



# CHILD ABDUCTION T.I.P.S. NEWSLETTER

*Training, Information, Practices & Strategy*

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**FREE CHILD ABDUCTION INTERVENTION & RESOURCE TRAINING**

**AUGUST 1-2, 2023 IN SANTA ANA, CA**

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[WWW.CHILDABDUCTIONS.ORG](http://WWW.CHILDABDUCTIONS.ORG)**

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### **Feather Alert**

by Ken Roberts

Captain, California Highway Patrol

Legislators from the Select Committee on Native American Affairs were urged by tribal leaders to take action to provide more immediate support when suspected acts of violence occur against California's Native Americans. Assemblymember James Ramos, the first California Native American elected to the state Legislature authored the Feather Alert bill, to codify Government Code § 8594.13 to allow for the activation of a missing persons alert when an indigenous woman or person goes missing under certain circumstances. The California State Senate Public Safety Committee voted 5-0 in favor of Assembly Bill 1314. The bill authorizes a law enforcement agency to request the Department of the California Highway Patrol (CHP) to activate a "Feather Alert," if specified criteria are satisfied with respect to an endangered indigenous person who has been reported missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances.

If those specified requirements are met, the CHP will activate a Feather Alert within the appropriate geographical area requested by the investigating law enforcement agency and assist the agency by disseminating specified alert messages and signs to engage the public for tips and leads when quick action is critical. The goal of the Feather Alert System is to engage with law enforcement agencies to notify the public when an indigenous person goes missing.

The Government Code specifies the following criteria that must be met for the issuance of a Feather Alert:

1. The missing person is an indigenous woman or an indigenous person.
2. The investigating law enforcement agency has utilized available local and tribal resources.
3. The law enforcement agency determines that the person has gone missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances.
4. The law enforcement agency believes that the person is in danger because of age, health, mental, or physical disability, or environment or weather conditions, that the person is in the company of a potentially dangerous person, or that there are other factors indicating that the person may be in peril.
5. There is information available that, if disseminated to the public, could assist in the safe recovery of the missing person.

In California, the Feather Alert joins these other special alerting programs overseen by the CHP:

- The AMBER Alert: which stands for America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response is used when children aged 17 or younger have been abducted or are taken and are in imminent danger. It has been in use since 2002.
- The Blue Alert: approved in 2011, notifies the public when a suspect in the assault or killing of a police officer remains at large and the search is active.
- The Silver Alert: used when elderly, developmentally or cognitively impaired persons are missing and are determined to be at-risk. The bill was approved in 2012 and went into affect in 2013.
- The Yellow Alert: effective January 1, 2023, notifies the public when the suspect in a hit-and-run results in the death of a victim is still outstanding.
- The Endangered Missing Advisory is used when an individual is missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances and is believed to be in danger due to issues with age, physical and mental health issues, weather, being with a potentially dangerous person or other circumstances.

### **Feather Alert Frequently Asked Questions:**

#### **Why is the Feather Alert important?**

The Feather Alert is an important step in bridging the gap between law enforcement and tribal nations when an Indigenous Person goes missing. California has the largest population of Indigenous Persons of any state and addressing this issue is of utmost concern. The Feather Alert provides law enforcement with additional tools and resources to help locate at-risk missing Indigenous Persons through cooperation between tribal nations, law enforcement, the media, the community, and the CHP. The Feather Alert is a direct call to action by state legislators to address the concerning problem of missing Indigenous Persons. The alert will assist tribal communities and law enforcement to quickly notify the public and enlist their help to locate missing Indigenous Persons.

#### **Does California encourage the system to go nationwide?**

The Feather Alert is new to California and has only been modeled similarly in two other state, Washington and Colorado. The CHP believes that this program could be of great benefit in addressing missing Indigenous Persons. The CHP would reach out to and work with our partners in Washington and Colorado to see what has been effective and what can be improved as we work with this new alert. As the alert is brand new to California, we want to see how it works, its effectiveness, and any lessons we can learn before we would make any official recommendation to other states or the federal government.

## How would the system work in conjunction with other states?

Washington and Colorado are the only other state with a similar alert program specific to indigenous persons and neither program is more than two years old. In the case where a missing indigenous person from California might be located in one of those states, we would work directly with those state partners to launch their respective indigenous person alert. In other states, we would work with the state individually to get the message broadcast when the need arises, utilizing the resources and alerts available within that state.

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### **The California Department of Justice's Office of Native American Affairs**

by Megan Eschleman

Clearing House Manager, Department of Justice, Missing & Unidentified Persons Section

The California Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Native American Affairs (ONAA) was established in 2000 to support the rights of tribal citizens and governments and help protect the public safety of tribal communities. The ONAA provides three main functions:

- Advises the Attorney General on matters of importance to California tribal governments and tribal citizens that promote the health, safety, and welfare for California's tribal citizens.
- Serves as tribal liaison between the DOJ and federal, tribal, state, and local justice systems.
- Facilitates and promotes a statewide framework for state and tribal partnerships that encourage the cooperation and collaboration between tribal, state, federal, and local justice agencies through coordination of intergovernmental services, programs, and technical assistance for justice-related issues.

The ONAA has partnered with California's tribal communities to develop multiple Missing in California Indian Country events. These events, in part, serve as critical public safety events for tribal communities and aim to elevate the state's response to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) crisis. The events allow for loved ones to report an individual missing, receive access to various governmental and non-profit resources, and/or provide a DNA sample for inclusion in the DOJ's Missing Person Database.

The first event was successfully held on April 22, 2023 at the Blue Lake Rancheria in Humboldt County, where local, state, tribal and federal justice partners came together to share critical information, resource availability, and partnership in addressing the MMIP crisis in California. The event included a traditional blessing, cultural sharing, justice partners and community resources spotlights, and a panel discussion with victim resources and tribal, state, and local resources. The second event will be held on September 30, 2023, at the Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians reservation in Riverside County though event details have yet to be released. For updated information, please visit [oag.ca.gov/nativeamerican](https://oag.ca.gov/nativeamerican).

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## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**The SVICAC Vigilant Parent Initiative** provides online safety training and the signs to recognize when a child may potentially be in danger on-line. The Silicon Valley Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program (SVICAC) helps state and local law enforcement agencies develop an effective response to technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation and internet crimes against children. For more information visit: [www.svicac.org/](https://www.svicac.org/)

The SVICAC

Vigilant Parent Initiative

# Making the Internet a Safer Place



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## ARCHIVED WEBINAR: SEX TRAFFICKING IN SCHOOLS

Overview: The sex trafficking of minors has become one of our nation's top concerns in the last few years. An increase in legislative efforts, community awareness campaigns, the creation of task forces, and providing funding for victim services has been paramount in addressing this issue, yet missing children, who are believed to have run away of their own free will ultimately become lost among the close to 450,000 children reported in the NCIC.

This training explores our students are being lured, what their missing categories are, and how social media is playing a role in all of this. It takes a closer look at CA's Education Code that requires schools to be providing human trafficking education in both middle school and high school. If you are interested in viewing this webinar please visit: <https://cirinc.org/abduction/webinars.html>

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[www.cirinc.org/abduction](https://www.cirinc.org/abduction)

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Megan Eschleman, *Chair, Clearing House Manager*, Department of Justice, Missing & Unidentified Persons Section
- Erin Runnion, *Vice-Chair, Founder*, The Joyful Child Foundation
- Bridget Billeter, *Deputy Attorney General*, California Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General
- Jeffrey R. Cugno, *Special Agent*, Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Deanne Castorena, *Deputy-in Charge*, Los Angeles Co. District Attorney's Office
- Marlene Glusing, *Legal Assistant*, Merced Co. District Attorney's Office
- Stephen Lagorio, *Deputy Chief*, San Jose Police Department
- Leslie A. Olson, *Program Manager*, Sacramento Co. Child Protective Services
- Ken Roberts, *Captain*, California Highway Patrol
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