



1899 L Street, NW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20036

T 202.822.8282
F 202.296.8834

HOBBSSTRAUS.COM

April 11, 2024

GENERAL MEMORANDUM 24-002

The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Will Hold a Legislative Hearing on Tribal Law Enforcement

The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs has announced that it will host a [legislative hearing](#) on two bipartisan, bicameral bills aimed at addressing issues pertaining to Tribal law enforcement. The hearing will take place on April 17, 2024 at 2:30 PM ET. Committee members will consider the Bridging Agency Data Gaps and Ensuring Safety (BADGES) for Native Communities Act ([H.R.1292/S.465](#)) and the Parity for Tribal Law Enforcement Act ([H.R.4524/S.2695](#)).

Introduced by Senators Cortez Masto (D-NV) and Hoeven (R-ND), the BADGES for Native Communities Act would revise federal policies regarding sharing information, reporting, and investigating instances involving missing, unidentified, or murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives. Among other things, it would create a grant program at the Department of Justice for Tribes to improve their response to missing person cases. It also requires the Department of Health and Human Services to ensure the availability of training on culturally-responsive mental health and wellness programs for Tribal and Bureau of Indian Affairs law enforcement officers. This bill aims to address Tribal concerns that Tribal law enforcement officers are inadequately resourced to address the public safety crises impacting Indian Country.

Introduced by Senators Cantwell (D-WA) and Mullin (R-OK), the Parity for Tribal Law Enforcement Act aims to address recruitment and retention challenges at Tribal Law Enforcement Departments. Primarily, the bill would allow Tribal officers to enforce federal law within the Tribe's jurisdiction if those officers meet certain training and background check qualifications. It also extends federal benefits, including retirement and pension, to those Tribal officers.

This hearing comes as both the House and Senate have demonstrated a particular interest in addressing the public safety concerns of Tribal communities. This hearing is the sixth on this topic to occur during this Congress. In addition, the Parity for Tribal Law Enforcement Act has garnered significant support—it has six bipartisan co-sponsors in the Senate and nineteen in the House. Tribal witnesses have also frequently cited this bill as a top priority in Committee testimony. The House passed it out of the Committee on Natural Resources on March 12, 2024.

###

Inquiries may directed to:

Joe Webster (jwebster@hobbsstrauss.com)

Jennifer Hughes (jhughes@hobbsstrauss.com)

Elizabeth Bailey (ebailey@hobbsstrauss.com)