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State Patrol Delivers LB 154 Study to Legislature

MAY 22, 2020 (LINCOLN, NEB.) — The Nebraska State Patrol (NSP), working with the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and Legal Aid of Nebraska, has completed a study commissioned under LB 154 of the Nebraska Legislature. LB 154, passed in 2019, charged NSP with studying the issue of missing Native American women and children in Nebraska.

Through an exhaustive process spanning more than a year, the team analyzed information from multiple missing persons reporting systems and conducted listening sessions in tribal areas to gauge the scope of the issue and develop recommendations to address concerns raised.

“NSP has been able to develop new partnerships through this effort that are already working to benefit Nebraska’s Native American citizens,” said Colonel John Bolduc, Superintendent of the Nebraska State Patrol. “The most common points raised during the listening sessions illustrated a need to revitalize connections between tribal residents and law enforcement. That work can have a substantial impact on multiple facets of public safety, including missing persons cases.”

During this effort, the team discovered that a disproportionate number of Nebraska’s reported missing persons were Black (3.9 times population percentage) and Native American (3.1 times population percentage). The research also revealed that the greatest percentage of Native American missing persons are boys age 17 years or younger, accounting for 73.3% of all Native American missing persons in Nebraska. Among all racial demographics, 59.6% of Nebraska missing persons are boys age 17 years or younger.

NSP also found that many law enforcement agencies throughout Nebraska do not currently have a policy for reporting missing persons to centralized databases. Among the recommendations detailed in the report, NSP will work with the Nebraska Crime Commission to develop a Standard Operating Procedure for handling missing persons cases to be provided to other law enforcement agencies throughout the state.

Throughout the research and requests for information at listening sessions, the team did not learn of any unreported Native American missing persons cases in Nebraska. The full NSP LB 154 report can be viewed here.