

UTFAV Newsletter

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Senator Udall holds listening session on "Addressing Gaps in Protections and Services for Native Women"

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On February 12th, U.S. Senator Tom Udall (D-NM), vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, along with U.S. Senator John Hoeven (R-ND) hosted a listening session during the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Executive Council Winter Session. Tribal leaders were invited to make comments regarding implementing and improving the landmark legislation that amended the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) to restore Tribal jurisdiction over non-Indians who commit domestic violence crimes

on Tribal lands. Senator Udall described that it was from the input of Tribe's that resulted in recent legislation that he introduced back in December. "Feedback from the five original VAWA Pilot Tribes served as the basis for the bill I introduced in December – S. 2233, the Native Youth and Tribal Officer Protection Act. This bill addresses three critical but unanticipated gaps in the 2013 special jurisdiction restoration: attempted domestic violence, family violence committed against

Native children, and crimes against Tribal law enforcement tasked with arresting and prosecuting violent offenders under the 2013 restoration", said Udall.

Udall also described Senator Hoeven's SURVIVE Act, which he is a cosponsor of, which will increase Tribe's access to resources to better serve victims by creating a 5% Tribal set-aside from the Crime Victims Fund.

Udall also announced his efforts in working with members of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to declare a National Day of Awareness for Missing

and Murdered Women and Native Girls to increase awareness.

Senator Udall ultimately described the importance of input from Tribal leaders and stakeholders doing the work at the grass roots level.

If you would like more information about the listening session or other opportunities to provide input to Congress, please email rcarr@utfav.org.

House Passed Legislation: Amber Alert Bill (HR 2666) Anti Online Sex Trafficking Bill (FOSTA)

The Ashlynnne Mike AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act

On February 26th, HR 2666 was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill would allow the Amber Alert system to extend to Native American reservations. Back in May, Representative Andy Biggs (R-AZ) introduced the bill in honor of 11-year-old Ashlynnne Mike. Ashlynnne Mike was a Native

American youth who went missing from her school bus stop in 2016 and was found dead the next day. At the time, Navajo Nation did not have an alert system in place when children went missing.

FOSTA

On February 27th, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act of 2017 (FOSTA). The bill gives prosecutors, state attorney

generals and sex trafficking victims a clearer route to use legal action against websites that host advertisements for prostitutes. The legislation was created because currently there is a lack of anti-trafficking laws that can be applied to websites that have material posted by third parties, such as Backpage. The bill amends the Communications Decency Act by specifically allowing

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criminal and civil actions against a website if its conduct violates federal sex trafficking laws.

If you would like more information about either bill, please email Rachel at rcarr@utfav.org

Uniting Three Fires Against Violence Updates!

Welcome Training Coordinator!

Vanessa Owaski-Patzwald

Vanessa Owaski-Patzwald has accepted the position of Training Coordinator. She will be assisting in meeting the needs of our tribal programs and their training interests. Prior to her new position, Vanessa worked at the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Advocacy Resource Center for ten years as the Legal Secretary and overall worked for her tribe for 12 years. She has an associate's degree in office administration and is a citizen of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

Welcome, Vanessa!

Vanessa can be reached at our office at (906) 253-9775 or via email at vpatzwald@utfav.org

DV Expert Witness Training

UTFAV is excited to move forward with the planning of a Tribal DV Expert Witness Training. The training is set for June 12-June 13 in Marquette, Michigan. US Department of Justice's Indian Country Training Coordinator Leslie Hagen, along with Herb Tanner, the previous Director of the Violence Against Women Project for the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan (PAAM) will provide instruction to participants over the two day period in the Federal Courthouse Building in downtown Marquette. Participants will have the opportunity to learn the important skills necessary to provide expert testimony regarding domestic violence through mock trial exercises inside an actual court room. It is our hope that a number of advocates will be trained and ultimately each Tribe will have a

network of Tribal advocates throughout Michigan trained and ready to provide expert witness testimony.

Advocates will be provided with travel assistance including hotel, reduced mileage and per diem. A room block has been made for the Staybridge Suites in Marquette, a new hotel featuring suites in every room and a manager's reception each weeknight evening.

Please call UTFAV at 906-253-9775 or email vpatzwald@utfav.org for more information about registration!

Tribal Leadership Summit

SAVE THE DATE

The Tribal Leadership Summit is set to take place during the week of September 17th at the Mission Point Resort on Mackinac Island. Please keep an eye out for an official save the date later this month.

Uniting Three Fires Against Violence

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Uniting Three Fires Against Violence is Michigan's Native American Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition. Our mission is to support Michigan Tribes in promoting the social change necessary to address the disproportionate rates of violence impacting our communities. We are dedicated to providing resources, safety and advocacy to ensure the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being of Native Americans victimized by violence.

For more information about Uniting Three Fires Against Violence, please contact us at 906-253-9975.

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