

# SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 112

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# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

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INTRODUCED MAY 9, 2024

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT**

**District 31 (Hudson)**

## **SYNOPSIS**

Establishes task force on missing women and girls who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color.

## **CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



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1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** establishing a task force on missing women  
2 and girls who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color.

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4 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*  
5 *State of New Jersey:*

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7 1. There is established a task force on missing women and girls  
8 who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC).

9 a. The task force shall consist of 15 members, to be appointed  
10 as follows:

11 (1) the Attorney General or the Attorney General's designee,  
12 who shall serve ex officio;

13 (2) the Commissioner of the Department of Children and  
14 Families or the commissioner's designee, who shall serve ex  
15 officio;

16 (3) the Commissioner of the Department of Health or the  
17 commissioner's designee, who shall serve ex officio;

18 (4) the Superintendent of State Police or the superintendent's  
19 designee, who shall serve ex officio;

20 (5) the Director of the Division of Criminal Justice or the  
21 director's designee, who shall serve ex officio;

22 (6) two members to be appointed by the President of the Senate;

23 (7) two members to be appointed by the Minority Leader of the  
24 Senate;

25 (8) two members to be appointed by the Speaker of the General  
26 Assembly;

27 (9) two members to be appointed by the Minority Leader of the  
28 General Assembly; and

29 (10) two members to be appointed by the Governor.

30 Appointed members shall be representative of the communities  
31 impacted by this crisis, including individuals who have been  
32 directly impacted.

33 b. Any vacancy in the membership of the task force shall be  
34 filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was  
35 made. Any member who shall miss three consecutive meetings of  
36 the task force without good cause shall be deemed to have forfeited  
37 and vacated membership on the task force.

38 c. It shall be the duty of the task force to:

39 (1) develop policy recommendations to ensure first responders  
40 are culturally competent regarding the severity and impact of  
41 missing and murdered BIPOC women and girls on the communities  
42 and families affected;

43 (2) develop training and education materials for BIPOC  
44 communities on methods of prevention and protection and social  
45 media protocols relating to missing BIPOC women and girls, and  
46 disseminate the materials in high-impact communities within the  
47 State;

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1 (3) develop strategies and recommendations for the Office of the  
2 Attorney General to collect statistics, demographics, surveys, and  
3 oral histories; conduct data analysis; and issue guidelines to ensure  
4 de-identified data is publicly available;

5 (4) identify traffic hubs, highways, and extraction sites that lead  
6 to or facilitate the abduction of BIPOC women and girls; and

7 (5) create a State-wide public awareness campaign.

8 d. The members of the task force shall be appointed within 60  
9 days following the enactment of this section. The task force shall  
10 organize as soon as practicable after the appointment of its  
11 members, and shall select a chairperson from among its  
12 membership, and a secretary who need not be a member of the task  
13 force. The task force may conduct business without a quorum, but  
14 only may vote on recommendations when a quorum is present. The  
15 task force shall meet at the call of its chairperson, and at the times  
16 and in the places the chairperson may deem appropriate and  
17 necessary to effectuate the task force's duties, and it may conduct  
18 public hearings at such place or places as the chairperson shall  
19 designate.

20 e. The task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance and  
21 avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or  
22 municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it  
23 may require and as may be available to it for its purposes, and to  
24 employ stenographic and clerical assistance and incur traveling and  
25 other miscellaneous expenses necessary to perform its duties, within  
26 the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available to it  
27 for its purposes.

28 The task force may use existing studies, surveys, plans, data, and  
29 other materials in the possession of any State agency and each  
30 agency is hereby authorized to make staff and information available  
31 to the task force so that the task force may have current information  
32 essential for its purposes.

33 f. Members of the task force shall serve without compensation,  
34 but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses actually incurred in  
35 the performance of their duties as members of the task force.

36 g. The task force shall report its findings and  
37 recommendations, including legislative proposals, to the Governor  
38 and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164  
39 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than 18 months following the organization  
40 of the task force.

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42 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire on the  
43 60th day after the submission of the task force's report to the  
44 Governor and the Legislature as required by subsection g. of section  
45 1 of this joint resolution.

STATEMENT

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This joint resolution establishes a task force on missing women and girls who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color.

The Centers for Disease Control has reported that murder is the third-leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native women. Additionally, in a 2020 report by the Women’s Media Center, it was reported there are approximately 64,000-75,000 missing Black women and girls across the United States. Cases involving BIPOC women and girls often are under-reported, do not receive the required level of attention by the media or law enforcement, and are categorized improperly by law enforcement officials.

The systemic racism, sexism, and suppression experienced by BIPOC women and girls leads to worse health, wealth, housing, education, and employment outcomes. Furthermore, there is no comprehensive database regarding missing and murdered BIPOC women and girls. Creation of the task force on missing BIPOC women and girls will address these inequities.

- The task force will be responsible for:
- (1) developing policy recommendations to ensure first responders are culturally competent regarding the severity and impact of missing and murdered BIPOC women and girls on the communities and families affected;
  - (2) developing training and education materials for BIPOC communities on methods of prevention and protection and social media protocols relating to missing BIPOC women and girls, and disseminating the materials in high-impact communities within the State;
  - (3) developing strategies and recommendations for the Office of the Attorney General to collect statistics, demographics, surveys, and oral histories; conduct data analysis; and issue guidelines to ensure de-identified data is publicly available;
  - (4) identifying traffic hubs, highways, and resource extraction sites that lead to or facilitate the abduction of BIPOC women and girls; and
  - (5) creating a State-wide public awareness campaign.

- The task force will be comprised of 15 members, as follows:
- the Attorney General or the Attorney General’s designee, who shall serve ex officio;
  - the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families or the commissioner’s designee, who shall serve ex officio;
  - the Commissioner of the Department of Health or the commissioner’s designee, who shall serve ex officio;
  - the Superintendent of State Police or the superintendent’s designee, who shall serve ex officio;

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- 1       • the Director of the Division of Criminal Justice or the
- 2       director's designee, who shall serve ex officio;
- 3       • two members to be appointed by the President of the Senate;
- 4       • two members to be appointed by the Minority Leader of the
- 5       Senate;
- 6       • two members to be appointed by the Speaker of the General
- 7       Assembly;
- 8       • two members to be appointed by the Minority Leader of the
- 9       General Assembly; and
- 10      • two members to be appointed by the Governor.