**NNABA CO-SPONSORS FOUR RESOLUTIONS ON NATIVE AMERICAN**

**VOTING RIGHTS AND VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN**

**AT AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION MIDYEAR MEETING**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **For Immediate Release**February 19, 2020 | **Contact**Robert Saunooke561-302-5297ndnlawyer@hotmail.com |

**PHOENIX** – On Monday, the American Bar Association (ABA) House of Delegates unanimously passed four resolutions cosponsored by the National Native American Bar Association (NNABA) concerning issues related to violence against Native American women and Native American voting rights.

“These are important policies that will protect Native women from violence and will allow Native Americans to participate fully in the democratic process, and NNABA was pleased to co-sponsor these four resolutions,” said **Robert Saunooke**, president of NNABA. “We urge that legislation is passed to remove barriers to voting in Indian Country and to reauthorize VAWA.”

Speaking in favor of [Resolution 10A](https://nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.americanbar.org%2Fcontent%2Fdam%2Faba%2Fadministrative%2Fhouse_of_delegates%2F2020-midyear-meeting%2F2020-midyear-10a.pdf&data=02%7C01%7C%7Cb4962c5f0cf44f0bc90d08d7b4cc80c8%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637176662727793734&sdata=iJ9sU1Xp3QVTdEEMXemnOnkD3tNads6hF4cIORVGFkI%3D&reserved=0), which focused on the crisis on missing, murdered indigenous women, **Mary Smith**, an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation, past president of NNABA, and current ABA Secretary, said she was speaking (see [Video](https://nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.americanbar.org%2Fnews%2Fabanews%2Faba-news-archives%2F2020%2F02%2Fmidyear-meeting-2020--house-of-delegates-takes-stand-on-a-gender%2F&data=02%7C01%7C%7Cb4962c5f0cf44f0bc90d08d7b4cc80c8%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637176662727803743&sdata=%2B4Xou70h1sJ24cY%2BbzNPmioWQ0hJcAxwduq%2BP0jcMn4%3D&reserved=0)) "to give a voice to indigenous women" whose voices are often not heard, and “hope that legislation is passed expeditiously so that data on this crisis is collected and that law enforcement can receive necessary resources to investigate and prosecute crimes against Native women.”

Speaking in favor of [Resolution 116](https://www.americanbar.org/news/reporter_resources/midyear-meeting-2020/house-of-delegates-resolutions/116/), which focused on reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, NNABA Delegate **Jerry Gardner** indicated that adopting the resolution would ensure that “the ABA would be able to completely support the expanded tribal jurisdiction provisions in the bipartisan VAWA Reauthorization” expanding Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction to also include “prosecuting non-Indian perpetrators of crimes.”

Resolutions [112](https://www.americanbar.org/news/reporter_resources/midyear-meeting-2020/house-of-delegates-resolutions/112/) and [114](https://www.americanbar.org/news/reporter_resources/midyear-meeting-2020/house-of-delegates-resolutions/114/) addressed barriers to voting faced by Native Americans, and urged passage of the Native American Voting Rights Act and legislation that allows voters to use an address other than a physical address, which is a common occurrence on reservations and rural locations where many Native Americans reside, for purposes of voting and registering to vote. “These resolutions support changes to ensure that Native Americans are not denied the fundamental right to participate in our democracy,” said Patty Ferguson-Bohnee.

*NNABA was founded in 1973 and serves as the national association for Native American attorneys, judges, law professors and law students, tribal court practitioners, and tribal advocates and strives to be a leader on social, cultural, political and legal issues affecting American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. NNABA’s work is centered on representation of indigenous communities and individuals, broadly covering issues important to the Native American community.*