



Notes from the Chief

What I'm working on for You



Osiyo -

Cherokee Nation remains committed to protecting our women and children from violence. As Principal Chief, I reinforced that dedication by creating the ONE FIRE program for survivors of domestic violence, and recently, the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council passed laws that strengthen our ability to protect Native women and children within our own jurisdiction.

The amended titles 21 and 22 of the Cherokee Code Annotated allow the tribe to better enforce the Violence Against Women Act tribal-jurisdiction provisions aimed at preventing domestic abuse and violence against women and children on tribal reservations.

These amendments authorize Cherokee Nation to prosecute non-Indians for domestic violence, dating violence or violations of protective orders within our jurisdiction. Cherokee Nation has the authority to hold offenders accountable for their crimes against women and children regardless of the perpetrator's race. This law will apply to a spouse or partner of a Cherokee Nation citizen or other tribal citizen with ties to our jurisdiction.

Additionally, the Tribal Council also modified Title 12 of the Cherokee Code Annotated, which gives Cherokee Nation's District Court the expanded ability to issue and enforce protective orders for acts of domestic violence occurring within the Cherokee Nation. The amendments enable Cherokee Nation courts and Cherokee Nation marshals to combat domestic abuse more effectively.

Native American women suffer from violent crime at some of the highest rates in the United States. With non-Indians constituting a significant percent of the overall population living on tribal lands, it is imperative that we take this action to close the jurisdictional gap in Cherokee Nation. This will have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of women and children within the Cherokee Nation's 14

counties.

I want to commend the Cherokee Nation Attorney General's office for working on this new law for more than two years, and the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council for taking this major step in flexing Cherokee Nation's sovereign muscle to bring justice to Native American victims.

We will continue to offer programs and services that curb the rate of domestic abuse. Our people deserve to live healthy and secure lives within the Cherokee Nation. We have always looked at how our decisions will impact the next seven generations, and providing a safe future for our children and grandchildren is an important part of securing that future.

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