

# **NCUIH President Elect Sonya Tetnowski Named to the Not Invisible Commission**

Category: Press Release

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***The Administration has demonstrated a strong commitment to including urban Native communities in efforts to end the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons.***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 5, 2022)** - Today, May 5, National Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) Awareness Day, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland and Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco hosted an event to announce the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)'s Not Invisible Act Commission (Commission). The Commission is led by the Departments of the Interior and Justice and is aimed at reducing violent crime against American Indians and Alaska Natives. Members of the Commission include Sonya Tetnowski (Makah), the National Council of Urban Indian Health's President-Elect and the Chief Executive Officer of the Indian Health Center of Santa Clara Valley. NCUIH supported the nomination of Ms. Tetnowski who also serves on the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs \(VA\) Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs](#).

**"I am honored and proud to be appointed to the Not Invisible Act Commission. In this role, I will work hard to shed light on the devastating impact of violence against American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) living in urban areas. Thank you to Secretary Haaland and Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco for this tremendous opportunity to represent American Indians and Alaska Natives who reside in urban areas,"** said Commission Member Sonya Tetnowski.

**"On behalf of all the brothers and sisters we have lost to the horrible epidemic of violence, I am encouraged by this Administration's commitment to ensuring that urban Native people are no longer left out of efforts to find solutions to end this crisis. From the President's Executive Order on MMIP to Secretary Haaland's work on this Commission, we are grateful that our leaders are listening and focusing on Indigenous-led conversations that include urban Native voices like Ms. Tetnowski. We look forward to the day when we no longer fear for the safety of our relatives,"** said Francys Crevier (Algonquin), CEO, NCUIH.

## **About the Not Invisible Act and the Administration's Work to Include Urban Natives on MMIP Efforts**

NCUIH worked closely with Congress on the *Not Invisible Act*, which was enacted in October 2020. The Act calls for the Interior Department to coordinate prevention efforts, grants, and programs related to missing and murdered Indigenous peoples. Secretary Haaland was the lead sponsor of the *Not Invisible Act* when she served in Congress. The bill was passed unanimously by voice vote in both chambers of Congress. The Act also established the [Commission](#). Earlier this week, DOJ [announced](#) the creation of a Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons Webpage (<https://www.justice.gov/tribal/mmip>).

On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed [Executive Order 14053 \(E.O.\)](#) on Improving Public Safety and Criminal Justice for Native Americans and Addressing the Crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) during the White House Tribal Nations Summit. The E.O. states, “Given that approximately 70 percent of American Indian and Alaska Natives live in urban areas and part of this epidemic of violence is against Native American people in **urban areas**, we must continue that work on Tribal lands but also build on existing strategies to identify solutions directed toward the particular needs of **urban Native Americans**.”

- [Policy Blast: President Biden Highlights Urban Native Americans in Executive Order on MMIP and in Tribal Nations Progress Report](#)

## About Commission Member Tetnowski

The following was included in a nomination letter prepared by NCUIH in support of Ms. Tetnowski:

Ms. Tetnowski will bring a deep understanding of the impact of violence on the health of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) living in urban areas to the Commission. As a board member of both NCUIH and CCUIH, Ms. Tetnowski is a leader in the provision of health and wellness services to AI/ANs living in urban areas. Violence is a key public health issue and is considered a social determinant of health (SDOH) and both NCUIH and CCUIH are committed to the reduction of violence of AI/ANs. Furthermore, as Chief Executive Officer of the Indian Health Center of Santa Clara Valley, Ms. Tetnowski has first-hand experience with the provision of health and wellness services to crime victims.

Ms. Tetnowski’s commitment to serving victims of violent crime is evidenced by her work supporting the Red Women Rising Project. The Red Women Rising Project works to uplift the voices of urban AI/AN survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. It does so through increasing awareness around urban AI/AN women’s domestic violence issues and enhancing survivors’ access to domestic violence services. The Red Women Rising Project was formed as a direct result of the gap in resources and culturally relevant services dedicated to serving the needs of the majority of American Indian women created by the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 and the of the Violence Against Women Act’s lack of focus and resources for AI/AN women living in urban areas. As a member of the Commission, Ms. Tetnowski will bring key knowledge and experience about the impact of violent crime against AI/ANs living in urban areas.

Finally, Ms. Tetnowski’s unique background will contribute to the Commission’s diversity of experience, background, and geography. Ms. Tetnowski is a member of the Makah Tribe and grew up on the Tribe’s land on the tip of the Olympic Peninsula. As a Soldier in the United States Army, Ms. Tetnowski was stationed at both Ft. Lewis, Washington and Ft. Bragg, North Carolina and deployed in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and Operation Uphold Democracy. She has served AI/ANs in numerous capacities including as the CEO of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe in Port Angeles, Washington, as the Executive Director of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Economic Development Corporation in Portland, Oregon, and as the Economic Development Director for the Makah Tribe in Neah Bay, Washington. Currently, Ms. Tetnowski works as the CEO of the Indian Health Center of Santa Clara Valley, in San Jose, California.

## About the Commission

Among its mission, the Commission will:

- Identify, report and respond to instances of missing and murdered Indigenous peoples (MMIP) cases and human trafficking,
- Develop legislative and administrative changes necessary to use federal programs, properties, and resources to combat the crisis,
- Track and report data on MMIP and human trafficking cases,
- Consider issues related to the hiring and retention of law enforcement offices,
- Coordinate Tribal-state-federal resources to combat MMIP and human trafficking offices on Indian lands, and
- Increase information sharing with Tribal governments on violent crimes investigations and other prosecutions on Indian lands.

The Commission has the authority to hold hearings, gather testimony, and receive additional evidence and feedback from its members to develop recommendations to the Secretary and Attorney General.

## **Members of the Commission:**

- Bazil-Lu Adams, Officer, Yakima County Sherriff's Office
- Natasha Anderson, Nez Perce Tribe, Assistant Prosecutor for Nez Perce
- Deidra Angulo, Sonder Mind Mental Health Services
- Eric Broderick, retired physician
- Ruth Buffalo, Legislator, 27th House District of North Dakota
- Grace Bulltail, survivor or family member of missing or murdered person
- Francisco Burrola, Special Agent in Charge for Immigration and Customs Enforcement at Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- Elizabeth Carr, Senior Advisor to the Director, Indian Health Services - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Kerri Colfer, National Indigenous Women's Resource Center
- Christine Crossland, Senior Social Science Analyst, National Institute of Justice - U.S. Department of Justice
- Amber Crotty, Navajo National Councilmember
- Jordan Dresser, Northern Arapaho, Tribal Business Councilmember
- Michelle Demmert, Judge, Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
- Dale Fine, Jr, Special Agent, Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation
- Leanne Guy, survivor or family member of missing or murdered person
- Jolene Hardesty, Michigan State Police, Missing Children's Clearing House Analyst
- Carmen Harvie, survivor or family member of missing or murdered person
- Karen 'Kari' Hearod, Director, Office of Tribal Affairs and Policy; Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Admin - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Don Hedrick, Chief of Police, Rapid City Police Department
- Tamra Truet Jerue, Alaska Native Women's Resource Center
- Vivian Korthuis, CEO of the Associated Village of Presidents, Native Village of Emmonak
- Hope MacDonald LoneTree, Deputy Commissioner, Administration for Native Americans - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Annita Lucchesi, survivor or family member of missing or murdered person
- Jason O'Neal, Director, Office of Justice Services, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior
- Gregg Peterman, Supervisory Assistant U.S. Attorney for District of South Dakota; US Attorney's Office—U.S. Department of Justice
- Kim Poyer, Section Chief, Victim Services Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation - U.S. Department of Justice

- Allison Randall, Acting Director, Office of Violence Against Women— U.S. Department of Justice
- Shawna Roach, Investigator, Cherokee Nation Marshal Service
- Delight Satter, Senior Health Scientist/Advisor to the Director for Center for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Katherine Drake Schmitt, Deputy Director, Office of Victims of Crime - U.S. Department of Justice
- Heston Silbert, Colonel, Arizona Department of Public Safety
- Sonya Tetnowski, National Council of Urban Indian Health
- Karonienhawi Thomas, Sergeant, Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Police Department
- Kristen Welch, Walking Women Healing Institute
- Patricia Whitefoot, survivor or family member of missing or murdered person
- Cord Wood, Captain, Oregon State Police
- Daniel Yonkin, Detective, Montana Lake County Sheriff's Office