
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

SB 891 (Cervantes) - Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Justice Program

Version: January 14, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: April 13, 2026

Policy Vote: PUB. S. 6 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Bob Franzoia

Bill Summary: SB 891 creates the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Justice Program (MMIPJP) within the Department of Justice (DOJ) to improve collaboration amongst law enforcement agencies in cases of missing and murdered indigenous people.

Fiscal Impact: Costs to the DOJ in the low millions of dollars annually. DOJ estimates costs of \$1.4 million in Fiscal Year 2026-27, and \$1.9 million in FY 2027-28 for nine full-time positions in its Division of Law Enforcement, Victims Services Unit, Directorate Division, and Special Prosecutions Section, plus Information Technology software costs and consulting services for the annual report through December 31, 2028.

DOJ anticipates costs of \$2.3 million in Fiscal Year 2030-31 and ongoing thereafter to maintain the above described staffing levels for the MMIPJP and add two full time positions to the DOJ Research Services Branch.

Background: According to the author, "It is an unfortunate truth that across the United States, including California, there is an ongoing crisis of persistent violence committed against Indigenous people, especially women and girls." The Sovereign Bodies Institute has tracked approximately 18 new cases of missing and murdered Indigenous people (MMIP) per year in California since 2015. A 2018 Urban Indian Health Institute report highlighted inconsistencies in how these cases are understood by communities, law enforcement, and the media.

Existing law requires the Attorney General to establish and maintain the Violent Crime Information Center to assist in the identification and the apprehension of persons responsible for specific violent crimes and for the disappearance and exploitation of persons, particularly children and dependent adults. Existing law requires the Attorney General to establish within the center and to maintain an online automated computer system designed to effect an immediate law enforcement response to reports of missing persons, and requires the center to make information authorized for dissemination that is contained in law enforcement reports regarding missing or unidentified persons accessible to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System.

Existing law establishes the Rural Indian Crime Prevention Program, a program of financial and technical assistance for local law enforcement, within the Office of Emergency Services, to target the relationship between law enforcement and Indigenous communities to encourage and strengthen cooperative efforts and to implement crime suppression and prevention programs.

Proposed Law: This bill establishes the MMIPJP within the DOJ to:

- Facilitate collaboration and act as a liaison between tribal victims' families, tribal governments, and federal, tribal, state and out-of-state law enforcement agencies regarding active and inactive MMOP cases, including human trafficking cases;
- Provide technical assistance to law enforcement agencies investigating MMIP cases; and,
- Publish data on MMIP cases, as specified.

This bill requires DOJ to submit an annual report, until January 1, 2029. After that date, the report shall be submitted pursuant to the Reports to the Legislature statute (Government Code 9795).

Related Legislation: This bill is nearly identical (date adjustment) to SB 4 (Cervantes) 2025 which was held in Assembly Appropriations and under submission.

AB 2279 (Cervantes), vetoed in 2024, was substantially similar to SB 4 (Cervantes) 2025. AB 2279 would have required the program to provide grants to local and tribal law enforcement agencies to support investigatory activities. In his veto message of AB 2279, Governor Newsom wrote:

I am returning Assembly Bill 2279 without my signature.

This bill would establish the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) Justice Program within the Department of Justice to fund and support law enforcement agencies' investigatory activities.

I appreciate the author's commitment to addressing the ongoing MMIP crisis. My administration continues to prioritize policies that increase collaboration between law enforcement and tribal communities to bring justice to those impacted. In partnership with the Legislature, we increased funding in this year's budget for the MMIP Grant Program, which has awarded millions of dollars to support tribes' efforts to identify, publicize, investigate, and solve MMIP cases.

This measure is duplicative of those efforts and creates a new, unfunded grant program not included in the 2024 Budget Act. In partnership with the Legislature this year, my Administration has enacted a balanced budget that avoids deep program cuts to vital services and protected investments in education, health care, climate, public safety, housing, and social service programs that millions of Californians rely on. It is important to remain disciplined when considering bills with significant fiscal implications that are not included in the budget, such as this measure.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

AB 2944 (Waldron) 2024 would have authorized the Governor to appoint a Red Ribbon Panel to address the MMIP crisis, consisting of specified members. The bill would require the panel to produce and submit, by January 1, 2026, a study with recommendations to address the MMIP crisis to tribes, California's federal elected

officials, the Legislature, counties, cities, and federal, tribal, state, county, and local law enforcement agencies. This bill was held under submission in Assembly Appropriations.

Staff Comments: The 2024 Budget Act provided a one-time appropriation of \$13.2 million for the MMIP. The original appropriation for that grant program in the 2022 Budget Act was \$12 million one-time General Fund to be spent over three years in 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25. The 2023 Budget Act included \$12 million one-time General Fund for the Board of State and Community Correction's (BSCC) program. In summary for BSCC:

- 2022-23 = \$4 million
- 2023-24 = \$16 million
- 2024-25 = \$17.3 million

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