

March 31, 2014 Toothless Laws

For half a minute, we all got excited about Senators Hoeven & Tester introducing The Native American Children's Safety Act.

Spirit Lake even endorsed it. It shows the government recognizes (at last!) that Native American Children suffer horrific abuse--- so they are essentially making laws that will 'ensure' that the foster care homes and guardian homes don't have violent or sexual or drug offenders in them.

Yes, that will make it all better! But wait, those laws were already supposed to be on the books, weren't they? Wasn't it considered illegal to 'endanger a child'? Or for a pedophile, Registered Sex Offender to live in the same homes as the children? Or have access to or be around them?

Why, yes, it is already against the law! Several laws in fact. And just like this new, shiny, sparkly one rolled out by Senators Hoeven and Tester, they mean nothing.

We already have laws against child rape. We already have protocols in place for investigating child abuse--- but they are not followed either.

We already have in place, laws and protocols for following up on Mandated Reports... but as we have clearly seen... they are not followed... and there is no consequences to those who do not follow those laws.

There are no consequences to any of those who are supposed to enforce those laws, if they turn their backs on those reports, refuse to investigate the rapes, child rapes, and horrific abuses heaped on these kids.

In fact, Timothy Purdon and the BIA, as well as the Top Level ACF, among others, have strenuously opposed anyone making these reports, or asking for investigations into these unthinkable abuses... and there are no consequences for any of them.

Even after Timothy Purdon ignored or claimed to have investigated all the mandated reports, and took no action on even a single one, and a little girl, not yet three-years old, who had already endured daily and nightly abuse, both violent and sexual, was murdered, there was no consequence to Timothy Purdon whose office cut a deal with the killer just so there would not be a murder trial and he would not have to risk being investigated as an 'accessory before the fact'.

This new, shiny law of Hoeven & Tester also comes complete with strong terms, but no consequences, no means of enforcement, no downside for anyone in government or law enforcement that chooses to ignore the reports and the crimes committed against these children. None.

As noted, several times, we are still waiting for all these 'responsible agencies' to begin to investigate even a single child rape on Spirit Lake Rez. Oh, wait! That's right! Tim Purdon has investigated exactly ONE. Cue the canned applause.

Meanwhile, we all are horrified, stunned, brought to tears and angered beyond anything we've seen before when the Grand Forks Herald breaks a story that tells only a small portion of the horrors endured by children in the care of monsters.

Children whose situation was ignored by the very people who wear badges and who wear suits and carry the authority to investigate. We are appalled at the monsters, but those who ignored the reports, repeatedly, and who threatened, retaliated against and harassed those who made the reports--- they get to go to fund raisers and to awards dinners where they get to pat each other on the back.

Until we even begin to enforce the laws already on the books, and until we hold accountable those who are endowed with the authority and the means to enforce those laws but who refuse to act, until there are real consequences for those individuals whose paychecks are written with our tax dollars, nothing will change.

I am still endlessly stunned at the leap Senator Heitkamp makes when discussing the horrific crimes against children on the rez... immediately going into her theory that what is needed is more language and cultural programs. Also, economic development.

You know, keep the corruption and abuse in place, put more money into already existing language and cultural programs, and of course, economic development which benefits mostly the corrupt who have nothing to fear from anyone in government ever holding them accountable.

In short: Children are being raped, abused, and murdered. What shall we do about it? Send in the police? No. Investigate the crimes? No. Let's send them all, the victims and their abusers to language classes and cultural events... oh, and bring in corporations for some economic development!

You or your child has been raped. Do you really think what is needed is language classes? Cultural programs? Or for some corporation to come in and find ways to exploit the Indian Tax Loopholes? Or would you rather have someone say: "We need to investigate the crimes and corruption and start putting these perpetrators in jail!" Remember: Heidi Heitkamp received \$4 MILLION dollars and so far, she's come up with 'language classes, cultural events and Corporate loophole exploitation' as her solution to the problem.

Am I the only one that sees this as a major disconnect from the facts of the crisis at hand?

"Oh sweetie! I know you've been brutally raped and forced to dwell in the same home as your abuser... here, have a language class."

Give me a break!

Not one single government official has admitted that these crimes must be investigated. Not one, except Thomas Sullivan of the ACF, and his superiors have

shoved him so far out of the loop he may as well move his office into the broom closet.

So many of these high positions with the most authority have been gifted to political players as party favors, that the entire system is corrupt, from top to bottom, in every agency, and it shows when children are murdered, raped, tortured and abused.

It also shows when bridges collapse, oil spills pile up, buildings fall down, and our military chain of command misplaces 7 nuclear warheads for over 36 hours without anyone in high command knowing about it.

It shows when there are floods and slides that could have been avoided if the permits had not been granted for the sale of property as dwellings in places where the ground is unstable.

It shows when we don't have enough firefighters to put out forest fires or even in neighborhoods.

It shows when our schools fall the lower and lower ratings in the world, behind many countries we think of as 'Third World'.

The 'cuts' are showing. The political payoffs are showing. It's time we started holding government accountable for doing the job of enforcing the laws and arresting the corrupt instead of inviting them to fundraisers. It's time we demanded that those who rape and abuse children are jailed and the children are not threatened and harassed or retaliated against for speaking out, by the very agencies that are supposed to be protecting them.

If you want more horror stories, then, by all means, do nothing. What was revealed in the Grand Forks Herald and in that gut wrenching series "Innocents Lost" being done by the Miami Herald, is just the very tip of the iceberg. I can guarantee you there are many more stories just as bad, many even worse, on the reservation and throughout the nation, because of this culture of corruption and political payoffs and for the myth that government needs to be run like a business. Government needs to be run like a government, for ALL of us, and for our future.

We must hold government accountable for the damage they do and the damage they allow. We must hold these agencies accountable, from the top on down, for their failures and their outright disregard for the safety and well-being of these children.

And when a concerned citizen phones and asks a civil question, "Who is accountable for the safety of these children?" That person needs to be given an honest straightforward answer, and not accused of 'hassling' and being hung up on.

When Marianne McMullen refused to answer the question that by all accounts should be in her wheelhouse, and she hung up on Betty Jo Krenz, it showed the highest level of disdain for both the question and the crisis behind that question being asked.

Government jobs should not be gifts to donors and fundraisers and cronies. Government jobs should be awarded to those who know how to run those agencies and how to get the job done, and how to honor the mission of those agencies.

Presently, they are all little fiefdoms, small kingdoms, and their agency heads are Royalty, above the laws and without care nor concern for the people whose lives are affected or ruined by their inactions.

When children are being murdered and raped, trafficked wholesale, slaved into pornography; when abuse is so horrendous that children are not just traumatized, but afflicted, we deserve better than being hung up on when we ask "To whom do I give this report?" We deserve to know what will be done and when.

The children suffering and dying; being tortured and raped, they too, deserve to know that there are laws that apply and that those laws will be enforced.

We can do those language classes, cultural events AFTER the children are removed from their abusers.

We can hold the awards events for these politicians who have failed these children AFTER the children are safe.

We can investigate and prosecute the abusers and the corrupt now, and remove their ability to buy off politicians and authorities, agents and agencies, NOW.

We rescue the children, take out the garbage, clean the house and then we hold whatever self-congratulating events the politicians who have failed repeatedly want to hold.

Until then, for the love of all that is supposed to be Human and Decent in us all, rescue these children! Don't wait for the Grand Forks Herald to tell you about one case, or the Miami Herald to tell you about hundreds... KNOW they are there and start fixing this NOW.

We don't need any more grand sounding laws with absolutely no consequence for either breaking them or refusing to enforce them. The Children need to be found and rescued NOW.

You know where to find me.

~Cat