

Indian Law Resource Center

Indigenous Peoples' Rights

<https://indianlaw.org/safewomen/save-native-women-act-introduced>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Press Release:

SENATOR DANIEL K. AKAKA INTRODUCES BILL TO PROTECT NATIVE WOMEN AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

The Stand Against Violence and Empower Native Women (SAVE Native Women) Act would empower Tribes to prosecute violent crimes and improve prevention programs

October 31, 2011

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senate Indian Affairs Committee Chairman Daniel K. Akaka (D-Hawaii) today introduced S. 1763, the **Stand Against Violence and Empower Native Women (SAVE Native Women) Act**. The bill would provide Indian Country with jurisdiction over non-Indians who commit crimes on Indian lands, improve the Native programs under the *Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)*, and improve data gathering programs to better understand and respond to sex trafficking of Native women.

Senators Al Franken (D-Minnesota), Tom Udall (D-New Mexico), Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii), Mark Begich (D-Alaska), Patty Murray (D-Washington), Tim Johnson (D-South Dakota), Jeff Bingaman (D-New Mexico), Jon Tester (D-Montana) and Max Baucus (D-Montana) are cosponsors of the bill.

"According to a study by the Department of Justice, two-in-five women in Native communities will suffer domestic violence, and one-in-three will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime. To make matters worse, four out of five perpetrators of these crimes are non-Indian, and cannot be prosecuted by tribal governments. This has contributed to a growing sense of lawlessness on Indian reservations and a perpetuation of victimization of Native women," said Senator Akaka.

"American Indian women suffer disproportionately from domestic violence and sexual assault, and the Violence Against Women Act must be updated to more effectively address their unique needs," said Senator Franken.

"This legislation works to ensure services are available to survivors of assault in native communities, repair a fragmented criminal justice system, and give tribes more power to prosecute those who are committing such heinous crimes against women," said Senator Udall.

"By strengthening tribal jurisdiction we are empowering our Native communities with the tools they need to fight back against instances of violence," said Senator Begich.

"We cannot let the next generation of young Native women grow up as their mothers have-in unbearable situations that threaten their security, stability, and even their lives," said Senator Akaka.

"With the introduction of this legislation, the sponsors are sending a clear message that Congress intends to build on the incredible momentum of VAWA to ensure that the epidemic of violence against Native women will end in our lifetime," said Sarah Deer, Amnesty International's Native American and Alaska Native Advisory Council Member.

"Senator Akaka's SAVE Native Women Act has the potential to restore safety and justice for American Indian and Alaska Native women. It offers American Indian tribes the opportunity to increase life-saving protections for women living within tribal jurisdiction," said Terri Henry, Co-chair of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Task Force on Violence Against Women.

"This is an epidemic. It is unacceptable. And, we must stand against it," said Senator Akaka. "I am committed to working with the co-sponsors, tribal leaders, NCAI and others who diligently work to protect at-risk Native women, to pass this much needed legislation."

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