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STATEMENT OF BRAD SMOOT
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PRAIRIE BAND POTAWATOMI NATION
HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
REGARDING 2021 HOUSE BILL 2008
JANUARY 19, 2021

Mr. Chairman and Members:

The Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation is one of the four resident federally recognized Indian Tribes in Kansas. As you may know, the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation is one of the largest employers in Jackson County, Kansas, and is a significant economic stimulator in northeast Kansas. Tribal government operations, Prairie Band Casino and Resort, and other business enterprises employ over 1,000 tribal and non-tribal employees who reside in Jackson and surrounding counties, including Douglas, Brown, Jefferson, Nemaha, Pottawatomie and Shawnee.

On behalf of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, we appreciate the opportunity to provide written support for 2021 House Bill 2008. This bill draws public attention to an issue that is very important to Native Americans in Kansas and across the country. We also want to thank the sponsors of this bill for its introduction.

The extent of violence perpetrated against Native persons in the United States is unacceptable. The Nation supports this legislation as an important first step in the State of Kansas' response to the missing and murdered indigenous persons crisis. We are hopeful that this first step will lead to increased state and local cooperation with tribal governments and tribal law enforcement, case monitoring, data collection, dedication of personnel, and establishment of task forces.

For those of you that want to learn more about this issue, we would call your attention to a valuable online resource, maintained by the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center. See www.niwrc.org. On behalf of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, we encourage this committee to favorably consider HB 2008. Please let us know if we can provide additional information.

Sincerely,

Brad Smoot
Legislative Counsel
Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation