



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

September 25, 2020

The Honorable Russell Vought
Director
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Director:

This letter responds to your request for the views and recommendations of the Department of Justice (Department) on enrolled bill S. 982, the “Not Invisible Act of 2019.” Despite the concerns expressed below, the Department recommends that the President sign the bill.

The goal of the “Not Invisible Act of 2019” is to increase the coordination of efforts to reduce violent crime in Indian country and crime against Native Americans. The bill requires that the Department of the Interior (DOI) designate an official within the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to coordinate prevention efforts and resources across federal agencies.

The bill also requires the Department and DOI to establish a joint commission on violent crime within Indian lands and against Indians. The commission would identify actions to combat violent crime, including recommendations for identifying, reporting, and responding to instances of missing persons, murder, and human trafficking of Native Americans. The Department and DOI would then submit a written response to the commission’s recommendations.

The Department is concerned that the location of the coordinator of federal efforts to combat violence against native people is in DOI/BIA exclusively. Direction of the Department’s activities by a DOI official would be inappropriate. An official in one agency cannot coordinate the work done by another agency. The Department has significant expertise with regard to the federal efforts to combat violence against native people through its law enforcement and prosecution functions, victim services programs, human trafficking efforts, grant and policy activities, and training and technical assistance providers.

Furthermore, the Department is also concerned that the bill specifies agency components that would have representatives on the Joint Commission on Reducing Crime Against Indians. The Department would best serve the new commission by selecting representatives that are well

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suited for this responsibility. Representatives from the Department should be determined by the Attorney General, at his discretion.

Despite these concerns, the Department recommends that the President approve the bill. Thank you for the opportunity to present our views. Please do not hesitate to contact this office if we may provide additional assistance regarding this or any other item.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "MB Hankey".

Mary Blanche Hankey
Deputy Assistant Attorney General