



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative Walt Blackman (R-7)

Representative Teresa Martinez (R-16)

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Reps. Blackman & Martinez Urge Immediate Action on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Crisis

News Conference Scheduled for May 20 at 9:00 a.m. at State Capitol Rose Garden

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – Republican State Representatives Walt Blackman and Teresa Martinez are calling for immediate state and federal action to address the alarming rates of violence against Native American and Alaska Native communities.

Recent reports from the CDC and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) show Native women and girls face some of the highest rates of sexual violence, homicide, and trafficking in the country. Native men also experience elevated rates of violent death. In 2016 alone, more than 5,700 Native women and girls were reported missing, yet only 116 were recorded in the federal [NamUs](#) database.

“This isn’t just about numbers—these are lives lost and families shattered,” said Representative Blackman, Chairman of the House Government Committee. **“We need our congressional delegation, state leaders, and federal agencies to act. Too many cases are ignored, misclassified, or left unsolved. I represent a district bordering the Navajo Nation, where many families continue to wait for justice.”**

“People in these communities need help—investigators, forensic tools, trained personnel, and victim services. Words are not enough. We need action,” Representative Martinez said. **“Our Native communities have waited long enough. This is a matter of justice. The time to act is now.”**

A 2017 GAO report found that nearly 60% of tribal law enforcement agencies lack the resources and training needed to investigate trafficking and violent crime. Violence in some tribal areas is estimated to be up to ten times higher than the national average.

Representative Blackman and Martinez are calling for increased data collection, improved coordination between agencies, more funding for tribal law enforcement, and the creation of targeted task forces.

The members will hold a **news conference on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.** at the Arizona State Capitol Rose Garden to urge action and raise awareness. Media and the public are encouraged to attend.

Follow Representatives Walt Blackman and Teresa Martinez on X at @BlackmanForAZ and TMartinez4AZ.

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