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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tribe requests state officials tighten regulations for residential group homes in response to the murder of 14-year-old Emily Pike

San Carlos Apache Reservation, Ariz.-- The San Carlos Apache Tribe is requesting state elected leaders investigate and tighten regulations for state-licensed residential group homes for children in the wake of the brutal murder of 14-year-old Emily Pike.

The Tribe's Council on Friday sent a [resolution](#) requesting the investigation and legislative reforms to Governor Katie Hobbs, Attorney General Kris Mayes and members of the Arizona Legislature. The resolution also requests the Legislature pass House Bill 2281 that would establish a Missing Indigenous Person Alert System.

Emily was placed by the Tribe's Social Services Department at Sacred Journey, Inc., a residential childcare center located in Mesa. After a month there, Emily left the facility without permission on or about Jan. 27. Most of her dismembered remains were found in plastic garbage bags on Feb. 14, about 100 miles away off U.S. Highway 60 near a remote forest road.

"Our Council has offered a \$75,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for Emily's murder," San Carlos Apache Tribe Chairman Terry Rambler said in a [letter](#) that accompanied the resolution. *"We have requested the public to supplement the reward to generate more interest and leads. This crime must not go unsolved. Emily was murdered in a cruel, depraved and heinous act and the perpetrator(s) must be held accountable."*

Unfortunately, Emily is not the first child to leave Sacred Journey without the group home's permission. The Mesa Police Department reports that about 30 children have run away from Sacred Journey over the past three years.

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"What happened to these other children?" Chairman Rambler asks. "Are they all safe and accounted for? Why has this clear failure to protect these children been allowed to continue unabated for years?"

The San Carlos Apache Tribe strongly believes the circumstances require a comprehensive review by the state that goes beyond the ongoing police investigation into Emily's murder.

"We respectfully request Governor Hobbs, given your background in social work, take all steps necessary to implement reforms in group homes to ensure the safety of children is a top priority of your Administration," Chairman Rambler said.

"And we respectfully request Attorney General Mayes investigate the circumstances surrounding Emily's unauthorized departure from Sacred Journey. This investigation should carefully review the safety, security, monitoring, licensing and operational standards for group homes and determine how these could be strengthened to prevent children from leaving their care without permission," Chairman Rambler said. "We ask that your recommendations be presented to the Legislature to be considered in appropriate legislation that is named in honor of Emily Pike."

The Tribe's resolution also supports HB 2281 that would create an alert system upon learning that an indigenous person is missing, in peril or in the company of a dangerous person. The alert system should be immediately activated upon notification an indigenous person is in danger.

"We appreciate Representative Martinez and her co-sponsors, Reps. Brian Garcia, Mae Peshlakai and Myron Tsosie for introducing HB2281. I look forward to your support in passing and signing this bill into law," Chairman Rambler said.

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