

## United States Senate

November 13, 2024

The Honorable Bryan Newland  
Assistant Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington D.C., 20240

Dear Assistant Secretary Newland,

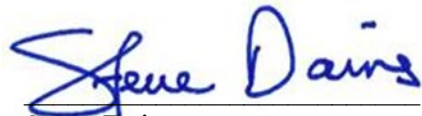
We write to raise concerns of glaring public safety and law enforcement deficiencies by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) on Montana's seven Indian reservations. On October 23, an eight year old boy was shot and killed in Lame Deer on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. This is only the latest tragedy in a serious crisis on reservations throughout Montana. We appreciate the diligent response from tribal law enforcement and partners from the Federal Bureau of Investigation that led to a quick apprehension of the suspect. However, Indian Country is facing a serious emergency with violent crime on the rise.

Recent data indicates that many tribes have experienced violent crime at substantially higher rates than the U.S. national average. Alarming, law enforcement personnel on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation have indicated that data in the Incident Management and Analysis Reporting System (IMARS) is inadequate and does not match the current realities seen on the front line by law enforcement. Even with insufficient data, it is clear that Tribal law enforcement across Montana is combatting unprecedented threats stemming from an influx of dangerous drugs, violent crimes like murder, human trafficking, and assault, and in some cases cartel members operating with impunity on reservations. The neighboring Crow Tribe is currently investigating the disappearance of a thirteen year old girl. Multiple Tribes have declared states of emergency in response to debilitating amounts of meth and fentanyl.

This crisis is exacerbated by a severe shortage of personnel that are forced to police millions of acres without sufficient equipment. Tribal officers are still operating without body cameras and other necessary equipment despite funding being made available by Congress and Tribes do not know when those resources will be delivered by the BIA. Several Tribes have indicated that they see a lack of transparency over funding for self-determination law enforcement contracts. This demands swift and immediate action.

We urge the BIA to work with relevant Tribal, county, state, and federal partners to address current public safety shortcomings in Indian Country immediately and appreciate the opportunity to assist the Bureau's efforts. We also ask that you provide a timely response to our concerns as well as the Tribe's.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Daines". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S".

Steve Daines  
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew M. Rosendale, Sr.". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Matthew M. Rosendale, Sr.  
Member of Congress