
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 31 (Ramos) - Peace officers: tribal police

Version: June 9, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 3, 2026

Policy Vote: PUB. S. 6 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Bob Franzoia

Bill Summary: AB 31 would make permanent and Tribal Police Program under the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) that grants peace officer authority to tribal officers on Indian lands and elsewhere in the state. The bill would require the DOJ in coordination with the California Highway Patrol (CHP), to establish and administer the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Person (MMIP) Task Force.

Fiscal Impact: Estimated \$1.5 million in FY 2026-27, \$2.3 million in FYs 2027-29, \$2.3 million in FY 2029-30 and \$2.6 million ongoing for the DOJ Division of Law Enforcement, California Justice Information Services Division and Office of the General Counsel to support the Tribal Police Program. (Tribal Police Fund, General Fund)

\$10 million to \$15 million annually for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Person Task Force. (General Fund)

Background: The Tribal Police Program would grant peace officer authority to certain tribal police officers on Indian lands in the state. DOJ is authorized to select three federally recognized tribes to participate, set certain minimum qualifications and certifications and training requirements for tribal officers.

Proposed Law: CHP would be authorized to enter into an agreement with a tribal, local, state, and federal agency to facilitate information sharing and coordination for cases involving an MMIP case and would also authorize a tribal government, an investigating agency, and an investigating law enforcement agency to activate the task force for assistance.

Related Legislation: AB 2138 (Ramos) 2024 proposed creating a similar program to provide peace officer authority to qualifying tribal officers. The bill was vetoed by Governor Newsom. The veto message stated, in part:

Unfortunately, while well-intentioned, this bill creates a significant legal disparity between California peace officers and tribal police officers. There are a range of important obligations, as well as powers, that accompany peace officer status. These obligations must be maintained should the powers of peace officer status be shared with tribal police officers.

This bill address those concerns by requiring that a tribe participating in the pilot program must adopt tribal laws that are “substantively identical” to the Public Records Act and the Government Claims Act, must comply with any investigation by DOJ of a tribal officer-involved fatal shooting, must adopt tribal laws clearly and unequivocally waiving tribal sovereign immunity in lawsuits related to the pilot program, and must

accept adjudication of specified claims under state and federal law, rather than tribal law.

SB 891 (Cervantes) would create the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Justice Program (MMIPJP) within DOJ to improve collaboration amongst law enforcement agencies in cases of missing and murdered indigenous people. SB 891 is pending in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

Staff Comments: The Tribal Police Fund is hereby created in the State Treasury. All moneys in the fund, upon appropriation by the Legislature, shall be used to assist Tribal Police Program participants with fiscal needs associated with the development of information technology, such as the establishment of databases and recordkeeping, necessary for the purposes of complying with any state-mandated reporting required of California law enforcement agencies and employers of peace officers.