

*Male 1:*

Good morning. It is an honor to be asked to do the invocation and actually Chairman Sanchez of \_\_\_\_ Public Council was asked to do the invocation. But I got a call from his assistant this morning. He says he's at the hospital waiting to be a grandfather. So I thought that was a important reason not to be here. So they asked me if I would step in and do the invocation. And I also am the former vice chairman of the \_\_\_\_ Public Council, which is the consortium of the 19 governments here in New Mexico. Of course, we have the other tribes here. **Mescalero**, Apache, \_\_\_\_ Apache and the Navajo Nation also. I'd be remiss if I don't at least recognize some tribal members from the \_\_\_\_\_. And I think there's some members from Santa Clara Pueblo and other tribes that are here. So with that, again, it's an honor to be asked to render this invocation for this really important topic that we're here for to discuss. So I'm gonna be asking the spirits to give us the wisdom and the fortitude to deliberate on this issue that is so important because of our children. Their safety and their wellbeing. I will be giving testimony later on today too, but at this time I'm just honored to do the invocation. And I'm gonna be rendering it in my tribal \_\_ language.

[\_\_\_\_ Language]

Thank you.

*Female 1:*

Thank you, **Mr. Vijo**. At this point, I'd like to both thank and introduce Mayor Richard Berry from Albuquerque. Thank you very much for hosting this important hearing. We appreciate the hospitality of you and your city.

*Richard Berry:*

Good morning. Welcome to our beautiful city. We're glad you're here to discuss such an important topic. Chairman Listenbee, Chairman Torre, thank you so much for your efforts and everyone on the task force. We know that you're taking a great amount of your time to address this important issue. And, you know it's interesting \_\_\_\_ we're talking about and as we \_\_\_\_ the agenda and reading about the task force and then listening about the task force, the words innovation and collaboration come to mind. And we're really at a time I think where those two things suffer greatly at **crimes on issues**. And so to have a task force that comes together on those auspices to tackle something as important as taking care of those and watching over those who can't watch over themselves and take care of themselves, I think there's no higher or better calling. So we really look forward to you and your discussion today to hearing what this task force comes forward with.

We hear far too often stories that we would rather not here about children who have either been victims of violence or who are exposed to violence. This is a nationwide issue. This is not a strictly New Mexico issue, obviously. I know you're traveling around the country and you're hitting different issues as you go. And for you to be here to talk about rural issues and tribal issues I think is appropriate. We have a wonderful community in New Mexico. And one of the things that we do in New Mexico is we celebrate our diversity. And so you are here at a time where you will have an opportunity to hear from a very diverse group of individuals talking about children exposed to violence.

And so we hope that you take away many good ideas from your meetings here today. That you enjoy your time in our city. And I just want to once again thank you for your efforts. Because I can't think of anything more important than this to talk about at these times. So thank you very much and enjoy your day.

*Robert Listenbee, Jr.:* Thank you.

*Female 1:* Thank you very much for the welcome and for your remarks. And now we're gonna have the opportunity to hear from the New Mexico US Attorney, Kenneth Gonzales.

*Kenneth Gonzales:* Good morning to everyone on the task force. \_\_\_\_\_ welcome you all to New Mexico. And as the mayor said, we have a very special \_\_\_\_\_. And you will hear throughout the day, I think you'll hear how prideful we are in our culture, particularly in our Native American culture. Which is \_\_\_\_\_ today \_\_\_\_\_ here. How these issues impact the many cultures in New Mexico and \_\_\_\_\_ particularly the Native American \_\_\_\_\_.

We have 22 Native American communities here in New Mexico. And that includes, of course, about half of the Navajo Nation, two Apache reservations, the **Jicarilla** and the Mescalero, and 19 Pueblos. The smallest Pueblo being **Picuris** Pueblo. And then we have Taos Pueblo. **Ohkay Owingeh**. Tesuque. **San Ildefonso**. Pojoaque. **Nambe**. **Cochiti**. **Tewa**. San Felipe. Santa Ana. Zia. Jemez. **Isleta**. Zuni. Laguna and **Acoma**. All 19 Pueblos.

You heard from Governor **Vihil**, who also is part of the Santa Fe Indian School and his history, a little bit of history of vice chair of the **All** Indian Pueblo Council. The All Indian Pueblo Council, I think you should know, has been a collaboration of our Native American Pueblos that dates back centuries. All the way back to

the sixteenth century. Collaborating on many things. On how to improve the lives of the people in each one of their communities. Protecting their children obviously is at the forefront. And that is why he is here today and why we were happy to have him here representing the many Pueblos and Native Americans in New Mexico. So thank you very much for being here.

I am privileged to be the United States Attorney and absolutely privileged to work for a man I believe who is committed to trying to make a difference, as you know, on the issues relating to children. One of the many things the Attorney General of the United States has done in this regard is to establish this task force relating to children exposed to violence. This task force, of course, as you know, is charted with developing a knowledge and spreading awareness about the pervasive problem of children exposed to violence. The task for is searching for ways to help us prevent children's exposure to violence as victims and witnesses, and to reduce the negative effects experienced by children exposed to that violence.

We all know, unfortunately, the facts are that children exposed to far more violence than we realize. And the task force will enhance how we work together to serve our children in cities, towns and reservations and in other rural areas throughout the country. Ultimately, this task force will help us improve our homes, our cities, our schools, our towns, our communities by finding ways to prevent crime before it happens, finding ways to protect our children and finding ways to end cycles of violence and victimization.

Now to achieve these very lofty goals, the task force has scheduled four public hearings so that it can hear practitioners, policymakers and members of the community on this particular issue. We all know that the first task force hearing was already held in Baltimore, Maryland, and this being the second such hearing. So we're privileged to have this here in New Mexico, a state that does pride itself on ethnic, racial and cultural diversity, and that is home to many different cultures.

So I want to thank both chairmen of this task force, as well as all the members of the task force and the many people who will testify here today. So in addition to spearheading the law enforcement community's efforts to address the many issues that we have here in New Mexico, I want to say that we work very closely with our state attorney general's office. And I want to just tell you for a

moment just describe a little bit of what he does for our state and for the children in our state.

First of all, he brings a long history of commitment and passion to our children. From his early days working on a commission devoted to addressing domestic violence and even working as a guardian ad litem to protect our many children throughout the state of New Mexico. As attorney general, he's led an effort to create laws on the books to address things like human trafficking, which unfortunately includes the trafficking of children. He has done so much good work that he has been invited by the United Nation to even travel abroad to Europe to help other countries who are very committed to addressing human trafficking and even slavery. So we are fortunate to have an attorney general who brings a commitment to this very issue and have him in New Mexico.

He has also done just an incredible amount of work in building what we call the Internet Crimes Against Children task force. We work with many task forces around the state and around the country. This particular task force includes 62 agencies from around the state. Now that's what I call a task force. And unfortunately, this task force has its hands full but is doing tremendous amounts of work to deal with the kinds of threats that exist out there against children, including the internet.

So with that, I'd like to welcome our attorney general, Gary King. And I thank him for being here today and thank the task force for also the time that you took to devote to this issue. You have many other things in other parts of your life, but the fact that you've devoted your time and dedication and expertise to this issue, we all appreciate. So thank you very much.

*Gary King:*

Well, thanks to Ken. He gave part of my talk already. My name is Gary King. I'm the attorney general of the state of New Mexico. And it's certainly my pleasure to welcome you all on the task force on behalf of the state of New Mexico and for the important work that you're doing. And I want to keep my comments fairly short. But US Attorney Gonzales mentioned my roots a little bit. But it wouldn't hardly be worthwhile to talk about the state of children in New Mexico without a mention of my mother, Alice King. And I don't know if any of you all would have known her or heard of her. But she was considered one of the great children's advocates in the state of New Mexico. My father was the governor. My mother was the first lady. But even when she wasn't the first lady she was always concerned about children and the state of children in New Mexico. She passed away a couple of years ago. And so

as attorney general I've been giving a number of speeches and claiming that since she's gone that we all have to pick up the slack. You know that there are many in New Mexico that have to do that.

She was the head of the New Mexico Children's Trust Fund, which helped abused and neglected children. We have a trust fund in the state of New Mexico that raises money from the sale of license plate and it goes just into a fund designed to help abused and neglected children in the state of New Mexico. She created her own foundation called the New Mexico Children's Foundation. She was on the board of directors of the Cary Tingly Children's Hospital. And she was also created something called the New Mexico Girl's Ranch.

And so we have that loving spirit in New Mexico that comes from folks like that. There are very many people here who have done that kind of work with children in New Mexico. But it certainly informs what we're doing in the attorney general's office. And Ken mentioned some of the specific things that we're doing. But my theme today I think is collaboration. I want to tell you that all of the things that we do in the attorney general's office to help children would not be able to be done without collaboration of many of the folks that are here today.

And I have three big task forces in the attorney general's office right now, but two that are most important for today's discussion. One is our domestic violence task force where we have many state agencies and nongovernmental organizations and our office who are working to help prevent domestic violence issues and to inform our domestic violence laws in New Mexico. So we have that collaboration.

I also have a task force we created a few years ago that's our human trafficking task force. Our anti human trafficking task force. But once again, we involve law enforcement, federal agencies, state agencies, all of those to focus on the victims of human trafficking, which we think are some of the most fragile victims that we'll run across. And our biggest focus right now is on the trafficking of children. Because I think that that's an issue that we've talked with law enforcement around the world on what we can do to focus on finding the victims of trafficking against children and doing something about that. And taking the traffickers out of there, but also having systems that protect the traffickers. And that requires a lot of collaboration between our office and the federal government because, as you know, trafficking victims that come from other countries, we have to

work to get \_\_\_\_\_ and a lot of support from ICE and from the Department of Justice to help us in pursuing those cases. So we have a lot of collaboration on that issue right now.

Our office also is working on trying to prevent young people from falling into other areas where they might be subjected to violence. We have a big program right now we're working also with federal agencies, a drug take back program. Because we're very concerned about the abuse of prescription drugs by young people and how that leads on to abuse of other drugs, heroin and methamphetamines. And once again, we have had a task force working with the US Attorney's office to try and address a significant heroin problem and deaths from heroin in northern New Mexico. So we've been working on that issue together.

We have a group that goes into the schools in New Mexico to talk about internet safety and making the right choices with regard to drugs, particularly methamphetamine. So we have a big project that has been funded by a Department of Justice grant where we're doing training to young people to avoid ever starting using methamphetamine.

So all of those are projects we're working on. But I think the crown jewel of what we are working on is something that US Attorney Gonzales mentioned, which is our Internet Crimes Against Children task force. And you all will know that a lot of our funding comes from Department of Justice funding with regard to that. But we're very proud that over the course of the last four years or so we have indeed engaged more than 60 law enforcement agencies in the state of New Mexico to work on our task force. And so we have trained many, many officers. And we're particularly working to try and engage with Native American law enforcement agencies now too. And I have my special agent in charge of my Internet Crimes Against Children task force is here today. Thank Anthony Mace, who's over there. And so he'll be around a bit today to answer questions.

But we really have tried to step up our effort. And I just want to say thank you to all of the law enforcement agencies and other agencies that have worked with us with regard to protecting children against those most heinous of crimes. I think the sex crimes that are perpetrated in using the internet. So we're working on that.

And the last thing that I will mention, and I think you'll hear some today, also, once again, I think that we have had grant funding

that's helped us do this. Is a program to help address the issue of teen dating violence. And so I have a person in my office who specializes in working with nongovernmental entities and governmental entities to address the issue of teen dating violence, which we think is also growing in America.

So as you can see, there are a lot of things we're working on. There are none of them that we could do all by ourselves in the attorney general's office. So we'll be looking forward to any recommendations that you all have on how we can increase the collaboration. But in New Mexico I believe that we're working hard together to protect the children in New Mexico. So thank you all for being here today.

*Male:* Thank you.

*Female 1:* Than you, Mr. King, for all of the hard work that you and your department does here in New Mexico. And now I'd like to introduce, although on the agenda we have Tom Perrelli, he was not able to travel out to Albuquerque with us for the hearing today. And in his stead we have his very able senior policy advisor, Anna Martinez. So I'd like to introduce her to provide the opening comments from Department of Justice.

*Anna Martinez:* Good morning everybody. And Tom did send his regrets. He really wanted to be here. For those of you who know Tom, you know he's I'll say not only because this is being filmed, I mean he's a fantastic boss. But apart from that, what I've really so much admired about him, other than, you know being this brilliant lawyer, is that he really has a sincere passion and personal commitment to both of these issues that we're dealing with today. Children's exposure to violence and Indian country. And it really shines through. So he really regretted that he couldn't be here. Unfortunately, with all the challenges he's dealing with he's leaving the department relatively soon. He's said that publicly. And so it's just a really tough time for him. But he does send his regrets. And so I'm going to be kind of reading his words. So at least hopefully channeling – he's about 8 inches taller than me, so I don't know how well I can do that. But I'll try my best.

So good morning, again. Thank you, Mayor Berry, US Attorney Ken Gonzales and State Attorney General King for welcoming us here to New Mexico. And for all that you have done these many years to protect and defend the most vulnerable members. Sorry. Of our tribal and rural communities we focus on today. Our children.

As many of you know, Ken was instrumental in creating and hosting the amazing National Intertribal Youth Summit in Santa Fe, which we've had the last two years here in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Where the Obama administration officials heard directly from 175 remarkable young men and women from nearly 50 tribes in Indian country. And I'll have more to say about that later. Tom also wanted to thank our colleagues in the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, Office of Justice Programs, the Office on Violence Against Women and the Cops Office and EOUSA and the New Mexico US Attorney's office, as well as those who have traveled to be here today from these offices. For their leadership in developing and advancing many of the department's most innovative and effective efforts since the Attorney General first announced the Defending Childhood Initiative.

At every level of today's Justice Department under Eric Holder, the Defending Childhood Initiative and the work of its task force is a priority. This task force, under the leadership of Joe Torre and Bob Listenbee, is comprised of renowned experts on the issues surrounding children exposed to violence. Its members work to improve the lives of children in large cities, rural towns and tribal communities. They represent the legal, medical, research, law enforcement, faith and survivor communities. And while they bring a diversity of perspectives to their work, they all share a common passion for the mission that brings us together today.

The work that you are leading in each of your offices has helped us better understand and more effectively address the threats that children across the nation are facing. The cases you've advanced, the lives you've touched and enriched and the communities you've helped to transform remind us each that in the often difficult work of improving circumstances and outcomes for young people who are at risk and in need, solutions are indeed possible. Progress is possible. And the changes that we hope to see are possible if we are willing to think creatively, to act collaboratively and to enlist the help of a variety of partners.

Today we are grateful to all of you for your participation in the second of four hearings of the task force. Testimony from witnesses at this hearing will add to the body of knowledge and research about this devastating crisis. And the information we gather will lead to the concrete recommendations on how to shield our children from violence in their families and communities and from the harmful effects of that exposure in their later lives.

As many of you know, the Defending Childhood Initiative and this task force represent very personal undertakings for both the associate Attorney General and the Attorney General as parents who naturally want to protect children. But they were stunned by the results of the national survey on Children Exposed to Violence, which was first released in 2009. We learned about the extent to which the same kids are often tragically victimized repeatedly. A child who is exposed to one type of violence is more likely to be exposed to other types of violence or to be exposed multiple times. More than 38 percent of children reported more than one direct victimization within the previous year. The study also found that a child who was physically assaulted in the past year would be five times as likely to also have been sexually victimized and more than four times as likely to also have been maltreated during that period. Children who should be getting treatment and being protected are instead being subjected to victimization over and over again.

The study also confirmed that children are more likely to be exposed to violence and crime than are adults. We've known for several years now that young people are at particular risk. For instance, a 2005 study showed that juveniles and young adults ages 12 to 19 were more than twice as likely to be the victims of violent crimes as the population as a whole. The 2009 survey shows that the discrepancy remains. Sadly. And we know that children who are exposed to violence are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, suffer from depression and anxiety, have problems in school, experience or perpetrate dating violence and engage in criminal behavior later in life.

We have also been deeply affected by what we have learned over the years about such issues as truancy, where the correlations with a host of other problems are extraordinary, and bullying, which so often is perpetrated by young persons who themselves were victims or witnesses of violence.

Even more troubling are the data from Indian country. Native youth have the highest prevalence of sexual assault victimization and over represented in the juvenile justice system. High levels of poverty, unemployment, domestic violence, alcoholism, child neglect, bullying and gang activity threaten the health and safety of Native communities.

Tom was honored to be asked by the Attorney General to help develop the Defending Childhood Initiative. And he is a constant and strong advocate for funding of the initiative. I want to note that the initiative is evidence of the department's renewed

commitment to its trust responsibility to tribal nations. That is why two of the pilot sites receiving funding for the Defending Childhood Initiative in fact are tribal communities. And that is why we are here in Albuquerque today.

For today we focus on the particular challenges facing young people in rural and tribal communities. While we know from research that rural youth experience the same levels of exposure to violence as their urban and suburban peers, rural youth more often encounter economic and physical barriers that prevent them from receiving adequate care and the services necessary for their healthy development. A child on a rural reservation who is a victim of or a witness to violence, especially in what should be the safety of his or her home, may feel frightened and alone. He may not be able to seek or receive help because the nearest neighbor is miles away or because the perpetrator is a close friend or a relative of the only public safety officer. Should he attempt to bring the perpetrator to justice, he might find that his tribe is unable to try non Indians who commit crimes on reservation land. In many tribal communities, distrust of federal or state services persists. In this atmosphere, law enforcement officers often face challenges in successfully addressing the root causes of violence that children experience, whether from adult or youthful perpetrators.

Often justice is stalled by the negotiations among tribal, state and federal court systems to resolve both criminal and family court issues. Justice may be thwarted by notable instances of systems failure, such as disproportionate sentencing of Indian or other minority juveniles or placement of tribal youth in foster care outside their tribe where their own tribe's traditions and cultural practices are unknown. In fact, a justice system's failure to be guided by Native traditions, preferences or sovereignty is an enormous impediment to healing the wounds of broken families.

Native American communities, whether located in cities or on traditional lands, each have a unique story to tell about the epidemic of violence they currently experience. State and federal governments need to understand these stories if they are to help native communities and individuals. But historically these attempts to help have been made with little or no regard to what those communities themselves can tell us about how best to heal. Tribal youth are the future of our tribal nations. It is our responsibility to give them the opportunity to flourish so that they can build and rebuild Indian communities across the country.

Which brings me back to the Intertribal Youth Summit last July which I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks. The overarching goal of that summit was to begin a discussion between tribal youth and leaders from the Departments of Justice, Interior, Education and Agriculture and from the White House. We want to know what the youth thought about such issues as education and careers, personal empowerment and leadership, substance and alcohol abuse, healthy relationships and lifestyles, culture preservation and community development and protecting the environment. Deeply personal issues that have a huge impact on the health of their larger communities.

We knew it was critical that we give our young people opportunities to speak and that we listen when they spoke so that they could come to understand the power of their collective voice. The students who attended the summit were already leaders. They were there because they were recognized in their communities as people to watch for great things to follow.

During the summit they learned how to guide others in their communities through practice and exposure to the many youth and adult leaders present. They learned how to increase their capacity for tribal leadership, to improve their personal relationships, to strengthen their knowledge and practice of traditional cultures and to protect their health through prevention, education and active lifestyles.

This outstanding event provided an opportunity not only to show native youth that federal agencies can come together for Indian nations but also to show the US government what Indian youth can do when they come together with a single purpose. Not only did they demonstrate personal growth by their writings and reflections after the summit, they produced a concrete product. A video that will reach far into the future to inspire their little sisters and brothers in the message and lessons that we learned. If you haven't seen this terrific public service video, it's called *That's My People*. The kids produced at the summit. Please visit the DOJ's Tribal Justice and Safety website to see the hopefulness that can emerge from children when the adults in their lives who have the power to change things for the better listen carefully to what they have to say.

So before I turn this over back to the co-chairs and to hear from the witnesses who will enlighten and form our dialogue today, I want to mention the work we are doing within tribal communities to eradicate the violent abuse of Indian women, which creates in too

many cases the atmosphere of violence in the homes of native children. We cannot separate the children from the women or the children's exposure to violence from the dangers to their mothers.

During the development of the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010, known as TLOA, we turned our attention to one of the most significant problems that tribal leaders said to our face – that they face. Their lack of sufficient tools and authority to combat the epidemic rates of violence against native women in Indian country. Native women suffer not only at the hands of their abusers and attackers, they also suffer needlessly because laws at the federal, state, local and tribal levels often work at cross-purposes for the women who are victimized. TLOA does increase accountability for federal agencies responsible for public safety in Indian country and gives greater local control to tribal law enforcement agencies.

But even before President Obama signed TLOA in September 2010 we knew we needed to do more. TLOA does not reach below the surface of the laws to study crimes against native women in a way that takes into account family structure, cultural practices, poverty, the realities life in Indian country, both on and off the reservation. We really do not know how accurate the statistics that measure crimes against Indian women are. Nor should we make generalizations about native women across tribal, geographical and cultural boundaries.

When the Violence Against Women Act was reauthorized in 2005, it included language specific to the federal government's responsibility to help Indian tribes safeguard the lives of Indian women. Title IX of the act created a task force which continues today. It's another federal advisory committee. To guide the development and implementation of a baseline study to examine domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking and murder in Indian country and to assess the effectiveness of federal, state, tribal and local response. The charter's language specifically requires inclusion of representatives from national tribal domestic violence and sexual assault nonprofit organizations, tribal government and national tribal organizations. This is the first, the very first national effort to collect information from enrolled native people by native people in Indian country. The Justice Department has been well served by the experience and skills of the members of that task force. Their executive, legal and advocacy expertise have dramatically advanced the department's field of knowledge about the perpetrators and victims of crimes against native women. And have enhanced our understanding of the complexity and

sensitivity with which we must seek solutions to these seemingly intractable problems.

And if history is any indicator, task forces like that one and like the one we are convening here today, can help to inspire extraordinary progress. For example, the president's task force on Victims of Crime, which was formed in 1982, led to the creation of the Office for Victims of Crime. And prompted a sea change in how the criminal justice system treats victims. It paved the way for victims to become valued partners in the prosecution process. And helped them attain the rights they deserve. Specifically that task force recommended legislation to provide federal funding to assist state crime victim compensation programs and their work helped to advance the passage of the Victims of Crime Act, known as VOCA, of 1984.

That same year the Attorney General's task force on family violence helped to raise awareness about the profound nationwide impact of domestic violence leading ultimately to the passage of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, known as VAWA.

Today, with the Defending Childhood task force, this tradition continues. And I am confident that its members will strengthen the work that's underway to raise awareness –

*[End of Audio]*

*Anna Martinez:* - about the issues of children's exposure to violence. And that they will play a critically important role in informing responses to this national epidemic. By December 1 of next year, they will present to the Attorney General a report documenting their findings and laying out recommendations for actions that the department and our partners can take to improve the current system of care for our vulnerable children. By hearing from and working closely with experts and practitioners, task force members will be uniquely positioned to add to our base of knowledge about how we can better support and safeguard children across the country. By giving us a better grasp of the prevalence and consequences of exposure to violence and by showing us what works in mitigating its effects, I have every expectation, Tom has every expectation, that this effort will help us better protect our children.

Of course, the real difference will come from the work that so many of you do in your neighborhoods and communities when you respond to a domestic violence call where a young person is present, when you work to remove a child from an abusive setting, when you counsel a student who has been bullied or when you recognize from the bench a lifetime of trauma in the delinquent acts of a teenager, you have become part of the solution. And because of you, I believe that together we can transform America for the better one child at a time.

Thank you for your time here today and for the time you give to this cause. And now I'd like to turn this over to our fearless leaders, our task force co-chairs, Bob Listenbee and Joe Torre.

*Joe Torre:* Thank you, Anna. Thank you for Tom's remarks and yours. And I also want to thank Mayor Berry and US Attorney Gonzales, Attorney General King and, of course, the invocation from **Gilver Vihil**. And also thank the city of Albuquerque for hosting this hearing. It means a great deal to us, and I think we're gonna learn a lot.

At our first hearing in Baltimore in November we heard from very – a lot, many I should say, brave and resourceful survivors and practitioners. We look forward to hearing the experiences of those who are here today. And we thank you for being here.

At this hearing we are going to take a very close look at family violence. For me this is a personal subject. The violence in my home as a child left a scar and lasting impact on me. For me the longest lasting effects of my dad abusing my mom were the

feelings of fear and embarrassment. And I thought that I was the only one who felt this way. That there was something wrong with me. IT wasn't till decades later that I started to finally find out and talk about it basically, about my childhood with my wife, Allie, and in counseling. Only then did I understand that the violence in my home and the feelings of inadequacy that I was experiencing were really tied to what went on in my home during my childhood.

And over 3 million kids today are exposed to violence in their homes. That's unacceptable. Unacceptable. Many children also experience other types of violence as well. Sexual abuse, bullying in schools and violence among peers and in the community. These problems need to be addressed now.

I speak for the task force when I say that we are eager to hear your experiences and your suggestions today. To solve the problem of childhood exposure to violence we must together. And I thank you for this day. I think it's gonna be very informative, very interesting and certainly I can't wait to listen. Robert?

*Robert Listenbee, Jr.:* Thank you, Joe, and thank you, Ms. Martinez. I'd like to second Joe's remarks on the need to address childhood exposure to violence by talking about some of the very real challenges faced by children and families in tribal and rural areas. What we know is sobering to say the least. Children and families in rural and isolated areas most often face the paradox of needing more and having less. Rural areas are traditionally poorer than urban areas. And research shows us that poverty is correlated with higher rates of child abuse and neglect. Yet people living in rural areas have fewer resources. That is less access to health and mental health resources, fewer social workers, less access to food stamps, employment support, quality housing and other essentials.

Similar issues, as well as other unique issues, confront American Indian, Alaska Native communities. American Indian, Alaska Natives have the highest rate of poverty of any racial group in the nation. We know that suicide is the leading cause of death for American Indian, Alaska Native boys age 10 to 14. Finally, the American Indian Alaska Native population has a higher rate of gang involvement than any other racial group. At 15 percent compared to 8 percent of Latino youth and 6 percent of African American youth nationally.

These facts are staggering. But perhaps even more alarming is the difficulty many children and families face in getting help. On

tribal lands it can be complicated to address interpersonal and community violence. This is further confused by jurisdictional issues between tribal governments and the federal government.

Families face unique problems in isolated areas where a public safety worker may only visit once a month. Getting to a counseling session is difficult when there is no public transportation. Even if you have access to a car, it could take hours to get there and back. And when services don't exist, rural parents may lose custody of their children simply because they cannot comply with an order for treatment.

However, what we have in the face of all these complex problems is a wealth of cultural strength. Native and rural communities have developed strategies to prevent and mitigate children's exposure to violence. I speak for the entire task force when I say that we look forward to hearing about these solutions and strengths today. Being part of this task force represents an extraordinary opportunity as Joe said. Each of us recognizes that our goal is to identify ways to prevent children's exposure to violence and reduce its negative effects.

Thank you for being here with us today. We look forward to hearing your testimony. At this time we'd like to allow task force members to introduce themselves. I'd like to start on my left with General Tony Taguba.

- Antonio Taguba:* Morning everybody. I'm Tony Taguba. I'm retired Army soldier.
- D. Tilton Durfee:* I'm Deanne Tilton Durfee and I'm executive director of the Los Angeles County Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect.
- Steven Marans:* Good morning. I'm Steven Marans. I'm the Harris Professor of child psychiatry and psychiatry and director of the National Center for Children Exposed to Violence at the Yale University School of Medicine.
- Sarah Deer:* Good morning. My name is Sarah Deer. I'm an assistant professor at William College of Law in St. Paul, Minnesota and a proud citizen of the Muscogee Creek Nation of Oklahoma.
- Georgina Mendoza:* Good morning. My name is Georgina Mendoza. I'm community safety director for the city of Salinas, California.

- Robert Macy:* Good morning. I'm Robert Macy with Harvard Medical School and the Boston Children's Foundation.
- Thea James:* Good morning. I'm Thea James. I'm an emergency medicine physician and director of the Violence Intervention Advocacy Program at Boston Medical Center.
- Alicia Lieberman:* Good morning. I'm Alicia Lieberman. And I'm the director of the Early Trauma Treatment Network of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network at the University of California San Francisco.
- Sharon Cooper:* Good morning. My name is Sharon Cooper. I'm a developmental and forensic pediatrician on the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a board member and a consultant for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.
- Jim McDonnell:* Good morning. My name is Jim McDonnell and I'm the chief of police for the Long Beach Police Department California.
- Joe Torre:* Thank you. And now addressing family violence I want to introduce Esta Soler, my friend Esta Soler. Ester is founder and president of Futures without Violence. Many times recognized and awarded for her leadership in the field of violence prevention and intervention. Ms. Soler will speak about cross system involvement of children who are exposed to violence, the path from victim to perpetrator and the need to invest in holistic prevention and intervention services. Esta Soler.
- Esta Soler:* Good morning. I'm Esta Soler. I'm president and founder of Futures without Violence, formerly the Family Violence Prevention Fund. It's great to be here. I want to thank the task force for the chance to be here today. And to thank Attorney General Holder for his leadership in pulling together the Defending Childhood Initiative. He's been a strong clear voice for decades on the need to invest in helping children who have witnessed and experienced violence and preventing that violence from happening in the first place.
- And I also want to thank the Associate Attorney General Perrelli and Anna, thank you for your comments. We would like to thank him. In particular his commitment to native women and for his focus on helping children and youth who have experienced violence. It has been unwavering.

When I thought about appearing before this distinguished group today, I knew that I should probably catch up on some related reading. Some academic journals perhaps. A new doctoral thesis. A case study or two. But then I found the perfect book called *A Terrible Thing Happened*. Familiar with it? It's 32 pages long. And it's the story of a young raccoon named Sherman Smith.

Sherman saw the most terrible thing happen. And he tried repeatedly to forget about it. But he felt nervous for no reason. His stomach hurt. He had bad dreams. He felt angry all the time. And he started to get in trouble. And then he met Ms. Maple, who helped him talk about the terrible thing. And now Sherman is feeling better.

Yes, this book is by Margaret Holmes and it is for children, but it's a simple example of how important it is for kids to get help when they witness or experience violence. The brains of young children who witness or experience abuse develop differently. They may react developmentally, dramatically and sometimes violently. Witnessing or experience violence impacts how a child develops physically, intellectually and emotionally. And they don't do as well in school and they're more frequently sick.

And like Sherman, they experience the toxic stress of exposure to violence, constant fear, unpredictability, isolation and pain. And all of those can have a profound effect on the growing mind and body. And you all know this. And I'm sure you've already heard many of the heartbreaking statistics about how many children in our nation are exposed to violence. But let me just confirm a few.

One in three children are exposed to violence in their homes by the time they are 17 years old. And children who are exposed to one type of violence are at two to three times the risk of experiencing other forms of violence. And 42 percent of females who are raped are first raped as children under the age of 18. And more than a quarter of males who are raped are raped before they are 11.

And here are some facts that are just as important. Children need joy, love, fun, friends and play. They need to feel good about themselves. Chairman Torre, my friend Joe, you've talked about how hard it is or hard it was to grow up in an abusive home. And how important it was to have baseball. Something you were good at that gave you respect, friendships, fun and incredible success. Few kids are ever gonna grow up to be able to hit a Major League curveball or perhaps win a World Series. And you did it.

Congratulations. And now I know you're trying to do something else, but we won't talk about that. But for every child who is growing up – and everybody knows about it. Who is growing up witnessing violence and abuse, we need to help them find those things that let them thrive.

While all forms of abuse and trauma impact kids, certain types at certain ages seem to have greater impact. Our work suggests that family and intimate partner violence, known by many as domestic violence and child sexual abuse, have serious impacts. When they begin early in a child's life, they deprive him or her of the biggest protective factor they have, a loving caring and capable adult. Not only have these children been traumatized by abuse and violence, but they have been hurt by or forced to watch the suffering of the people they rely on the most to protect them or heal them.

When these children then act out or exhibit bad behaviors, they're often met with responses that can impair the child's development. Being removed from school or taken from their home is often seen as the safest response. While both actions are occasionally necessary, they are also traumatic events for a child. They should happen in situations as a last resort, only after efforts to help the child and family have been exhausted. And that's why we so appreciate how the Defending Childhood Initiative has been framed. Protect, heal, thrive. All of these elements in equal parts must be part of our response.

Before moving on to our specific five recommendations for your consideration, I'd like to add three other factors to consider. The development path of childhood, gender and culture. The path. The age and developmental path of a child when a terrible thing happens often matters much as the event. Prevention and interventions must be age appropriate. Working with pediatricians and Head Start workers to understand why an individual child isn't talking is very different than an anti-bullying campaign for a group of middle school students. Each is necessary but requires different players, different systems and different supports.

The work with that child must also continue as they grow and age. This is not just a one time check in before healing from trauma and violence is an ongoing process.

Gender. Let's not be afraid to talk honestly about gender and how boys and girls are impacted differently by violence. When we talk about perpetrators and victims of youth gun violence and crime,

for instance, we are almost always talking about crimes that boys do to one another or to strangers. They are fighting. They're stealing. They're hurting others. Their crimes show up in visible ways. But when we talk about sexual violence or relationship violence that leads to injuries, we are almost always, not always, but almost always talking about harm boys and men are doing to girls. The consequences are equally severe but often ignored when we talk about youth crime. A girl who's being abused is far more likely to come to our attention because she's pregnant, using drugs, running away, turning tricks. Girls who are hurting often hurt themselves. And yes, while girls are increasingly showing up in our juvenile facilities, it is still almost always related to escaping harm or surviving abuse. Both girls and boys need and deserve our help. It just may look a little different.

And culture. We need to talk about race and culture. How does a young person respond to violence? What's the best way to reach them? How are they treated when they reveal the violence that they are experiencing? All of these things are influenced by race and by the cultural background of the person being hurt, as well as the person trying to help. Every child in America should have a strong sense of cultural pride. Unfortunately, many children growing up in the United States are confronted by bias and racism, which can work against our efforts at healing.

We need to listen more to communities to understand what works and what doesn't. The remedy here is not rocket science. It's about partnering with communities to develop solutions that come from the cultural values of the community and not imposing outside judgments.

With these three considerations in mind, the developmental path of childhood, gender and culture, I'd like now to offer five specific recommendations to this esteemed task force about how we create futures without violence for all our children.

First of all, number one, start early. Let's start early, both in identifying kids who are being hurt and let's start early in helping them. Let's create social norms that prevent violence from escalating or beginning in the first place. This means trauma in form, routine screening and assessment to identify individuals and communities who are suffering from exposure to violence. And it means broad based prevention programs that serve to inoculate kids from future violence. Not every child needs intensive therapy, but our healthcare system, our schools and our youth serving

organizations need to be able to identify the children who need help.

Two, focus efforts on key development stages. Infancy and early childhood and early adolescence are critical times developmentally when it comes to preventing violence. Brain research shows that what happens to you as a young child can alter your body and mind for life. How you react to stress or confrontation, for instance, may be altered by what you see or experience as a toddler.

But just as important is the brain and biology of early adolescence, age 9 to 12, when kids are developing their ability to form and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships. This is when kids start really figuring out how they're gonna treat each other in relationships and in romantic relationships. It also may be the best time – the last best time to intervene with kids who have already experienced extensive and multiple traumas before they start engaging in behaviors that make them dangerous to themselves or others.

It is also an ideal time for both prevention and intervention efforts, because parents and other caring adults, like teachers and coaches, are still very much present in the lives of children at this age. Even the most troubled children are typically still in school. So programs that work with schools and after school settings are showing significant promise.

Three, change public policies to support prevention and healing for children and families. States and cities across this country are experiencing devastating budget cuts. But that cannot be an excuse for not investing in prevention and healing. In fact, it is an opportunity. With the implementation of healthcare reform, the Affordable Care Act, states will now have more resources and increased pressure to focus on prevention and early intervention services as a way to improve health.

The Violence Against Women Act has programs that focus on prevention and early intervention with children and youth that have not been fully funded. And the Victims of Crime Act, VOCA, funds can go to help children who are victims of violence and abuse. This is money, as you know, collected from criminal penalties that go to serve victims of crime. Lifting the cap on distribution of these funds can create new revenue for services

without any new government outlays. Perhaps political, but important for your consideration.

And finally, our mental health system needs to be better trained and adequately reimbursed to take on the deeply complex task of helping a child who has been a victim of violence, often through more family based interventions.

Four, stop spending money on things that don't work. We must end the over incarceration of young people, particularly young people of color, and get tough boot camp type facilities, punitive juvenile justice facilities and certainly adult prisons. Youth perpetrators are almost always child victims. And we need to invest in the programs that address the trauma and violence and help them thrive and heal.

Previous speakers in Baltimore detailed the failings of these approaches. I'm not gonna repeat them. So I will support those recommendations and add one more suggestion. We need to keep these kids in school, connected to safe and stable adults. This means actively opposing zero tolerance policies that drive the most troubled kids, and often many who are mild offenders as well, out of schools and away from what may be the most safe and stable place they have in their lives.

We must be about keeping kids connected to adults who can help. This also means helping parents heal from their own trauma and supporting schools in their efforts to help the whole child.

Additionally for your consideration, we must shift funding in our child protection service system. Currently, 7 billion goes annually to pay for out of home placements of children who have been taken from their home and only 900 million goes to prevention and protection services. With the vast majority of the funding going to support child welfare agencies as opposed to services for families. This balance is wrong. We need to change the funding formulas to allow states to use more money to help struggling families and kids before the only option left is foster care.

And fifth and finally, we must make the conversation we're having in this room and across the country, we must make what we're working on a public issue. When I started in 1980, I had a chair with the San Francisco General Hospital Emergency Room and I had a desk in the closet of the district attorney's office. Nobody

would return my calls. They thought the issue of family violence was inevitable. They thought it was intractable.

We made enormous progress. Domestic violence against adult women has been reduced dramatically in one generation. And we should be proud of that. And honor the incredible dedication and work of so many of you and so many people in the audience that have helped that happen. But we also need to point out it wasn't an accident. It was intentional and it was strategic, and I believe the tide turned when we made it a public issue. When we turned a private matter into a public problem demanding public action and public policy reform. And when women in the beginning stood up and said no more and when men joined us in that effort.

We have a lot to be proud of. There are programs that work. Miracles are indeed happening every day across this country. And people need to know that when they invest in the work good things happen for kids.

And finally, we want you to know that we are with you. We stand ready to offer our expertise and passion and continuing the work that you do here today. There is a role for all Americans, for coaches, for people in our armed forces, for our counselors, for our therapists, for our lawyers and our activists across this country and for our pediatricians and our police chief and for our teachers and our parents and our neighbors. It is about all of us. It is about the next generation. We can make a difference. We have to make a difference. Our kids deserve nothing better. They deserve it. Thank you. And I look forward to working with you. And I look forward to changing the funding formulas. And I look forward to supporting the pilot programs. And I wish you the best of luck in your new endeavor Chairman Torre.

*Joe Torre:* Thank you, Esta. We have about ten minutes for questions.

*[Clapping]*

Well done. But that doesn't surprise me one bit. Questions? Yep. Georgina.

*Georgina Mendoza:* Good morning and thank you very much for your invaluable insight. I appreciated the comments that you made in terms of having a holistic approach and getting people across the spectrum involved. I especially appreciated your comment about needing to

change the social norm. Oftentimes when communities are so ingrained in violence it becomes a way of life.

What recommendations or strategies do you know of that have been able to really start changing the norm and have a more social transformation effect?

*Esta Soler:*

I think a lot of issues that are issues of our time have been able to change the social norm. The one issue that I just talked about early on is nobody wanted to deal with the issue of domestic violence. Everybody thought it was just predictable, intractable, as I said. And it was basically, you know part of bad relationships.

I think part of what it is is it's both normative and it's also public exposure. I remember a call that I actually got from my friend and colleague, who I actually happened to ride on the airplane together with, Dr. Alicia Lieberman, who does absolutely wonderful work as all of you do. And I got a call from her because the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, which is one of the main programs in this country that funds child trauma work, was about to get defunded. And there was a push actually to make sure that the program stayed whole.

Part of what I was thinking when I got that call was why are we even talking? We know what the data is. Why are we talking about the fact that we might be potentially defunding a major program in the United States? And it wasn't even a lot of money. Relatively speaking. It was 45 million dollars or 50 million dollars.

So I think one of the social norms we have to change and we have to change right away is what we have to make sure is that this conversation that's happening in this room needs to happen in very, very public venues. We need to speak out more about it. It's great that **Nicholas Christoff** just wrote an article after the Academy of Pediatrics came out with their publication. But most people don't read Nicholas Christoff. And I think he's great and I love what he does. We need to make sure that in every newspaper, we need to take it from the back page to the front page. And not just when somebody gets hurt and killed. We need to talk about it. And the norm we have to change is that the programs that are in place are working. There are so many programs that are working, and you all are involved in many of those programs, but most people don't think they are working.

So if I were to change a couple of norms, I'd make it much more public. I would give people the confidence that these programs work. And I would have more people who are pediatricians and people who are on the front lines be talking to the media all the time about the programs that are working. It's so – you know that, Steven. I mean so often the work doesn't get covered until a kid gets killed. And you know what? I think you must be sick of reading about those stories. And I'm sick about it too. Because I know if we could change the funding formulas we can get the kids the help that they need. We can keep them in school. And we can change what's going on across this country. It's doable. The norm we have to change is we have to believe.

Now I have to tell you this. I'm an optimist. You probably got that. My father joined one club in his life, god love him, and it was the Optimist Club. And so he gave it to me. I got it. I got to give it to you. But we have to tell our story. Nobody's telling it. You know and it's not just because we don't have the resources. We have the brain power to figure out how to do the political work to shift the resources so we get to the kids early and often. And don't forget about that middle school kid. That middle school kid may be our last best hope here.

*Joe Torre:* All right, Steven. Quick, okay? Steven?

*Steven Marans:* Really quick.

*Esta Soler:* By the way, it's nice to see you. I think the last time I saw you was many years ago.

*Steven Marans:* Well, it's lovely to see you and thank you so much for being such a clear and articulate voice for children. You've raised the issue of scale and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network is a great example. Forty-five million up against the figures that you cited is a drop in the bucket.

I had a very specific question. Rather than talking about our failures, I wondered if you could offer any specific suggestions about opportunities that we could be exploiting in terms of the issue of early identification that you mentioned in your remarks.

*Esta Soler:* Yeah. Well, I think the Affordable Care Act gives us a wonderful opportunity. I know many of you have talked about home visitation for many, many years. But there's now a resource where home visitation can get implemented and pushed up to scale. And

I think that's a really important program. I think that there's work that needs to be done.

I mean when I think about what's happening with Geoffrey Canada and the Harlem Children Zone, I close my eyes, and I know we're not gonna have Geoffrey Canada in every community across this country. He's done amazing work. We need to figure out how to put more of those – not more Geoffrey Canadas. Geoffrey Canada's wonderful. He's doing his work in a particular community. But we need to make sure that there are more programs like that in our Head Start program, in our early education programs, etcetera. I mean I don't think it's rocket science. And I think you agree with that. And it's not that every kid needs the intensive extraordinary therapy that my colleague Alicia Lieberman provides. But there's so much that we can do in school, in childcare programs when they're young. And that's what I think we should do. And I think because of the Affordable Care Act, I would look at that and all of its dimensions because of the amount of money that is currently there. We know that there are court battles. There's a possibility that Medicaid will get expanded. I know there's a court battle. I don't want to be naïve about this. On the other hand, I think it might be one of the best ways in which we can get more resources.

The other area in the Affordable Care Act, Steven, is the prevention program. And we do know that most of it's gonna go to chronic care and obesity. But we need to do the political work. We need to make our public feelings about how important it is to get help to kids, we need to put that on the political agenda so that when prevention is talked about in healthcare reform, it's not just about chronic health –

*[End of Audio]*

*Esta Soler:* And obesity, it's about child trauma and having our kids have a complete medical home so that they can really thrive. There's lots we can do. Including scaling up your program.

*Steven Marans:* Thank you.

*Joe Torre:* Esta, thank you so much. Thanks for your passion.

*Esta Soler:* You got it, Joe.

*Joe Torre:* Don't ever lose t.

*Esta Soler:* Thanks.

*Robert Listenbee, Jr.:* Good morning, again. Our next panel is gonna focus on violence in rural and remote communities.

Before we begin the next panel I'd like to acknowledge present in the audience the staff from Senator Bingaman's office and thank them for coming here today and showing interest in the work that we're doing. We look forward to hearing from them as the day goes on.

Violence in rural and remote communities is a serious matter. It is frightening and painful for children to experience violence at the hands of those who re supposed to love and protect them. The challenges of seeking help and safety are compounded when the nearest neighbor is miles away or when a perpetrator is a close friend or relative of the only public safety officer. Panelists will speak to the complexity of preventing and intervening in violent situations in rural communities.

Our first panelist is Rochelle A, vice president of Leaders Uniting Voices and Youth Advocates of New Mexico. Rochelle is currently a first year university student and will speak as a former foster youth and survivor of childhood violence.

She'll be followed by Elsie Boudreau, LMSW, Alaska Native Justice Center. Ms. Boudreau, \_\_\_ Eskimo, is a survivor of abuse, is a licensed master of social worker, master social worker from the village of St. Mary's, Alaska. In 2010 she established and began operating in Alaska an Alaska Native unit within Alaska Cares, a child advocacy center.

Ivy Wright-Bryan, national director of the Native American Mentoring Big Brothers, Big Sisters of America. Ms. Wright-Bryan, a Paiute, has practiced tribal law for 15 years in tribal justice systems in northern Nevada. She was the first Paiute woman to be appointed tribal court judge by the Pyramid Lake Tribal Council and presided over the juvenile court on her reservation. Ms. Wright-Bryan drafted the family protection ordinance which gained approval by the tribal council and stands today as one of the most comprehensive and fortified laws protecting families against domestic violence. We'll start first with Ms. Rochelle A and welcome.

*Rochelle A:*

Thank you. I want to start by saying thank you to the task force for inviting me here to share my testimony with you. I will be speaking to you today about both my personal experiences and some policy recommendations that come from both my own experiences and the experiences of other young people in New Mexico who have gone through the child welfare system.

In my childhood I was physically and verbally abused by my father for several years. I couldn't go to the authorities because I was afraid of what would happen or that I would get into more trouble than what I was already in. But when I was 17 one incident was so extreme that I needed to get help. I convinced my father to let me go for a walk so I could go and calm down. I walked to a place that I knew my boyfriend was working at the time.

Because of how badly I had been beaten, my boyfriend called the police. I was permanently removed from my dad's home at the age of 17. I was placed with a foster family that treated me like I was their own daughter. And my foster siblings treated me like they would have treated their own sister.

Today, just two years later, I am a university student and have plans to some day become a pediatrician who will detect and heal the kind of abuse that children – abused children face. One of the things I am most proud of is serving as the vice president of Leaders Uniting Voices, Youth Advocates, LUVYA. Our membership varies, but right now there are 22 of us from all over New Mexico.

LUVYA is open to young people at least 14 years old who have been in foster care for at least a year. People are eligible after they age out because they are still in the system underneath Children's Youth and Family Departments, CYFD. Most of the – one of the

most important things that LUVYA does is to promote healthy relationships. We want to maintain healthy relationships with siblings, social workers, with each other and, if possible, our biological parents.

A goal for 2012 is to get our bylaws done by March 1. Another goal is to promote LUVYA through flyers and materials and to recruit more members. This year we'll be having our annual independent living conference in August, which will be held in Taos. We will have many different workshops for foster kids. One workshop will be on financing and how to manage a budget. We also want to encourage people to be creative and have fun. We plan to have a photography workshop with a professional photographer with different angles for shooting pictures, how to make a camera out of a can, how to work with chemicals in a black room. We want to have a zumba workshop to show people that we like to have fun and that everyone is welcome to come and have fun with us. We are also making LUVYA t-shirts for the LUVYA members and the foster kids who go to our conference.

One for the things LUVYA wants to see better enforced is sibling visitations. Sibling rights are something that personally mean a lot to me. One of the hardest things for me has been losing my relationship with one of my younger sisters. A few years ago, before I was removed from my home, my dad kicked me out of the house and dropped me off at my grandparents. I lived with them for a year. And for that year my sister wouldn't speak to me because, as she put it, I had hurt dad. Then we started talking again and got really close. Since I was removed from my dad's home, though my relationship with my younger sister has really suffered. She wasn't there that night I got taken away from dad, so she doesn't understand what really happened. She's only hearing one side of the story. My dad's. It's also a part of the protection thing for her. If she doesn't talk to me, then she won't get punished for it.

I only had one visitation with my siblings during the year I was in foster care. And that was because my father could decide whether they can see me or not. My social worker had set it up the meeting for me. My little brother was really happy to see me, but my sister told me she didn't even want to be there. I didn't let it affect me because I was happy that my brother was there. But I hadn't really spoken to her since.

One thing I would suggest is that young people be given the right to meet with their siblings, but that a grown up be there to help us to have the conversations we need to have. I was alone in the room with my sister and my brother. The counselor was across the hall with her door open. If we were arguing too much, someone would come in and tell us to settle down, but no one helped us have the conversations we needed to have.

Once my counselor asked me if I wanted to talk to my dad and I said no, because I was afraid of him. But I wish she would have asked me if I wanted a counseling session with my sister. If we would have had a counseling session, maybe we'd be talking right now. She could hear my side of the story and decide for herself. She could decide what matched up and what didn't. Today I've come to accept that I'm just going to have to be patient with it.

Another lesson I have learned from being in foster care that I would like to share with the task force is about the strictness of the rules for foster kids and their foster families. I understand that there are legal reasons why foster parents and the system have to make sure we don't get hurt or in trouble, but the rules are so strict that teenagers don't get to have a normal life. Me being in for a year was really hard because I wasn't allowed to stay at a friend's house unless the friend's parents were certified foster parents. I wasn't allowed to be in a car unless the driver was a social worker or a certified foster parent.

I could do school activities, like go on fieldtrips, but I couldn't get my driver's license at the age of 17 because it was a liability. I think the system needs to give us a little bit of leeway. They tell the foster parents to let us grow up as normal teenagers. But in reality you can't, because you can't go hang out. You can't be in a car if someone isn't certified. You can't have a sleepover in a house without a certified foster parent. I could have visits, but my foster parent would have to drop me off and pick me up.

This is especially hard living in a town where you have to drive to get anywhere. We do have buses that come once in a while, but the places that I have been placed at the buses weren't able to pick me up and drop me off to the places that I wanted to go. This is not the same thing as being picked up after school by a girlfriend to go to an after school job together. That's normal living for a teenager. And that's something I missed out in my year in foster care. Not just in foster care but my entire life.

If my foster parents were lenient and tried to let me live a little bit more of a normal life, I had to worry about whether it was going to get them in trouble.

Finally, I would ask the task force think about the importance of peer support groups, like LUVYA. LUVYA has been, and still is, a support for me because we have each other to talk to. Sometimes as foster and former foster youth we remember things from our past and can't figure out how to get over them. Talking to one of the LUVYA people always helps me. It really helps to get advice from someone who had similar experiences. Sometimes all I want to do is cry and break down. \_\_\_\_\_ someone from LUVYA will say, "Right now you're not understanding why this happened to you. But some day you will help someone else that went through this. You're not going to know how your actions helped, but you will have helped someone. Some day you will help someone else from what you went through." And I know they are right. Because they went through – because I see what they went through and how they have helped me. I'm really glad to be a part of that and hope that the task force will consider the importance of peer support for foster and former foster youth.

I want to thank you again for inviting me to speak with you all.

*Robert Listenbee, Jr.:* We want to thank you, Ms. Rochelle A. It's very difficult for young people in particular to come before the task force and testify. But you've done a magnificent job. There are going to be questions from the task force members, but first we're gonna take testimony from the other two witnesses before we have questions for you. So please bear with us. But thank you very much.

*Rochelle A:* Thank you.

*Robert Listenbee, Jr.:* We'd like to at this time go to Ms. Elsie Boudreau, who is going to testify. Ms. Boudreau.

*Female 2:* [Foreign Language]

Hello. I am Yupik. My Yupik name is \_\_\_\_\_. And I would like to acknowledge Mr. Torre for sharing your story. I'm sorry you went through what you did and for all the people today that will share. My English name is Elsie Boudreau. I am named after my maternal grandmother, \_\_\_\_\_. And while I've never met her, I really feel her spirit when I identify who I am. Cause she's part of who I am.

I'm the youngest daughter of Edgar and Theresa Frances, of St. Mary's, Alaska. And the granddaughter of George and \_\_\_\_ Peterson and Alfred and Natasha Frances. I am married and have two sons and a daughter. I am also a survivor of clergy sexual abuse. And like I must also add that I'm a licensed master social worker.

I have here a picture of myself when I was a child making my first communion. And it is a reminder of why we are all here today. And I know that while I am one voice, I am grateful for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the endemic number of Alaska Native children who experience violence.

So with that, I humbly ask for guidance from our Great Spirit to give me the right words, the words that will make a difference in the life of even just one child.

For me, I didn't find my voice until my daughter turned ten, the same age I was when my abuse began. So let us make a difference before it is too late for another child.

I, along with the victims in the film, *The Silence*, come from along line of peaceful and proud Yupik people. We lived life according to what we call **yuyuhuk**. The way of the human being. Yuyuhuk assured that there was an interconnectedness in relationship to each other, to nature, to animals and to the universe. Children were put in a place of honor. And we were taught compassion, humility, humor and a strong sense of spirituality.

The Yupiks you see today are trying desperately to matter. They're trying to rid themselves of the after effects of the boarding school era where many were physically and sexually abused. They're going through the process of ridding themselves of the era of the great death of the early 1900s where many in communities died. In some situations whole communities died. And because our ancestors believed that they had offended the spirit world and therefore were being punished, they replaced their world view of interconnectedness with sin and the concept of hell and individuality as a path to salvation. And this opened the door for another blanket of trauma, clergy sexual abuse.

The church hierarchy knew long before I was even born that my abuser, Father Poole, had problems with young girls and did nothing to protect me or the 20 or so other girls who have since

come forward since I filed a lawsuit. According to bishop accountability, the archdiocese of Boston, with a Catholic population of 1.8 million, has named 243 named perpetrators. If the archdiocese of Boston had that same rate of abuse reported as in the diocese of Fairbanks, Alaska, there would have to have been allegations made against 5,462 priests. The risk of being a child victim of clergy sexual abuse is substantially higher within Alaska Native communities.

In Alaska, the rate by which children experience violence is horrific. The numbers speak for themselves. Of the 1,664 children seen at child advocacy centers throughout the state, 661 or 40 percent were Alaska Native, American Indian. According to the 2010 census, Alaska Natives comprise only 14.8 percent of the overall population. According to the state of Alaska, for the month of December 2011, 62 percent of the children in out of home care were Alaska Native. Sixty-two percent.

So what do we do? We must acknowledge the fact that many of our relatives, and we are all related, were sexually abused and many by clergy. We must understand that when the abuser is a parental figure that also represents God, the spiritual world and the eternal, the betrayal leaves a victim nowhere to turn. We must understand that sexual abuse has deep historical roots that permeate into the lives of our children today. We must acknowledge a history of our painful events, all the painful things that we, as a native people went through, the systemic deprecation of our cultures and acknowledging the harms against our children and how that impacts all of us.

We must encourage victims to come forward and support them in that process. We must believe what we see and hear, no matter how painful. We must provide means for people to cope with the stress and the trauma of sexual abuse. We must be open to integrating all forms of intervention, particularly for our Alaska Native children who live in rural areas of the state. And we must acknowledge the possibility of healing, not just individual healing but healing on a more communal scale.

We must get rid of the civil and criminal statutes of limitations on child sexual abuse. It's one of the hardest things to talk about and some people don't ever talk about it until they're in their 40s or 50s. I've known people that didn't come forward until they were in their 70s. Child sexual abuse is like having a black mark on your soul. Every state in America needs to change its laws to

eliminate the statute of limitations on child sexual abuse. And if funding is to come from the Childhood Initiative, every state should be required to have eliminated the statute of limitations for suing or prosecuting child sexual abuse cases. It needs to be a requirement for funding.

Question. What should the government's role be in holding institutions responsible for clean up of child sexual abuse? For example, we make toxic polluters clean up their oil spills. Shouldn't the Catholic Church and other institutions that either knowingly or negligently allow child sexual abuse to occur be required to pay for the services survivors need to heal?

In closing, I just want to reiterate the fact that I am just one voice. I do not represent the many voices of Alaska. And I think it's imperative for the task force to find ways to allow space and time for others to share as well. **Goyana.**

*Robert Listenbee, Jr.:* Thank you very much, Ms. Boudreau for that very powerful testimony. We are definitely gonna have questions of you in just a moment. At this time we'd like to turn to Ms. Ivy Wright-Bryan, national director of Native American Mentoring, Big Brothers, Big Sisters of America. Ms. Ivy Wright-Bryan.

*Ivy Wright-Bryan:* *[Foreign Language]*

In my Paiute language I introduced myself as Ivy Wright-Bryan and I am a Pyramid Lake Paiute. My nation is located in northern Nevada about 40 miles north of Reno. Thank you to this panel for the invitation to come and testify. And also I want to thank the indigenous people of this area for allowing me to be a visitor here in their land.

What I'm going to share with you initially is my own personal story of my family. There was a village called – it was named Mata. And it was located near what is now Susanville, California. Now on a spring day the village was celebrating. Celebrating probably, you know something to do with new life and spring. The US Calvary came upon them. And back then, the sole assignment of the Calvary was to kill the indigenous people of this land.

They took siege upon this small village and they killed everyone, men, women, children, except three people. A grandpa, a little girl and her mother. The grandpa was shot and he was able to recover. The little girl and her mother climbed a big pine tree and hid there

till the Calvary left. Thinking that they had annihilated everyone. That little girl was named Kitty **Wakin**. That was my grandpa's grandma. We are the sole survivors of that village. The Wright family from Pyramid Lake.

So you see violence has a history in my family. And my family's story is not unique. There are many indigenous people in this land that have a similar story. Similar massacre stories. Similar family foundations that have incorporated violence.

In my work, I've dedicated my career to native children. First in my community. You read my bio. As a juvenile court judge, I chose the juvenile court as my specialty. In moving on to my position now with Big Brothers Big Sisters as the national Native American mentoring director, I continue that dedication to our tribal children across the land. And my message that I bring to the nations when I meet with them is that you no longer have to work with a stranger. Nobody is coming to your home to change you, to rescue you, to serve you. That is not what the Native American Initiative through Big Brothers Big Sisters stands for.

What I brought to the table is a partnership. Because of the historical traumas that our society has sustained, this, I believe, is the first generation that is able to heal. With the governmental genocide to begin with, then we move on to boarding schools, after that relocation and woven within that, of course, is violence. And we lose a whole generation of people with parenting skills, positive parenting skills. So this is the first generation to be able to heal from that.

What makes Big Brothers Big Sisters different in the programming is that the programming is tribal specific. It is not Native American specific or Alaska Native specific. It's tribal specific. And it is customized in such a way as the communities that we partner with, we incorporate their lifestyles and their indigenous beliefs and their indigenous activities, art, craft, beliefs.

We employ a liaison from that particular community. Who better than to know which matches are appropriate than someone from the community? Who better to be seen as a role model than someone from that community? Someone is from there is making a difference. When called upon, I appear before their council or in their committee. Because like I said, no longer will they have to work with a stranger. I am here. I'm a native person. I'm a

humble indigenous person of this land. And I serve them. I serve them as a person who respects them. Who understands.

Now our program – we’ve developed a cultural activity that teaches the creation story. We cannot have a strong foundation in our children unless our children know where they come from. What their indigenous names are. How their people are identified. For example, in the Paiute culture, we are identified by the foods that we eat. When I introduced myself as \_\_\_\_\_, it’s because we eat the cui-ui fish that is found in our lake. Another tribe may be called \_\_\_\_\_, which means trout eaters. They eat the trout from their lake. And that’s how we identify ourselves. Not merely as Paiutes, but going a little deeper into that. And our children in our program, they have an opportunity to learn those first lessons, to learn the creation stories of their tribes. And from that they develop an enhanced tribal identity. And with that enhanced tribal identity, we build upon that for higher self-esteem, self-motivation.

Children in our programming in this year have reported zero continued incidences with juvenile justice. And that is amazing. We promote native to native mentoring. In our grants to our agencies, we require 70 percent of the matches to be native to native. I am happy and very proud to report to this panel that the Mississippi Choctaw have 100 percent native to native matches. All from their community.

Something else is that our native to native matches last significantly longer than do non native matches. A typical number of non native matches is I believe it’s 16 months. For our native matches, we look at an average of 26 months.

Our program is fairly new. We first started out in 2007. Got a slow start. But last year, last summer the count of the children in our programs was thirty-five hundred. That number grows, you know every year. I think that our Big Brothers Big Sisters Native American Program is a viable program for our tribal children. Our study that’s to be published, our youth outcome survey, it notes that our children tend to be less involved with risky behaviors. And within that definition of risky behaviors is hitting, violence towards another person. And they also have enhanced positive familial experiences and enhanced relationship with their people at home.

In our program to move further into tribal specific, is that we incorporate the whole family. We realize and we recognize that

tribal families are not defined as nuclear. But we have extended families. It is not uncommon when one child has a singing program at the school that their auntie shows up, their grandparents, their uncles and aunts. And typically aunts are the greatest supporters of the children. Sometimes more important than the mothers.

So in recognition of all of these tribal specific aspects, I, again, underline that our program is very, very viable. Thank you very much.

*Robert Listenbee, Jr.:* And we thank you Ms. Wright-Bryan for your testimony. And we thank all three of you for your testimony. We're now going to have approximately 15 minutes of questions. Since we started with Ms. Rochelle A, I'd ask the panel to direct the first question to Ms. Rochelle.

*Alicia Lieberman:* You spoke powerfully. And thank you for your powerful testimony about how you lost your relationship with your sister when you were placed in the foster care, in a foster care home. And one of the controversies in the child welfare system is whether all the siblings need to be removed from the home when one of them has been abused. On the grounds that the other children were also hurt by being exposed to their sibling's abuse. Do you have an opinion or recommendations about this issue?

*Rochelle A:* Whenever I did get taken out I did want my siblings to be taken out of the house as well, but that didn't happen. They kind of gave my dad the choice of me being put into the system or him – me not living with them but being placed with somebody else and he could still have custody of me. And from what I was told they weren't supposed to give my dad that choice. And since they gave my dad the choice, they really didn't go and investigate my dad's house to see how the other kids were. It wasn't just my siblings that were in the house, it was also my step-siblings that were in the house. So and all of them are exposed to it as well.

But I did want them to be taken out and be placed with me. And I think if they would have gotten taken out we probably would have a stronger relationship than what we do now. It hurts though because we're sisters. We used to talk about everything. Just remembering the good times is what I try to do now. But I think if they were taken out we would have a stronger relationship than what we do now.

*Alicia Lieberman:* Thank you.

*Robert Listenbee, Jr.:* We will now take questions for all the panelists. Yes?

*D. Tilton Durfee:* Thank you so much. You have helped us a great deal. And I hope that you know how important your being here was and is for the sake of a lot of other children. Rochelle, the issue you were just speaking of relates not just in one child being taken out of the home but sometimes several children are taken out of the home and placed in separate foster homes. Which is really just as bad because they don't have – they don't know where the other siblings are. By talking about the impact of just being separated yourself from your family, you've really helped us I think look at the foster care system and think about the impact on children who are separated from their siblings. So thank you for that.

*[End of Audio]*

*D. Tilton Durfee:* Thank you so much for your comments about those kinds of things you couldn't do as a foster child like going to sleepovers or driving a car. That's something I think should be changed. I think that we can look at why that is and what exceptions can be made. And also your talk about the peer support that you needed for former foster youth. And I think there's a growing concern about making sure that children and youth who have been through a similar situation have a place to go where they can talk to each other. Especially if they've lost track of their own siblings. So please know how much you've helped us and you've made a difference. And your words are not lost on us at all. So please know that what you went through will help other kids. So thank you.

*Rochelle A:* Thank you.

*Robert Listenbee, Jr.:* Sarah Deer.

*Sarah Deer:* Hi, Elsie. Thank you so much for coming down here. I'd like you to speak about isolation in Alaska. You know the first time I went out there it was about 12 years ago and I flew out to Barrow and then to some of the villages. And I'd never seen anything quite like that in terms of isolation. I have a goddaughter now in Arctic Village and going out to visit her again I'm reminded about how difficult it is to get help. And how it's so different. So if you could speak a little bit to that isolation. And how it impacts victims.

*Elsie Boudreau:* Yes. I am from the village of St. Mary's. There's 500 people that live there. And there are no roads that connect St. Mary's to any other city. And that's true for the 220 or so villages or so in Alaska. You cannot drive to – you have to fly to a village. Sorry about that. And I work at a child advocacy center. We have children that come in from villages who many have never been to Anchorage, which is considered a big city. And they – it's \$600.00 or so roundtrip from a village. They bring an adult. And they have to have a place to live or a place to – I don't know what we can do.

*Female:* Just move it back a little bit. Just a little bit further.

*Elsie Boudreau:* Okay. So they have to have a place to stay. So we have villages in the 60s that didn't have telephones. The probably many of the people in the villages didn't get television until the 70s. And today most people in villages do have cell phones and cable television. And that's really their connection to the rest of the world. But for

a victim that's been traumatized, it takes a lot to travel from a village to receive the help. And if they were to receive any type for mental health or counseling services, it would be a lot.

*Robert Listenbee, Jr.:* General Taguba?

*Antonio Taguba:* This is for Ivy. Can you hear me?

*Ivy Wright-Bryan:* Yes.

*Antonio Taguba:* I'm very impressed with the fact that you're getting funding support from DOJ with your mentoring program. Cause I'm involved in something similar \_\_\_\_ with our youth, especially at the high school and also at the professional level. Have you received a national recognition now that you're a premier mentoring program within the Native American community to the point where you're involved in the national mentoring conference, for example, that they hold every year at Washington, DC?

*Ivy Wright-Bryan:* Yes. We actually participated firstly in the national conference at OJJDP as participant. And I believe last week we were at the mentoring conference where we facilitated a presentation that dealt with working in tribal communities. And that presentation we began with getting to know the community and fostering a relationship and being accepted prior to proposing any formal partnerships in communities.

*Antonio Taguba:* The only reason why I ask is because you know there's a great movement on the mentoring program for those children of color. Something that has not been recognized in the past and something that could help alleviate or even obviate the problem of youth violence given the recognition that we want with public engagement. So I thank you for that. And I think, you know we'll take it to great heart that your program will get some sort – well, will propagate itself nationally as we go through our final report to the Attorney General. Thank you.

*Ivy Wright-Bryan:* Thank you.

*Robert Listenbee, Jr.:* Dr. Cooper.

*Sharon Cooper:* Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson. This is for Elsie. Thank you very much for your comments. And actually, thank you to everyone who has spoken thus far. There is an enlarging body of literature regarding spiritual wounding and why it should be

included when we talk about the victim impact of child abuse and family violence. And what I would like to ask you is do you feel that children who have been victims can be better suited or served from a counseling perspective from spiritual counselors or from individuals who don't claim any spiritual connections per say? Because of the issue of loss of faith and loss of trust in those who promote child abuse who also have spiritual linkages. What is your opinion?

*Elsie Boudreau:* That's a very good question. I believe that child sexual abuse really is a spiritual abuse as well. And I believe that for a child to heal, the spiritual aspect does need to be incorporated. But that doesn't necessarily mean religion. It doesn't necessarily mean that it's faith based. What it means is acknowledging the whole person and them identifying where they come from and what their connections are to the land, to the universe, to the rest of the people around them. So acknowledging that piece I think is really important. And I believe that's a means for any child victim to heal. Is to acknowledge the spiritual aspect of that person. Does that answer your question?

*Sharon Cooper:* Mm hmm. Yes, it does.

*Robert Listenbee, Jr.:* For our task force, we have time for two more questions. Okay. Dr. Macy?

*Robert Macy:* Thank all three of you for your courage and your transparency and your leadership. This is for Ms. Boudreau. In the spirit of the gentleman that introduced us today and convened us, they talked several times about collaboration. And I was struck by your comment that one of the things you see that we need to do to move forward is to integrate all different interventions. As I probably don't need to tell you, in the lower 48 people tend to compete over which intervention is better and which intervention's gonna get there first. So unfortunately many healers or treatment providers sometimes fight over survivors. And so I was struck by your comment about we need to integrate all interventions. I'm wondering if you can speak a little bit more to that.

*Elsie Boudreau:* Yes, thank you. I think it's really important to be able to identify in looking at the services that you provide, understand where the victims come from and really build leadership from within. We need to allow space for the people that have been victimized, the elders, the parents, to go through a grieving process and to speak about the things that they want through. Because many have been

silent. And with that silence is shame. And what happens is it becomes something wrong with me. And what we need to do is allow ways for people using culturally specific programs I think integrating talking circles, really acknowledging elders, the spiritual level, any forms of art, cultural dance. And also individual and family therapy using the western way. Because there is room for that. But I think we need to incorporate all aspects of that. You know it's not just one way. It's not just the talking circles. It's incorporating all of it. And really being mindful of not just the individual that was hurt but how their level of not being able to process their hurt affects their family, affects the community as a whole. So providing education. So I think we need to incorporate all forms. And allow space for people to share stories.

*Robert Listenbee, Jr.:* Joe?

*Joe Torre:* Again, for Ms. Boudreau. We were talking about this last night. The victim at times doesn't get the support I'm guessing from the family members you thought you should get support from based on the fact that it is an embarrassment and there's pride and stuff. So it's really twofold that the counseling, as you said, I think it's terrific. I know what Bob was saying too about, you know we're gonna fight for who's gonna get the credit for the healing instead of concerning ourselves with the healing. But for the certain the counseling has to improve. I mean has to include the family members to me just to allow the victims to feel like, you know the perpetrator did to them so, you know we certainly need to understand it and support it. Cause otherwise they'll grow into, you know children will grow into young men or women and have issues going forward. I really appreciate a great deal. I learned a great deal from the three of you. I thank you so much for your bravery.

*Elsie Boudreau:* Thank you.

*Rochelle A:* Thank you.

*Robert Listenbee, Jr.:* Thank you. Can we have a round of applause for this wonderful panel?

*[Clapping]*

At this time there will be a 15 minute break. We'll reconvene at 11:05.

*Joe Torre, Robert Listenbee, Jr., Antonio Taguba, D. Tilton Durfee, Steven Marans, Sarah Deer,  
Georgina Mendoza, Robert Macy, Thea James, Alicia Lieberman, Sharon Cooper, Jim McDonnell,  
Rochelle A, Elsie Boudreau, Ivy Wright-Bryan*

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*[End of Audio]*