



Inspiring Native Leadership So Our Communities Flourish!



Esteemed Committee Chair and Members,

In Montana, Native Americans make up roughly 6.7 percent of the population, yet account for 20 percent of the state's male prison population and 34 percent of the female prison population. Once released, many face obstacles to re-entry such as lack of resources to gain stable and affordable housing.

SB 13, sponsored by Senator Jen Gross (D - Billings), requires a grant program be established to improve access to housing for Native American offenders reentering the community from the criminal justice system or who have a criminal history. Counties, cities or towns, and tribal governments would be eligible to receive the grant funding for services such as case management and housing placement services.

Therefore, Western Native Voice, along with our 10,401 individual members from across Montana that represent all eight tribal nations, and the undersigned, fully support Senator Gross' legislation to provide offenders, who have paid their debt to society, the opportunity for long term success. SB13 will also enrich communities by addressing critical housing needs and lead to reduced recidivism among offender.

Sincerely,

Marci McLean-Pollock
Executive Director, Western Native Voice

Co-signers:

Pastor Lisa K. Harmon
Billings First Congregational Church

MarCee Neary
Billings, MT

Reverend Mike Mulberry
Billings First Congregational Church

Montana Women Vote

Fort Belknap Indian Community Council

ACLU of Montana

Nell Eby, MSPR Peer Mentor
Billings, MT