

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by Section 11 of Article VI of the Oklahoma Constitution, I have vetoed Enrolled House Bill 1137.

While I support efforts to solve missing persons and homicide cases, I cannot endorse legislation that singles out victims based solely on their race. House Bill 1137 requires the creation of a unit within the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI) that focuses exclusively on missing and murdered Indigenous persons. But every missing person—regardless of race or background—deserves equal attention and urgency.

Oklahoma already has both the Missing Persons Clearing House and the Cold Case Unit within OSBI, which are tasked with investigating disappearances and unsolved cases across all communities. Creating a separate office that prioritizes cases based on race undermines the principle of equal protection under the law and risks sending the message that some lives are more worthy of government attention than others.

Justice must be blind to race. Our resources and investigative efforts should be deployed based on the needs of the case, not the identity of the victim.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Enrolled House Bill 1137.