families are now facing. According to Assemblymember James C. Ramos, California ranks fifth in the U.S. for having the most cases of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Children, Women, and Two-Spirit Individuals.

A 2022 California law, the Feather Alert Act, authored by Assemblymember Ramos, is designed to help locate missing persons. Like the Amber Alert and similar Alert laws for other groups, the Feather Alert Act involves the public in helping law enforcement locate, recover, and protect the victims.

The purpose of this resolution is to authorize and encourage PTAs throughout California to learn about this crisis and about the Feather Alert, and then to help educate their school communities and their wider communities about how we can help protect children and families who are at risk of becoming victims.

With this resolution, California State PTA will be standing with our fellow Californians to say No More Stolen Sisters, Children, and Two-Spirit Individuals. Working through our local PTAs, our organization is uniquely positioned to help achieve the goals of this legislation and the MMIWC2SI movement, bringing much broader awareness to a crisis that has for too long been silent and unseen.