

*[Beginning of Part 1]*

*Joe Torre:* Thank you. The impact on people and communities of children's exposure to violence. That's what this panel will be focused on. This panel will explore the effects of CEV on the bodies and minds of young people and on the social fabric they live within. Panelists will discuss a wide range of questions about the impact of CEV from brain development to juvenile justice system contact. This panel will also explore innovative and collaborative approaches to protecting and healing young people exposed to violence.

The Honorable Patricia M. Martin is president of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. She is a former lead judge in NCJV – oh, this is good for me here – NCJFCJ's Child Victim's Act Model Courts Project and promoted alternative court processes for children, such as court-appointed special advocates.

Dr. Steven Berkowitz is a child and adolescent psychiatrist and an associate professor of clinical psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania Department of Psychiatry. Dr. Berkowitz is director of the Penn Center for Youth and Family Trauma Response and Recovery.

Dr. Lauren Abramson is founder and executive director of the Community Conferencing Center in Baltimore. Dr. Abramson has examined how childhood exposure to violence correlates to juvenile offending and how alternatives to detention that incorporate trauma healing for youthful wrongdoers reduce recidivism.

Dr. Adam Rosenberg is executive director of the Baltimore Child Abuse Center. Prior to directing the Center, he served as the prosecutor in a domestic violence unit and sex offence unit of the Baltimore City State Attorney's Office.

We will start with the Honorable Patricia Martin.

*Patricia M. Martin:* Thank you so very much, Mr. Chair. Ladies and gentlemen of the task force, I am honored and privileged to be here and have a conversation with you this afternoon. I have rewritten my oral testimony five times, I believe, today, so I hope that my written testimony does provide some insight. What I'd like to do, with your privilege, is to address some of the questions that were posed earlier today. I do have the names of persons who asked the questions, but rather than take the time and go remind you back of

the conversation, I would like to just go through a couple of things that I think help address some of the issues that you raised this morning.

I think that there was a question posed to how do we bring the creativity of individuals or families and formulate that and pack that some way to make a recommendation to the attorney general. I would submit to you that the creativity and caring adult is what you would like to pull together and somehow formulate. So in Cook County, for instance, don't tell the legislature down in Springfield, but I've changed the goals for every child in the Child Protection Division of Cook County. I'm also the presiding judge of the Child Protection Division in Cook County, Illinois, and just as a way of background, through the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, I, along with Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago, are the three largest child protection jurisdictions in our nation.

Over the last decade, the three of those jurisdictions of themselves have been able to reduce – safely reduce our caseloads from anywhere from 40 to 80 percent and I would say safely because our recidivism rate has not increased. And we can talk about how that was actually done but what I'd like to do is give you some of the information that we've learned over this last decade and this is not only Cook County but I would suggest to you New York, L.A., and Chicago.

By the way, you've heard two judges' names today. Both of us, Judge Cindy Lederman from Miami and myself, we are members of the National Council, serve on the board of trustees, and I currently serve as the president of that organization. So I would strongly suggest if you're looking for innovative courts, the National Council is a laboratory where we take programs, we figure them out, we work through them, we come back at all sites, have our lead judges meetings where we share this information and we're heavily supported by OJJDP, so a big thanks to them.

Back to my point, creativity and caring adult. So at my benchmark hearing that is designed specifically for older youth and foster care, no child leaves foster care without what I call an Aunt Kitty. I am a member of a family of three children. Our parents died more than 26 years ago and I'm the oldest. I was the only one out of school. My brother was in med school and my sister was still an undergrad and I could not figure out how we were gonna get up the next morning after my mother died because my father had been

bedridden for ten years. My mother had closed his practice years ago. And the way we got up at home was my mother would sing *Precious Lord* through the house and that's how we got up. But when she died, I literally could not figure out how we were going to get up the next morning.

A long story short, my Aunt **Katherine**, who we called Aunt Kitty, woke me up at 6:00 every morning Central Time, no matter where I was in the world, but she woke me up the day after my mother died to the day she died a year and a half ago. I am on an old age pension on the other side of this life, I would suggest to you, but I will tell you that was the one rock that got me and ultimately got my brother and sister to a point where we feel as if we're providing some benefit and some productive measures to our society in general. So I would suggest to you, if it were my world, your recommendation would be that every child in foster care has to have a caring adult.

Now I'm not suggesting a safe and appropriate placement. That's my legal standard. I don't care if it's a drunk uncle but if the drunk uncle calls my child on Christmas morning and says, "Merry Christmas," if the drunk uncle calls my child and says, "Happy Birthday," and is there when my child needs my child, that is a caring adult. So I'm not looking necessarily for a placement. That's another segment of my job. I'm looking for someone who loves my child. Too much of my work is on safety and placement and not enough focus on appropriateness or love, so that is the new goal in Cook County. I would suggest that's your recommendation, in other language but that's your recommendation.

We also talked about improving the practice in courts, especially proactive courts. I've already mentioned the National Council of Juvenile Family Court Judges. I already mentioned the lead judges and the Model Court Project. What I would suggest to you is that one of the things that the Model Courts do is we collaborate. So I have medical schools working with Cook County Child Protection Division. I have Children's Memorial Hospital pede residents rotating through my court for a day trying to understand what we mean by child protection.

My judges go to their grand rounds and listen to what happens in grand rounds about broken arms and spiral fractures and taking in the totality of the circumstances before making a determination of

how a child has been injured or whether it's abuse or not. So there is a lot of collaboration in these model courts.

Another collaborator or a big collaboration for us is our Chicago Public Schools. You're speaking with a judge who has gotten off the bench and gone to an IEP at a school and I will readily admit I had no idea what an IEP was or what was supposed to happen there, but someone had to go. And so I work with Chicago Public Schools but the one thing I learned when I walked in the door, we speak two different languages. I don't understand what they're talking about but through that effort, we have a member of the Chicago Public School who is on the level of a principal housed in my courthouse. She has a computer for the Chicago Public Schools and a court computer.

So when my judges are trying to figure out where this child's academic history is and performance is, what grade did they fail, why did they fail, how many more credits do they need to graduate, I don't have to wait 30 days to have a worker go to the Chicago Public School figure out their system. I call Barbara **Chavarras** up to my courtroom, give her an hour and tell her to go back downstairs, figure that out and come back and tell me.

Things like that, even though we don't have data systems that intercommunicate or communicate together, at least we can figure out ways short of trying to change a whole system around to get the information. So I would suggest demanding that courts be collaborative, similar to the model courts, is a requirement because we can't do this work alone. We have to rely on others. All of us in this room today know that states do not raise children well. No matter how good our court system is, no matter how great our foster care system is, families raise children and we have to figure out ways to treat our children and families more holistically and I would suggest that this is one way to do that.

We talked about domestic violence. I will admit to you this is kind of an "a duh," as my nephew says, but we were taking the perpetrators out of the home when it was a domestic violence situation and we were charging the custodial parent, typically the mother, with failure to provide adequate support or supervision and then taking the perp, which is typically the father, out of the home. One day we realized that trauma is effective on all of our children whether we have to move the child for life preservation but that still produces trauma for the child. So we got this "a duh" moment and start taking the perp out of the home and leaving the child in

the home. Even to the point when it's a financial burden for the family, we still take the perp out of the home and even sometimes move the mom and the children to a relative's home, even if that's what we have to do, but we keep the child with the family unit as opposed to isolating the child out.

Those are things that we learned. Somehow we couldn't figure it out in the beginning but we finally got there and that came from a suggestion from one of our other model courts. So it's sharing information once we go back to our laboratories and our jurisdictions and share this information. So I would suggest every jurisdiction should be charging on domestic violence and figuring out ways to address that trauma and violence for the children, as well.

We talked about a lot of our courtrooms across the city, whether it's a juvenile justice courtroom, a child protection courtroom, a divorce courtroom, a child support courtroom, we focus on providing services for parents. I would agree with you, even though my charge is making decisions that are in the best interests of children. So what we are doing now in Cook County, I have this benchmark hearing that's for older adolescents and all we focus on is the older adolescent to the point that, for instance, if I terminated the parental rights on a parent at 3, when the child was 3, the risk factors and support factors for a child, that same child at 13 are vastly different.

So what I've done, even though the mother is no longer the legal mother of the child, I've invited her back to my benchmark hearing. I've put in a legal relationship, a legal guardianship, so the department has a way in which to funnel funds – legal gymnastics, maybe – but funnel funds back to support that relationship.

At 13, I'm not asking mom to get off drugs. If she does, great. If she does, great. What I'm doing now is making certain my 13-year-old knows how to navigate his mom. So when mom's drugging, what do you do? When mom's okay, what do you do? Each and every one of us sitting in this room has an uncle, an aunt that we were told not to sit next to at a barbecue. It's no different than my children in foster care and we also have to teach them how to navigate the bad parts or the not-so-positive parts of their family.

And I feel I have an obligation when my children get older to look at their permanency a little differently. I would hope that I can find a home. I would hope that I can find a family. But if I can't, at least give them the tools that they need to be able to find their way through this life.

We talk about gaps. I would suggest cross training is the absolute answer. It is no longer sufficient for me to go to judicial trainings and learn how to make determinations from the bench. I need to understand what a spiral fracture – when I first came to the bench, they told me the only way you could get a spiral fracture is from abuse. Ladies and gentlemen, when they tell us that, when docs tell us that on the stand, we believe that, until we have doctors coming in and actually telling us what we need to do and training us.

So as the presiding judge, one of the things I do once a month is I buy lunch for my judges but I invite a doc in, I invite a psychiatrist in, I invite someone from the substance abuse community in. That's where we found out that substance abuse providers are starting to use medicine like Vivitrol. We had no idea about that stuff until we brought them into our court building and started asking us to talk to us directly.

We work with the police department in Chicago and sheriff's department. We've had problems with serving our child protection warrants, trying to find kids who run away from placement. I found numerous opportunities with them to help me figure out how to find our kids. My kids go home. When they run from institutions, they go home. So talking with my police and sheriffs, we're able to execute those warrants a little better.

I've been told that I have to stop but I wanted to say one other thing and that is this, that in Cook County, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, I have been the presiding judge for the last decade in Cook County. We would not have been able to reduce our numbers from over 38,000 children in foster care down to 7,000 children in foster care without raising our rate of recidivism if we didn't reach out to the medical field, if we didn't reach out to the education field, if we didn't reach out to juvenile justice. And I would just encourage you, when you look at court and making recommendations for court, do not look just at juvenile justice and child protection but you have to look at divorce court, domestic violence court, child support court, even paternity court when we talk about siblings.

*Joe Torre:* Thank you, Your Honor. Just for the record, we didn't want you to stop.

*Patricia M. Martin:* Typically speaking, I don't. I'm the one that controls the time, but I just wanted to be mindful and respectful of the other –

*Male:* And may the record reflect, Your Honor, that the attorney here did not ask you to stop.

*Patricia M. Martin:* That's a first.

*Joe Torre:* Thank you very much. Dr. Berkowitz.

*Steven Berkowitz:* Thank you. It's really an honor to be here and it probably shouldn't be a surprise that just about everything I thought I was going to say has been said. Maybe that's one of the good and bad things about being the last panel. But especially since most of, or many of, the people who testified on the task force are friends, colleagues, and mentors. As many of you know, I was at Yale with Dr. Marren for 15 years as the deputy director of the NCCCEV, so I have to really acknowledge his mentorship over the years.

One of the things that I was asked to talk about is the neuroscience of trauma and I'm gonna do that briefly. I did a lot of rewritings, too. We really have, in terms of neuroscience, probably learned more about the effects of trauma and stress in the last ten years than about any other psychiatric or neurologic disorder, and I think that's really quite remarkable.

So we do know now that experience changes the genome. We know how it does that, through methods of epigenetics changing methylation on specific parts of the gene which change gene products which has impact on brain structure and on the body structure. And we have to remember that the brain is in charge of everything, so anything that affects the brain will affect the body. That's why, as you've heard time and time again, that exposure to violence and trauma early in life and actually throughout life has such negative effects not only on psychological health but on physical health and on functioning in general.

If you look at the data on employment, homelessness, 100 percent of men on death row were abused as children. So I think we really need to understand that very carefully. And it is a biological mechanism. We are biological machines. That's how we operate

and everything that happens is through a biological process. And it's not a surprise that the most exquisitely sensitive aspect of that process is about survival and trauma is about an attempt to survive and that is what's changed and dysregulated when children and adults are exposed to traumatic situations, particularly chronically.

So I think it's very important to keep in mind completely dysregulated systems. We have brain scans that show brain sizes decreasing. We know about cardiovascular disease increase. We know about cancer increase in all of these situations. What's really interesting to me is when you look at expenditures in terms of treatment and research. For every \$100.00 that's spent on the very diseases I just talked about, 5 cents is spent on interventions and research when it comes to child trauma. I think that's startling when we talk about costs.

Sitting next to the judge here and hearing about what she's doing in Chicago reminds me of what I don't have. In Philadelphia today, I sit with children on a daily basis about 50 percent who are in foster care who have been abused, neglected, shot. Most of the kids in foster care not only have been traumatized in multiple ways but have been exposed to in-utero substances, alcohol and other such things, and already come into the world with two strikes against them. And my job and I see our job as to instill hope and traumatized individuals are helpless and hopeless and our goal is to instill hope. But that requires not just a village. It requires a nation.

I spend more time on the phone with attorneys, child welfare workers – I wish the judges would return my calls – child welfare workers, foster care workers, and \_\_\_\_\_ patience because it does take that many people. And I can tell you that one of the greatest dilemmas is that we don't speak the same language. We don't have a child as the focus of our language. And I would argue if we want to make a systems change, if we really want to change what we're doing, we're all taking a short view. The long view is we need a new language among all the child serving agencies, courts, judges, et cetera, that have the child, have the human development and trauma informed understanding at the center of that language. That is what's going to change things in the long view.

That's what's going to change the funding in the long view, when we recognize the child maltreatment, trauma, and abuse is really the No. 1 public health issue in this country. I think the data is clear. You've heard it time and time again. \$100 billion was the

statement. That doesn't even include the rates of incarceration, of court hearings, of so on and so forth, is the No. 1 public health issue in this country and we need to change the paradigm across the board.

So one of the dilemmas with this panel, being the provocative person I am, is that it's only DOJ who's sponsoring this. Where's everybody else who's involved in these issues? Shouldn't they be here? Shouldn't we be talking about how to create that common goal and that common language? We do know how to intervene. We have lots of effective interventions. You've heard about some of them. You've heard about a wonderful way of thinking about things in the court system but we don't do it across the country. We don't have that common shared language that everybody believes and everybody agrees with.

I have an anecdote, the Defenders' Association, a very controversial case where I was completely blindsided and actually, frankly called unethical by the public defender. And she was wrong and I called her to task on it and then was asked after calling her to task to give a talk about what it means to provide trauma treatment. Well, it ends up that nobody, none of the attorneys in this setting, actually knew when they were requesting trauma-focused treatment what it was and I had to teach them what it was and when to ask for it and what really to ask for, to ask for an evaluation, not for treatment. They thought they saw a terrible thing happen, they must have trauma treatment. No, it doesn't work that way.

This is the language that doesn't exist among all of our various agencies and facilities and whatnot that needs to be imbued to change the paradigm and I would argue that needs to be throughout the secretarial and cabinet posts and agencies and in every level of government and in every level of the community, that we need to be talking about children and families and development from the same perspective, sharing language and creating a language that can allow our interventions to grow and be effective. And then the money, I think, will come, to support what we know already works.

Yes, there needs to be things that need to be adapted. We have many, many interventions that are effective that we can use and we should not shy away from using them. What keeps us from using them is the lack of consistency, collaboration, and the funding that goes into all different sorts of directions rather than really thinking

what the primary issue is at hand. So if I had anything I'd ask the task force to do is to talk about that as the cornerstone of the foundation of the change that's required in this country to change what I think is our No. 1 public health issue. Thanks.

*Joe Torre:* Thank you, Doctor. Dr. Abramson.

*Lauren Abramson:* Thank you for the privilege of being here with you. What I'd like to talk about and address is why we need to change our responses to violence and how we can do that. So why do we need to change our responses? What we're currently doing is not working. What we currently do is we separate victims and offenders and we punish offenders and we don't give them a chance to learn how to do things differently and how to do it better. In fact, when they go into detention, what they do learn how to do is how to be better criminals. The research shows that over and over again.

And what do we do with victims? We don't include them in the justice process. They're isolated and if they happen to have symptoms of post-traumatic stress, which many do, the research shows that they do not seek treatment for it. So victims are often stuck in their sense of victimhood and they're stuck with this identity as being a victim. So how can we do it differently?

In Baltimore for 13 years, we've been at the Community Conferencing Center, which I founded, we've been using a restorative justice intervention called community conferencing which what we do is we bring together the victims and the offenders and their respective family members and supporters and anybody else who's been involved and affected by the incident, the person who cleaned up the graffiti. It could be a pastor there to support them, a coach, anybody. There's a facilitator.

Everybody sits in a circle and has a chance to do a very radical thing. They get to talk to each other. So those who caused the harm get a chance to say what happened and describe what happened and then everybody in the circle gets a chance to say how they've been effected by what happened in a very emotional way. Affect is fundamental to why this process is so powerful.

And in everybody having a chance to share their story, offenders are beginning to take accountability for what they've done and victims are having a chance to put out into the external what they've been carrying on the inside and as everybody does that, they get a chance to really learn different things about each other.

And once everybody's spoken, we ask the group, "What do you want to do to make this better, to repair the harm and prevent it from happening again?" And if they can, they come up with a written agreement and we follow through to see if there's compliance with that agreement.

Now we use this as an alternative to arrest and court and incarceration not just for misdemeanor offenses but for felony offenses, as well. The more serious, the better, and when I tell you the outcomes, that will help explain why. We've also been doing this in schools, as Chief Goodwin said, in Baltimore City Schools, as an alternative to school suspension and arrest, to help stem the school to prison pipeline which maybe all of you are familiar with. About 100 students are arrested out of Baltimore City Schools every month. And we know that it works.

There's a lot of research that shows that conferencing, that victims feel much more satisfied if they go through conferencing than if they had gone to court. Offenders feel more satisfied and there's even research that shows that victims who are experiencing PTSD who went through conferencing have significantly reduced symptoms if they've gone through community conferencing than if they went to court.

So let me just give you one example of how it's worked. There was a bullying case that started on Facebook. I wish Facebook really should fund half of these kinds of programs.

*Male:* And Google the other half.

*Lauren Abramson:* Yeah. Somebody made a comment about somebody else's boyfriend and before we knew it, three girls had jumped two girls and one of the girls had a broken eye socket. So we have a community conference and what happened in that conference with this bullying incident is what happens in ten out of ten bullying incidents that we handle this way. The girls who bullied the other girls ended up in tears talking about the times earlier in their lives they were bullied. So we get this snapshot about how violence begets violence, whether you were a victim of it or you're a perpetrator of it, and it becomes this cycle.

And so the parents agreed to pay the medical bills for the girl who had the broken eye socket. But what all the girls agreed to do and decided to do and figured out that they would do it there and then is that they decided that they were going to get together after the

community conference and they were going to create a presentation about their experience of bullying and they were going to give that presentation not just in their school but in four other schools. And then each of the mothers and parents agreed that they would rotate and provide transportation when these girls made these presentations.

So there are no longer victims and offenders. There are young people who have made bad choices who have learned how to do it differently. 10,000 people in Baltimore have participated in a community conference and 95 percent of the time they come up with an agreement that they abide by. But not only that, there's 60 percent lower reoffending with the kids that go through community conferencing than if they went through the juvenile justice system all at one-tenth the cost of going to court.

But the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, with a \$270 million budget can't find one penny for this program that they refer cases to year after year after year. We know what works. We know what doesn't work. The Jerry Springer model of dealing with each other doesn't work, right? But we need to change our culture. We seriously need to shift funding to programs like restorative justice programs that give better outcomes than the antiquated, costly, ineffective – do you get how I feel about our current system – ways of responding to harm and we need to give our young people experiential opportunities. This is not about a curriculum. This is about experiencing ways to learn how to deal with conflict constructively because conflict is part of being human and we need to learn how to have healthy relationships.

If I can borrow from my sailing buddy when something breaks on the boat, we have the technology. What we don't have is a political will to use it. Thank you.

*Joe Torre:* Thank you, Doctor. Mr. Rosenberg.

*Adam Rosenberg:* Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman Torre and Chairman Listenbee. And my mom sent me a text saying, "Tell Joe I love him," so I had to share that.

*Joe Torre:* I'll take it.

*Adam Rosenberg:* Members of the task force, friends and colleagues who are here today and those who care about reducing violence to children, welcome to Baltimore. At Baltimore Child Abuse Center, every

child we see and meet with decorates a butterfly and perhaps you received a copy of this report with your material. We collect over 850 butterflies every year and that number continues to grow. This is a very real manifestation of the scale of the problem here in Baltimore City and nationally, as well. We proudly hang each one of those butterflies from the ceiling at the Center and recognize that every butterfly is different, every one has its own unique story. Each one symbolizes the transformation that occurs within each child and each case.

Today, I believe we've all had the privilege to hear many stories from victims and from survivors and we hear those stories every day at Baltimore Child Abuse Center 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We are one of the few programs in the country that have that ability to respond to victims of abuse in that manner. A child advocacy center – and you have much more material in my written testimony – but a child advocacy center like Baltimore Child Abuse Center provides a single interview and a point of contact for every reported case of sexual child abuse in Baltimore City. We break the silo. Watching and participating in these interviews are detectives and child protective workers and prosecutors.

For some, the interview results in the bad guy going to jail. For others, it results in a child protective services intervention of some sort. And for many, this is the start of a connection to therapy, to treatment, for both the child and the non-offending family members, who frankly, when they come to BCAC, they're also reporting that they, too, have been victims of abuse. Abuse is a multigenerational poly-victimization situation that occurs and many of them are getting help for the first time when their child has been abused at the Baltimore Child Abuse Center.

We are one of 700 centers nationally. We're the third in the country. These are centers that are urban and rural. They are suburban and on reservations and they're governed by standards set by the National Children's Alliance in D.C. and the National Child Advocacy Center in Huntsville, Alabama. They came about by a unique set of circumstances.

Former Congressman Bud Cramer, who formerly was the district attorney in Huntsville, Alabama, had received his first case as D.A., and whether it was by fate or the office was making his life difficult, they gave him a child abuse case. And when Bud went to go interview the victim, in Bud's own words, he says the victim said, "If you ask me another question, I will kill myself." Because

Bud realized the child had been spoken to 14 different times. Everybody spoke to the child and Bud had a radical idea. He broke the silo and he said I shall bring together police officers and social workers and everyone said, "Bud, you're crazy." But 25 years later, that model works and that's what we have here.

And yet, not every case and every child gets seen by the CAC first. And the amazing part, and I echo Judge Martin in the sense that my testimony has evolved throughout the day, as well, and maybe that's the disadvantage of our iPad culture, is I was sent this disturbing report by our clinical director just this morning. She reported to me that a six-year-old had come home and asked his parents if he was going to jail because two police officers came to school with guns and another person, a CPS worker, was also there. He reportedly was crying and scared and told him he couldn't talk about what happened with his cousin.

So apparently a report of abuse had occurred and the police, rather than bringing the child to us, had just responded to the school, doing what they meant to do best but they show up with guns there and asking their police-like questions. The child displayed anxiety that has disrupted sleep and the mom indicated – I mean she actually filed a formal complaint about the process and stated that what she experienced did not put her child's needs first.

The reason I'm able to share this story is because our process is able to share the failings of our system as well as its successes. So then we can take this incident and send it to the leadership of these different agencies. So when reports are different, these cases are very different and reports of abuse need to be handled differently than a regular investigation. Cops, prosecutors who come in contact with these cases often need to unlearn their basic skills and use their investigatory traits differently. We all live in a world where inconsistency is normal, impressions change, and people who protect those who harm them don't know why they were harmed by those who were charged to protect them. These victims respond differently to violence than other adult witnesses of crimes and those factors are taken into consideration in every interview.

Our Center reduces trauma by providing that single point of contact at a child family-friendly facility. This multidisciplinary team meets weekly to make sure that no case falls through the cracks and that there is an adherence to protocols and procedures by law enforcement. So we provide that training and that urgency, as well.

We also educate the community on a very tight shoestring budget to take – urging adults to take responsibility for protecting kids. As we've learned, unfortunately, over these last few weeks of Penn State and Syracuse, adults have to report abuse. It is not strong enough for the child himself or herself to report what happened to them. We need to be on the lookout and we need to stick up for these kids.

There is great need for community collaboration and that's how I met Jackie Cune, who testified before you this morning. She wanted to start her own nonprofit and I, running a nonprofit, said, "That's the last thing you want to do." But I encouraged her to work with us. She's been a model volunteer and believe me, I would hire her today if I could find the funding.

We need to encourage more community collaboration and I believe that's one of the recommendations this task force can make is that programs need to work together to support successful and existing efforts. We operate a big tent, so we can bring everybody under this tent, and we do more than just helping in cases of child sex abuse. As local law enforcement agents, many who have been here today, have come across their cases, they recognize the fact that we can just help them make their investigation better, so not just in a child sex abuse case but also in cases of human trafficking, witness to domestic violence, other forms of child maltreatment.

We are breaking the silos and inviting those people to come to our Center so we can help them with their investigation. However, there are still other systems that need to be a part of this, the school system, juvenile justice, parole and probation. These systems need to be added, as well.

Three things need to happen. I defer to my colleague, Howard Dubowitz, who sort of very succinctly outlined next steps and I guess these are good recommendations that can happen, too, to all of you. One is funding to defend childhood must be made a priority. There are just insufficient funds that support and even an understanding for these most critical programs. Nationally, they are simply just hobbled together through a variety of local and federal and philanthropic funds. Here in Baltimore, we barely get funded less than ten percent by the city we strive to serve, despite the fact that our process has been estimated to save over \$1,000.00 per child, which translates into almost \$1 million saved per year.

Congress recently reauthorized the Victims of Child Abuse Act at \$18 million, which is meant to cover 700 sites and national trainings. It is money that is appreciated but is woefully insufficient to serve the CAC's and make any significant change. We are a best practice of CAC's and I often cite David Finkelhor studies to show that we help those who have been abused and we can recommend that greater funding be made and made readily available so centers like ours and other multi-collaborative agencies can use these core skills and family focus to provide greater support to our communities.

Two is I have to agree what many people have said. We need public awareness and prevention education. This needs to be brought to the highest level and this is the public crisis that's going on right now in our country. If this was a disease, we would have our mission to the moon like process of bringing everybody together to find that cure and yet, the numbers of 75 million children who will be abused over the next 18 years dwarfs anything else that we're doing and those become the root causes for all the other ailments that we're throwing money at right now, bullying and childhood obesity and truancy in school. And it's not to minimize those but we can help affect that change if we can begin to publicly educate people on the need to stop abuse.

And there are many great models of prevention education that exist. They need to get into the hands of parents and of schools. Chief Goodwin's correct that many children feel safer in schools and we must find ways and fund ways to have this in there and many states are starting to go online and do that. Vermont, Illinois, Texas, and North Carolina, to have some examples, are beginning to have mandatory education in their school systems and I believe that's a recommendation the task force can have, too, that every state must have some form of child abuse prevention education available to it.

And finally, data sharing. Dr. **Merringer** is absolutely right, that we need to have access to this great trove of data that's out there. There are still many silos that exist. I love Judge Martin's suggestion that you have a principal in the courthouse accessing that data, so even if we can't integrate those systems at least someone can look at both sets of data. We have to have better data sharing here because quite often the school system, for example, doesn't know that the child that they're about to put out for truancy is the child who's been abused.

So I truly commend you for opening this up today, for answering these questions, and for taking a first step at reducing child abuse and maltreatment and children's exposure to violence and know that we're here to help.

*Joe Torre:* Thank you, Mr. Rosenberg. I just want to open it up for questions. We have about 15, 16 minutes for questions.

*Audience:* Thank you very much. I've learned a lot in a very short amount of time and I have a question about the – I guess for Judge Martin and Dr. Abramson. Are there any cases that you would screen out of the work that you do? In other words, are there cases that are so egregious that sitting in a circle could potentially create more problems than it could potentially solve?

*Patricia M. Martin:* First of all, I wanted to mention earlier that our model courts also include tribal courts and at the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, I went as an individual to testify on Congress on the Hill to include tribal courts in the CIP funding, so tribal courts this year are included in CIP funding.

But your answer is no. We do child protection mediation in Cook County. I do domestic violence cases and all other cases and the way we do it may be different, so I have team mediators, so I have two mediators. I never do them with one single mediator. I have the deputies around. If the person's in custody, I have extra protection for the staff and the mediators. We do put in different protections but I will not preclude any case from going to mediation.

I might make it go more than once because mediation in my jurisdiction talks about all the non-legal issues, who's going to help the kid on visits to drop offs, drop-off visits, parenting time with the dad when mom is in a new relationship and dad can't stand mom or stand the new partner. Those kinds of issues on how to get along with the family, even if the person's in custody and they're not there for murder and they're gonna get out one day, I've got to make certain that they learn how to communicate on behalf of my child. And so I demand mediation and the more serious the case, the more serious the felony, the more violence involved, the more I require mediation.

*Audience:* Even if the victim of the violence doesn't want to participate?

*Patricia M. Martin* I will still require the mediation. The victim doesn't have to participate. And I have an advocate there for the victim and if the victim chooses not to participate, that's fine, but they have to figure out how to communicate. Families have to communicate for my kids.

*Lauren Abramson:* I would say the same thing, except that we maintain the process as a voluntary process, so if any of the key participants decide not to, then we won't do it.

*Audience:* Thank you for asking that question. I had the same one. Thank you very much. But at the end of the last panel, I asked a question that I was told this panel should respond to. Over and over again, we've heard about the importance of multidisciplinary, multiagency, community, and public sector collaboration, sharing of information. So my question is what are the impediments, if any, that we should address to multiple agencies sharing information on a case-by-case basis or on an overall program planning level?

*Adam Rosenberg:* May I?

*Audience:* Oh, excuse me. Thank you, each of you. You were excellent. It's late in the day. Yes.

*Adam Rosenberg:* In Baltimore, one of the impediments, I think, is territory and silo and sort of the need that there is a lack of willpower sometimes or even a lack of understanding that we can share that information, so it takes a lot of time for me as an executive director. I go meet with both school administration, as well as school principal, so I think we have to educate at both the top level and the bottom level that we're here to help and we can provide some information sharing.

Some of it, frankly, is perhaps a confusion of the HIPAA laws even. People are so deathly afraid of violating HIPAA that they don't realize that we do have that multidisciplinary agreement in Baltimore that the State's Attorney's office can share with the police who can share with the Department of Social Services who can share with health practitioners. Howard Dubowitz and I sit on a committee where we talk about how do we bring in primary healthcare practitioners so we can share that information with them, as well.

But it's remarkable that in the year 2011 we're still so far away from that, that we're so intricately wired and connected in every other way in that you can follow my tweets and my Facebook postings in one sense but in another sense, I have no ability to sort of tie the various portals of information together that serve a child or a family. We found that sometimes four and five agencies may be serving one household at any given time and it's a waste of money. What a waste of time and resources that if we could streamline that.

*Audience:* That would be your recommendation?

*Adam Rosenberg:* There needs to be a recommendation that these people need to work better, that there can be information sharing, that there can be, I guess, laws that can be put out there sort of opening up greater exceptions so that information can be shared. There can be perhaps incentives put in place that if information is set up and shared set up that then these are the programs that may be available from federal government down in terms of that, similar to how we have incentives on your highways. There's a lot of highway money that's tied up based on what the state or the local jurisdiction does. Why can't we do the same thing with federal Justice money?

*Audience:* And this would relate to your common language issue?

*Steven Berkowitz:* Absolutely, and I think there are regulations that forbid certain information sharing and schools and others in particular often don't want to share the information that they can share because of turf issues and other such things. And I agree that it should be incentivized, just like we've incentivized – the federal government incentivized electronic medical records. Why not incentivize appropriate information sharing at that level and I think that would make a big difference.

*Patricia M. Martin:* I'll just add on a very local level, all you need is a judge's order, because I'm a judge. I mean we've had the same problem in Cook County and all I've done is issued an order to the hospitals to get medical records and I sent the order saying that it has to be first in line in the medical records department. No one questioned my jurisdiction, so I kept going. And going to Chicago Public Schools, likewise. I told you, I went to an IEP. I had no jurisdiction to be there but I was issuing orders. I guess the Appellate Court has to tell me I'm wrong and they haven't figured it out yet or no one's taken it to them, so get a court order.

*Steven Berkowitz:* I will file that order this week and get a copy from you.

*Joe Torre:* Dr. Marren?

*Dr. Marren:* Just really quickly, you all are wonderful and I'd like to have all of you in my community but everywhere in the country. We're a big country and there are lots of reasons why things don't proliferate, but we keep hearing the same story anywhere you go around the country. So at the rate of getting going, Dr. Abramson and Mr. Rosenberg, could you please briefly say something about how come out of \$240 million, your program doesn't get any money and how come there's so little money going to you? And lastly to the two of you, how come we're not talking from the child's perspective as a guide to addressing what's going on here?

*Lauren Abramson:* We're not very smart?

*Audience:* So I'm not **listening to anything you say, including yourself?**

*Lauren Abramson:* Sure. 90 percent of the juvenile justice budget is going towards those kinds of detention interventions that Dr. McCarthy said not only don't work but often make people worse. I would love an answer to that question.

*Adam Rosenberg:* I think some of it's due to priority setting, that children are not a priority. Children don't vote. Children aren't your taxpayers and I think that it's easy to sort of shuffle them and shovel them on the side there. In Baltimore specifically, we are obsessed with the homicide number. It's in the paper every day and we look at what the count is for the number of homicides this year and yet when you look at the number of other crimes that are occurring, it blows away what the homicide number is. And if we sort of reappportioned our focus, your impression of Baltimore, unfortunately, is *The Wire*, when it should be perhaps Charm City Cakes.

I think that's part of we're just focused on the wrong thing and we need to have more people saying, "You know what? Let's look at children there and let's prevent this child from becoming that homicide statistic later in life by giving him services today."

*Steven Berkowitz:* I think one answer is that our science and our knowledge is way ahead of our political will and that the more complicated the issues are – and we're talking about a very complex issue, as we

discovered today – the less – it’s not a sound bite and that’s one of our great dilemmas is that people don’t really want to delve into and think about the most complicated issues and child development is very complicated and the impact of trauma on children’s functioning and development into adulthood is very complicated and that’s something that takes time and effort, and as I said, it’s not a sound bite. It’s not something that people readily and easily pay attention to.

*Dr. Cooper:*

Mr. Rosenberg, I have a question for you. I was pleased to hear you say that in addition to the mainstream child abuse cases that we’re so accustomed to having sent to a child advocacy center, that you all are also starting to provide services for sex trafficking victims. First of all, I think the task force is already aware that these are victims who really experience exposure to violence, perhaps more than most victims, and so could you explain how you were able to get your CAC to embrace that as many CAC’s are not willing yet to evaluate or provide services for sex trafficking victims?

*Adam Rosenberg:*

Yeah, I think it’s a complicated issue, Dr. Cooper. In one sense, victims of human trafficking, almost 90 percent of them were victims of child abuse themselves, first, so they ended up in – and again, this is domestic human trafficking. I think for a long time, we thought about little kids from overseas being trafficked up and down the Eastern Seaboard, but it really is girls from Florida and Rochester, New York. I mean that’s what we’ve seen in the last month at the Center and these are kids who ran away from one situation because they were being abused at home and then find themselves now being trafficked.

We got involved with it. I mean we’re unique. We’re a nonprofit. Although in one sense, I cry poor and that I lament the fact that we’re not funded, and in another sense, it does give us the ability to say, “You know what? We’re going to do this today.” We have set up good relationships locally with Rod Rosenstein, who’s the U.S. Attorney, who’s here, and again, on upper level and lower level. I don’t sleep anymore ‘cause I’m just sort of creating these relationships to say, “Look, I’ve got this great program. Use it.”

And I think part of it is just, again, breaking these silos and that our program runs in contradiction in some sense to other CAC’s nationally who are very governmentally focused and this is our box and this is what we shall do and this is what we shall not do. So

even neighboring counties send us cases sometimes simply because they recognize that we can do this better.

But in order to do this, the centers need to have your backing from both the Department of Justice and I think they need to have the funding in order to make it do. Every interview costs about \$800.00. And I'm eager to do these interviews and we've gotten some grants and we've cobbled something together, but I also can't unring the bell at this point because once we've started the process, how can I not give an interview now to a victim of human trafficking? So we do it.

*Joe Torre:* I'm going to try to get two more questions in. Ms. Mendoza?

*Ms. Mendoza:* First of all, I want to thank all of you for sharing your personal stories and expertise, as well as for your time and commitment. I wanted to shift gears just a little bit. You all run excellent programs but I wanted to see if there was any component or opportunity for youth to become leaders and step out of the shadow of just being victims or those that are in need of services and be seen as someone who is powerful and a real stakeholder in our community. That's something that I hear a lot from the youth directly, when they say things – like me, when I go to teen lounges and hang out with them in jeans and they say, “Well, who are you to tell me what I need? Who are you to tell me what services are best for me?” And I'm stumped. I'm like, “You're right. Let's talk about it.”

So I want to know is there any programs or components to your programs that give the opportunity for that youth?

*Patricia M. Martin:* I would suggest that I mentioned two programs that do that very well. One is my benchmark hearing, which is designed for the older youth. As most of the jurisdictions in this nation, all of my kids are older today. Most of my kids coming into foster care are not the new infants, newborn infants. Most of my kids are 13, 11, teenagers, and so this program is designed for older youth. The whole hearing is a two-hour hearing that is set aside. I don't accept reports from the doc. The doc has to come in. I don't accept reports from the staff person at the intervention center. They have to come in.

And the idea is prior to the hearing beginning, the youth sits down with the social worker and talks about and fills out some forms that I've developed. One of them is, “What do you want to be?” So a

kid came in and told me they wanted to be a lawyer. The social worker said she wanted to be a cosmetologist and I said, "That's a little different." And the worker said, "Well, she's reading so far below grade that she'll never be a lawyer." And I said, "Well, I know a lot of people with degrees that can't read." But anyway, but the point is it's focused entirely on the child. The focus is entirely on what the child needs for the adults to do to support his or her dream.

The other one is our mediation program and my exit interviews with the participants talk about this is one of the first times throughout the entire court system that they feel their voice has been heard because they have the privilege of sitting down and saying how this affects them and what affects them the most and what they need out of these hearings.

So I think there are programs throughout the nation and those are just two right in Cook County that work very well.

*Steven Berkowitz:* We actually had just started a program with some of our teens who have gone through treatment and come out to be peer mentors to some of the younger children and actually everyone we've asked has agreed to do it. So we'll see how that goes. It just started.

*Joe Torre:* All right. Dr. **Massey**?

*Robert Massey:* Thank you, Joe. So I wanted to thank all of you for speaking both from your expertise but I think particularly from your hearts, and especially the rewrites at the end of the day, because you boiled a lot of the information but it wasn't all just from your intellects, which are profound and experiences from your heart and you all spoke very heartfelt. So I thought it might be time at the end of this day, and I think this is an upper, not a downer, but just to bring up a concept and to get a quick reaction from each of you. Maybe this is something you can think about and help us out with as we move forward over the next 12 months to get this report done.

If we think about, as Steve has brought up, child development and what we would call child-centric language, right, and how difficult development becomes when there's disrupted attachment, trauma that impacts development. Underneath that trauma, I'm gonna –

*[End of Part 1] [Beginning of Part 2]*

*Robert Massey:* – is oppression, transgenerational enslavement, so that at this point in time in America, we don't have birth equity. We don't have employment equity. We don't have educational equity. And that is, in my view anyway, a large feeder into the cycle of trauma. And I wondered since this panel is really about the impact of violence and trauma on the community, would you have any comments with respect to the structural racism and oppression that continues to unfortunately keep a large portion of our population in a place where it's very hard for them to even catch a breath?

*Steven Berkowitz:* Yeah, I'd love to respond to that, Robert. I actually think if we look at what is often called deep poverty, and we use poverty as a sort of wide ranging term but there is something called deep poverty, multigenerational poverty of families who have been impoverished as long as we've measured. And if you look at those families and the studies have shown I think in the NIS3 or I think it was 1992, if you made under \$15,000.00 a year, the rates of maltreatment were 22 times than if you made over \$30,000.00 a year. 22 times.

That is the cycle of violence and it's also the cycle of poverty because those very same kids who are maltreated are unable to learn well. They don't do well in school. They have health problems. They end up unemployed and homeless. So we perpetuate that cycle and I think that one of the issues that we're never going to address, unfortunately, in this country, is ensuring a livable wage, and we know that that makes a huge difference in breaking the cycle that we're talking about.

But with that said, I do think we can intervene with families, with communities, to interrupt cycles of maltreatment and abuse and trauma and I think there are multiple ways of doing that. And every time we identify a child, we're identifying a family, and the family needs a whole intervention, as does the child. And that's the opportunity that I think we have and that's what I see as really the outcome and the positive outcome of identification. But it requires the nation, not the village.

*Patricia M. Martin:* I would suggest that two things. One is that the NIS studies are based on reports of abuse and neglect. It's not based on actual abuse and neglect. I would suggest that there are some very rich families and some white families that have abuse and neglect in their households, as well. I don't see many of those.

As a matter of fact in Cook County, when a white family comes in, my office is on the eighth floor. I hear about it before they have the temporary custody \_\_\_\_\_. I actually, as a presiding judge, did not know white families were charged with abuse and neglect until I went down to South Dakota and South Carolina. I honestly didn't know that because in Cook County, they're all black. So to the point that I have no coke babies from Cook County Hospital. I mean they're all from Cook County, not from Northwestern.

So that either means white childbearing-age women don't use drugs in Chicago, which is possible, not probable, or something happens in the social investigation and work up at Cook County that's different than Northwestern. So I called the AMA and they don't – haven't returned my call yet.

*Steven Berkowitz:* I called them \_\_\_\_\_.

*Patricia M. Martin:* My point is there's institutional racism, no doubt, but institutions are developed by people and we have people who are racist but we also have implicit bias that we overlook constantly. And I have it, as well. Each and every one of us has implicit bias. I mean when I grew up – let me use a black example, since I'm black. Black women have back. Well, my sister runs marathons. She doesn't have back. You know what I'm talking about, right? Okay, good. *[laughter]*.

I was down in Kentucky and I – I apologize.

*Robert Massey:* I'm with you, sister. I got it.

*Patricia M. Martin:* I was in Kentucky talking about implicit bias and racism in court and I said that and there was a gentleman who, just like Colonel Sanders, he got beet red in the front row and then I figured I better figure out a way to get out of this conversation. But the point is, we all have implicit biases and they've been developed for a number of years for a number of reasons. But I have to teach my judges how to understand that they have implicit biases, hang it up like a trench coat in their chambers, and go out into their courtroom and make decisions that are devoid of that implicit bias.

Likewise, I would suggest that the residents coming in, the medical residents, the social workers, the law students coming in, have to learn that, too. And so that's one of the reasons. Judges aren't the answer but we are a part of the answer and when we understand that racism is about implicit bias, as well, that means there's

something we can do about it. So contrary to what you said, this is something that we can change. We have to be willing to change it but we can impact it in a positive way.

The National Council has developed a bench card on implicit biases for judges so that we can start looking at this issue and I hope that we'll have an opportunity to supplement our written testimony or provide additional oral testimony on some of these specific issues for you because these are issues that the court is looking at and working towards eliminating.

*Patricia M. Martin:* Thank you. We'd welcome that.

*Lauren Abramson:* Can I take a really short –

*Joe Torre:* Real short.

*Lauren Abramson:* Okay. I would actually like to refer to the task force a short book by a woman by Grace Lee Boggs called *The Next American Revolution*. She's a 96-year-old activist and she offers that the next American revolution will not be about equality but about who we are as human beings and she talks very cogently about what we need to do because all these jobs that are lost are not coming back. We need to restructure our education system, we need to restructure our criminal justice system, and we need to learn how to take care of each other and in the process, be healthy as a community. And I feel like the restorative justice work that we're doing is about bringing together human beings in a circle, not ignoring the fact that there is racism, that there's all sorts of biases and oppression, but letting people be human and figure out a different way to be with each other so those biases get broken down and get recreated in a different – or people reestablish relationships in a very different way.

*Joe Torre:* Thank you. Thank you very much to our panel, very informative. What can I say? It's time for public testimony right now, so if – five minutes, Will is telling me? You've got a big hand there, Will. That's closer to ten minutes than five minutes. A five minute break.

*[Break]*

*Robert Listenbee:* Good afternoon, folks. We're about ready to begin. For the witnesses that are about to testify, we've been advised that there are a total of ten witnesses. The witnesses have been given three

minutes each to testify. We're asking the task force members, we'd like to limit the questions to one or two questions per witness in order to stay within the time framework that's been set aside here, which is approximately an hour. So we'd like to begin.

And I'd ask you if you could identify yourself, ma'am, because I don't have the identification information here, and tell us who you are and what organization you're connected with, if you could, please.

*Geri Hawkins:* Good afternoon. My name is Dr. Geri Hawkins, officially –

*Robert Listenbee:* Can you speak a little louder so that people in the back can hear you, ma'am?

*Geri Hawkins:* Good afternoon.

*Robert Listenbee:* Thank you.

*Geri Hawkins:* My name is Dr. Geri Hawkins. Officially, it's Dr. Geraldine Drake Hawkins. I'm not representing the entity for whom I work. Well, I work for people with disabilities but I'm not representing the organization that hired me to do that. I'm speaking as a person who at one time considered herself not good enough and I was gonna write a book with that title. I no longer consider myself not good enough. At one time, I would have started this by singing [*sings*], "Sometimes I feel like a motherless child." As a little child, that's how I felt.

I am a person who really could be described as being what's called in some cases poly-victimization and for me, that would mean a person exposed to childhood sexual abuse, and in my childhood and teen years, being exposed to domestic violence. All of these things occurred in my home, which everyone in my neighborhood and my community believed was a wonderful place to be. On the outside, it seemed that way. I was a two-parent home. My parents had been married many years before they had children and my father was a working man, my mom was a homemaker, except at times that she cleaned floors for people who needed domestic work and took in laundry. However, they saw better futures for my sister and me.

What they didn't see was that their staying together and being involved in domestic violence would have decades – and I mean for me over six decades, for my sister, over seven decades – of

negative effects. My mother never received mental health care. It was very obvious to us as we grew up that she needed something. My situation is different. There was not a man beating my mother. My mother was the aggressor. As a child and being the younger child, at one point my sister needed to leave home to go to college, and you may be saying, "Well, how did these women go to college, et cetera?"

At a point, I'll tell you what some of my coping mechanisms were but there was support from people who today would be called mentors, teachers, et cetera, people at our church, so those things that people talked about earlier were very important in my day, as well. My hope is that the task force, as it moves forward in its work, would consider some of the things that I'm telling you, not necessarily my story but some of the recommendations that you might consider.

For me, just very briefly, in my childhood and teen years, was exposed to repeated sexual abuse by visiting cousins and in one case, a live-in uncle who was 17 years old and my sister and I were smaller children. It came to an end in both cases in my mother catching the culprits and doing what someone earlier said, removing the child abuser from the home. My mother had that technique and used it very well for us. In the case of the family member who was the uncle, that person moved and shortly after needed to – wow. I've got to stop. Okay – needed to find his own solution and his solution was to commit suicide.

So all of those things were things for a person growing up with a poor, impoverished economic status, not knowing that until I left home to go to undergraduate school, living in a segregated and – racially segregated community and being treated very badly in that way. And all of my adult life I've spent in counseling and my counseling has been wonderful. That has helped me. That has been a real great coping mechanism.

And if I can sneak in one more, I hope that you can look to find ways to reach out to nontraditional witnesses as you go around the country and looking for witnesses with cultural sensitivity as you do that and being aware as the demographics of the country change, it's gonna be real important that you really are ready to look at what needs to be done differently that's nontraditional that's already being done, 'cause it's not gonna work. In my work, I have a lot of concentration on people from diverse cultures and

it's very important that things are done in the ways that are needed and appropriate for people of different backgrounds. Thank you.

*Robert Listenbee:* Dr. Geraldine Drake Hawkins. Just a moment, please. Is there a member of the task force who has a question? We would like to at least allow that. Go for it. Yes, Dr. Cooper?

*Dr. Cooper:* First of all, thank you very much for sharing that with us and so eloquently and thank you for sensitizing us to take away that bias that we have of always thinking that men are the people who will abuse women in a family and recognizing that children are equally as traumatized when women are abusing men in that scenario, as well. Thank you very much for that.

My question to you was, as far as you and your sister were concerned, did you find that leaving your mother's care was difficult? Did you find that either of you identified with her behaviors?

*Geri Hawkins:* Leaving her care was not difficult. I decided when I was in high school that my goal was to – since I realized they didn't have a lot of money, my goal was to get as far away as possible and so I needed to be a top student. I needed to be offered scholarships and I was going to do my very best to do that and that's how I got away physically.

*Robert Listenbee:* Thank you very much for your testimony. Is there written testimony along –

*Geri Hawkins:* Yes.

*Robert Listenbee:* You did?

*Geri Hawkins:* Yes.

*Robert Listenbee:* Thank you very much, ma'am. I appreciate it.

*Female 1:* Ellyn Loy.

*Ellyn Loy:* My name is Ellyn Loy and I'm a social worker and I'm the clinical director at the House of Ruth, Maryland, and I would like to thank the attorney general for having these hearings and I would like to thank this group of women over there in this back row who I don't even know who I sat next to all day who when I wanted to back

out of giving my testimony five minutes ago, said, “No, go ahead. Go ahead.” Okay, so it’s for them and I don’t even know them.

*Robert Listenbee:* We thank you, as well, and we appreciate the fact that you’re testifying.

*Ellyn Loy:* Okay, so the House of Ruth is the most comprehensive domestic violence program in the state of Maryland and this year, we were awarded the attorney general’s annual Victim Service Award. And our services include a 24-hour crisis hotline; an 84-bed shelter; therapy programs for children, adults, and families; abuser intervention programs; and a nationally recognized domestic violence legal clinic. And we’re very proud to say that our services, all of our services, are offered in both Spanish and English.

So we know about domestic violence and we know about children who witness domestic violence between their parents or caretakers. In FY ’11, we sheltered 262 such children, all of whom fled their homes with their mothers in order to be safe, 262 children who left their favorite toys and the comfort of their own bed to come to a strange place called a shelter. While we would like to believe that these children did not see the violence or did not hear the screaming, we know from talking to them that they saw or heard something.

As we have heard over and over again today, kids who witness domestic violence between adults in their homes are depressed, anxious, scared, aggressive, clingy, needy, and have a marked decrease in the ability to think clearly. They are hospitalized more often than children who never witnessed domestic violence and they are at more risk of being abused themselves by either parent.

Research has shown and our practice concurs that one of the most effective ways to help children who have been traumatized by witnessing domestic violence is to help the non-abusing parent, who is mostly but not always, their mother. We believe that families traumatized by domestic violence need to participate in programs that help them as individuals and as families and we do this as a program called “Strengthening Family Coping Resources,” which is an evidence-based program that centers around a family having dinner together.

There are several barriers service providers face in helping battered women and their children and we would ask you to consider this

one. We ask you to examine the practice of judges who think the primary good for a child who has witnessed domestic violence between their parents is to have unsupervised access to both parents. These judges are not aware of the negative and traumatizing effect it has on the child to send them alone, without the protective parent, to the abuser's home. Many judges and lawyers express the view that children should have regular and frequent access to a noncustodial parent, even a domestically violent parent, as long as the parent does not physically abuse the child.

This view is based on the very real benefit that kids experience when they have frequent contact with their noncustodial parent, but this view utterly ignores the equally true reality that without treatment, most batterers continue to act in a narcissistic, psychologically abusive and controlling ways towards their intimate partner, as well as towards their children. And because the offending parent has not changed their behavior, there is a high probability that the child will continue to witness violence between their parents even if their parents are separated and in some cases, one parent will go on to have a new abusive relationship.

So I know we've heard a lot today and I've learned an incredible amount. I would just urge you to consider that one small thing that we ask you. Thank you.

*Robert Listenbee:* Thank you very much, Ms. Loy. Is there a question from the task force? Very well. Thank you very much, ma'am.

*Female 1:* Ellsworth Johnson-Bey, Brother Bey.

*Mr. Johnson-Bey:* \_\_\_\_\_, everyone. Thank you for the opportunity to present before these esteemed panelists. I bring a different perspective to the process. I'm the founder of an organization called Fraternal Order of X-Offenders. We're talking about violence. Violence is not limited to domestic violence. Violence is a crime and very seldom have we used the core relationship between the behavior and actually what it is. One of the things we do, we study crime from a historical perspective.

I come up out of the streets. I've been in every institution in the state of Maryland, Miami, Philadelphia, New York, and other spaces and places named in law books and you'll never hear me say I was a victim. I started out at a very early age. My premise is that all behavior is a learned behavior. People learn what they live

and eventually they may – underscore may – live what they learn. We tend to put the focus on the children but children are not the progenitors or creators of none of these dynamics, these pathologies that have become institutionalized.

From my perspective as an ex-offender, let's deal with the drug trade. Violence is systemic in the drug trade. I come out of the drug trade. Most of you have seen *The American Gangster*. Well, the guy, Little Melvin Williams, he was my street father. He taught me a lot of harm, wrong, crime, and crime. I carried that wherever I go. I have a sister who died in the women's cut. She cut a guy still after I shot him for molesting my niece. I come from a matriarchal family. I'm very protective of our women today.

The point that I'm making, it's ludicrous and ridiculous to talk about crime prevention – underscore violence – without including the population. We have a process called CPA's, not certified public accountants but crime prevention agents. We move from consumers to producers. We provide services for that population. We deal with Bloods, Crip, **Pyrew**, BGF, in the school system. We go into the juvenile justice system. We go into the adult system. We have written a 12-step crime prevention model.

And I'm gonna close with this. We talk about the psychology and sociology of criminality. What we're talking today is about criminality, juvenile delinquency, et cetera, et cetera. But none of us deal with the socialization process that people go through to become what they do. We want to deal with the individual internally. We will not deal with the system externally.

America is one of the most violent nations on the planet Earth and the fact of the matter is so we talk about the psychology of self-disclosure. We talk about the socialization process that people go through to become what they do. Self-disclosure. It's like the recovery model and we don't believe in the public safety model. We heard all this information about stats. Young folk say, "Brother Bey, they're liars. They're damn liars in their statistics." Crime is measured by reported crime. The world that I come out of, most crime is not reported, so those numbers that y'all keep quoting are inaccurate.

So one of the things we deal with is the socialization process. All of you who are experts in your area of expertise, you were socialized, capitulation, assimilation, imitation, et cetera, et cetera.

That is what we deal with. Behavior is not changed until the thinking changed.

One of the most important things, I never heard about the intergenerational dynamics of violence. My father was assassinated in Philadelphia. I told you about the lifestyle that I lived. My son at ten years old was selling drugs, 27 years old, the state of Maryland most wanted. I'm not blaming or complaining. I'm explaining a process that you need to include in this process.

A lot of these young folks, when we go to school and we engage them, they're angry. You know why they're angry? Because their fathers are not in their lives. Systems, they polarize and paralyze, genderize issues. We talk about the youth. We talk about the seniors. We talk about the ladies, the girls, and we're talking about what is missing in the process is family strengthening.

I'm gonna close with this. I know chief of the Baltimore City Police Department. You heard he said he needed more resources. Well, the greatest resource is human capital. He talk about what his officers need, you understand, because the officers are the subject and the students are the object. We need to invest in young folks. We need to reward them for their behavior.

In closing, nobody's dealing with the history, the culture, the values, the lifestyles, the rewards versus punishment, and that's what we bring to the process and we write programs, we have a regular program, DVD, et cetera, and we train folks. We train those who are problem makers to become problem solvers, go back into this community where they have credibility, cease fire, and that's what we need to do. We need to get that population involved, whether they're women, domestic violence, whether they're ex-offender population, and if you're talking about violence, you're talking about offenders or ex-offenders. Thank you for allowing me to share.

*Robert Listenbee:* Thank you very much, Mr. Johnson-Bey. Is there a question of Mr. Johnson-Bey?

*Patricia M. Martin:* Are we gonna be able to get that information of your 12-step program?

*Mr. Johnson-Bey:* We could talk about that.

*Patricia M. Martin:* Yeah, 'cause that sounds really interesting and I like the fact that you want us to think outside the box. I think as a task force, we'd like to get more information on that.

*Mr. Johnson-Bey:* Well, I'll leave my information, contact information, email, radio program, DVD, et cetera.

*Patricia M. Martin:* Thank you.

*Robert Listenbee:* Thank you very much, sir.

*Female 1:* Next is Michaele Cohen.

*Michaele Cohen:* Hello. My name is Michaele Cohen. That really is my name. You'll just have to accept that. I am the executive director of the Maryland Network against Domestic Violence. We are the statewide domestic violence coalition in Maryland and we are an organization that represents domestic violence programs and service providers and allied professionals and citizens who are concerned about eliminating domestic violence in our state.

We are also one of 56 domestic violence coalitions around the country and we also have sister organizations, Coalitions against Sexual Assault. They haven't been mentioned today. They are a wonderful resource in addressing both adult violence and violence against children. Obviously we've talked a lot about families and we are on the ground serving those families in our local domestic violence and sexual assault programs and we are champions and experts at creating collaborations and partnerships and how to do more with less.

And what I'd like to just mention is the need to increase the capacity of these programs. We work with many of the people that you've heard from today. We can do more. We want to do more. We recognize that we need to not only address the adult victims and create more safety and security for them, holding abusers accountable. We need to deal with the children, the next generation, and we want to do that but we need to increase the capacity of these programs to provide those services, to provide more wraparound services so families can become more self-sufficient. And we also want to reach out to underserved populations, people who haven't necessarily been accessing our programs because they don't know about them or they don't feel comfortable with them or we don't have the resources to serve them.

And I know we've heard a lot about funding but we're also facing the potential of tremendous funding cuts, both private and public sectors. We need more funds to serve more people and we are generating more people who need services through programs like we've developed at the Maryland network on lethality assessment, which identifies high-risk victims and gets them into services. And we know from the research that Jackie Campbell and Dan Webster have done at Johns Hopkins that we can reduce homicides and serious injuries if we get people into services, but that's created more demand for our services, so we're creating more demand at a time of diminishing resources.

So I just encourage you to factor that into your recommendations, to please consider us as a tremendous resource that you can work with, that we can expand our services. We can do more. We can work with all of the people that we've talked about integrating services and providing a more holistic approach. So we hope that you will consider that in your deliberations and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

*Robert Listenbee:* Is there a question from the task force?

*Dr. Marren:* Thank you for being here this afternoon. Would you be able to leave us or send us both your organization and the network, your sister organizations?

*Michaele Cohen:* Yeah, I would be happy to provide you with any information you want.

*Dr. Marren:* 'Cause it sounds like there's a network, whether it's informal or not, that's a powerful tool.

*Michaele Cohen:* Yes, well, certainly within each state, we have a network, and then we have the National Network to End Domestic Violence, which is our national organization and they have all kinds of wonderful resources. So I'd be happy to provide the staff or whoever with whatever information would be helpful to you.

*Dr. Marren:* Thank you.

*Robert Listenbee:* Dr. Moran, I think, has a question.

*Dr. Moran:* I don't know if you're able to answer this, but over the last years, I mean it sounds like what you're saying is you've been incredibly

successful and with success comes greater demand. Is that accurate?

*Michaele Cohen:* I would say that. I would say that.

*Dr. Moran:* You'll tell me if I'm putting words in your mouth but I'm also inferring that the success has been to actually achieve a goal of breaking the silence, of increasing the availability, of people not being alone with their experiences, et cetera, and services abounding, right? It's as though we've built it, we've achieved those goals, and now we're hit with all these cuts and where do people go now? Is that a fair –

*Michaele Cohen:* I think that's frightening. I think we've increased awareness. We've increased the knowledge that there are services available. We've increased the resources in the services that are available. And now for a variety of reasons, we're facing the potential of having to turn people away and not provide those services and that is really disturbing to all of us who have been working in this field for so long. We've made tremendous strides, I think, even though there's much more to do, obviously, and I don't know what's going to happen and I think everybody's really worried about that.

And I'm sure as you address the issue of the effect of children being exposed to violence, you see the need for more services and more resources. I think you've heard that from everybody but that's also about money. It's not just about being more creative and collaborating and partnering. We do that but we still need to have more counselors and more shelter beds and more attorneys and more affordable housing and more childcare and all of the resources that people need in order to be safe and secure. So it is a great –

*Dr. Moran:* So in many ways, Phase I and II of the Justice Department's goal to do exactly what you've achieved has been accomplished and now the question is where do we go next?

*Michaele Cohen:* Can we sustain it and can we expand it? Because there are many more people out there who need these services. Thank you.

*Robert Listenbee:* Thank you very much, Ms. Cohen. I appreciate it.

*Female 1:* Liz Ryan.

*Liz Ryan:*

Thank you. My name is Liz Ryan. I'm here on behalf of the Campaign for Youth Justice. We're a national organization dedicated to ending the practice of trying, sentencing, and incarcerating children in the adult criminal justice system. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today and I know you've had a very long day with a lot of testimony so I'm gonna be very brief.

As you know, in every state in the country, young people are prosecuted in adult criminal court. An estimated 250,000 young people cycle through the adult criminal justice system every single year. On any given day in America, 10,000 children are in adult jails and prisons. You've heard today about the dangers of placing kids in the adult criminal justice system so I won't repeat that here. I'll just say that there's been an extensive body of research commissioned by the U.S. Department of Justice Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that shows that these policies don't work. In fact, they do the opposite. They increase recidivism.

Public opinion and polling shows that putting young people in the adult criminal justice system is not what the public wants. The public wants rehabilitation and incarceration. As a result, a lot of states have changed their laws and much more work needs to be done.

So I would offer five recommendations to this task force. First, as part of your nationwide examination of children who are exposed to violence, I urge you to ensure that children in the justice system, most particularly youth in adult jails and prisons and in the adult criminal justice system, are considered part of the scope of this task force. This examination must proactively include the testimony of young people who have been affected by the system directly and my colleague, **Jabria Handy**, will share her thoughts with you on that, as well as their families.

Second, I urge you not to wait until you issue a report in September 2012 to share the findings that you've heard here today with the attorney general. You've been appointed by the attorney general to be his eyes and ears on these issues and I hope that you'll share the information. Too many children are affected on a daily basis to wait until ten months from now.

Third, I recommend that after this hearing that you contact the attorney general to urge him to take immediate action to halt the exposure of children to violence in the justice system by issuing

final regulations as soon as possible to implement the Prison Rate Elimination Act. This is a law that passed Congress in 2003 unanimously. Regulations have not been issued. Thousands of people around the country in every state in the country, including system stakeholders as well as crime survivor groups, have called on the Justice Department to ban the placement of children in adult jails and prisons. I urge you to call on the attorney general for that.

The last two, I recommend that you work with the nation's governors and state lawmakers to reduce the prosecution and incarceration of children in the adult criminal justice system in order to reduce recidivism rates and children's exposure to violence.

Lastly, I urge you to ensure that the final report of this task force does not sit on a shelf and that the recommendations are fully enacted. My office shelves are littered with reports from task forces and commissions that are great reports but the results have never been implemented. I urge you to stick with this task force until the recommendations are fully implemented. Thank you.

*Robert Listenbee:* Thank you very much, Ms. Ryan. Are there any questions of Ms. Ryan? Thank you very much. Let me just clarify one thing which is that the report is scheduled to be completed December of 2012, not September.

*Liz Ryan:* All the more reason for not waiting.

*Robert Listenbee:* I understand but I don't want to leave a misimpression.

*Liz Ryan:* Thank you.

*Male:* Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

*Liz Ryan:* Do you want me to stay here with you? Okay.

*Female 1:* Jabria Handy.

*Liz Ryan:* Can I stay here with her while we're doing this? Okay, go ahead. Why don't you talk into this?

*Jabria Handy:* Good afternoon. My name is Jabria Handy and I was exposed to violence as a youth incarcerated as an adult. At the age of 16, I was charged as an adult in the adult criminal justice system. It is because of my exposure to adult system that I am here to urge you,

this task force, not to expose any more young people to violence in the justice system, particularly in adult jails or prisons. It is also fitting because this hearing comes as here, in the city of Baltimore, we are debating whether to build another adult jail for youth charged as adults, which disturbs me.

Words cannot explain what I went through in the adult system. Tears hardly express the pain and discomfort of being judged as a criminal. At the age of 16, I got in an argument with my grandmother. As she was disciplining me, I attempted to get her off of me. I left the house and later on that day, she died of a heart attack. Because of the argument, I was charged with her death. I was charged as an adult and spent 11 months in Baltimore City Detention Center. Excuse me. Okay.

I was charged in Baltimore City Detention Center for 11 months. I was forced to shower with a woman twice my age and shamelessly exposed to a squat and cough while menstruating. I was neglected and did not receive the psychological and healthcare help I needed throughout my stay. I was treated as if I had been judged guilty of committing the crime, or as they would say, as an adult.

For example, to get to school we had to walk through a tunnel and through the adult male facility. While passing, the jail became on lockdown where everyone freezes where they are and because of an incident of violence. That particular day, a man had gotten severely beaten and stabbed who was sitting right before us. The guards told us not to look but when you're in jail, you learn never to look or turn your back. I began to become institutionalized and it became a normal routine to wake up at 6:00 in the morning or randomly get searched.

They eventually gave me a choice to plead guilty to a lesser charge in order to go home. Even though I had committed no crime, I would have done anything to go home at that point. As a result of my plea, I got waved down as a juvenile with the charge of manslaughter, spending four and a half months at Westes Children's Center and then sent to a place in Pennsylvania for six and a half months. The bottom line is if I would have been charged as a juvenile, I would have received the service I needed in order to maintain and keep focus on future goals and would not have experienced the violence of the adult system.

I also urge the task force not to wait to share these findings with the attorney general in a report to be issued in December 2012 but

to assure the attorney general is aware of these issues and urge the attorney general to take immediate actions, such as banning the placement of children in adult jails and prisons and final Prison Rate Elimination Act regulations. Additionally, I urge the task force to recommend that the nation's governors and state lawmakers end the practice of trying, sentencing, and incarcerating youth in the adult criminal justice system to reduce recidivism and children's exposure to violence. Thank you for your time.

*Robert Listenbee:* Thank you very much.

*[Applause]*

*Robert Listenbee:* Just so we all know, can you tell us your name again, please?

*Jabria Handy:* My name is Jabria Handy.

*Robert Listenbee:* Jabria Handy, okay. Are there any questions from the task force? If not, let me just say thank you very much for coming up and speaking to us. We really appreciate your comments and we're certainly going to take them very, very seriously. Thank you.

*Jabria Handy:* Okay, thank you.

*Female 1:* Mitru Ciarlante.

*Mitru Ciarlante:* Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Mitru Ciarlante and I'm director of the Youth Initiative at the National Center for Victims of Crime. We're a national advocacy organization and a voice for victims across the nation and we also help to build the capacity of victim advocates, law enforcement professionals, and other allied professionals who help victims of crime rebuild their lives. Collaboration is a vital part of what we do. We partner with the National Boys and Girls Clubs of America, the American Psychological Association, the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, and others. In fact, some of these are in Defending Childhood Initiatives, I'm very proud to say.

I also just want to give you some feedback that since we've been working under the Defending Childhood Initiatives, I do think we've experienced better coordination and collaboration across the federal agencies but we definitely need more. It's difficult to be having these conversations without the Administration on Children and Families, Department of Education. We really all need to come together at the same table.

In our Youth Initiative, we've worked on the ground with more than 100 communities at the local level, bringing together youth with police and youth development professionals and victim advocates to build youth outreach and services in their communities. So I thank you for allowing me to share just a few observations from this work that – building on what some other people have said.

One thing that I would highly recommend is when we do our outreach and intervention, that we make sure that those efforts are inclusive and actually enumerate the most underserved and marginalized populations of young people. What we hear from the youth, if they're not named, if they're not depicted in our organization names and outreach images and messages, they really assume it's not for them or that we don't understand them or they're not welcome there. So I'm talking about youth of color, American Indian youth, runaway and homeless youth, all of our most vulnerable victims that we've heard about today.

I would also encourage us to really invest in some wide scale resilience building. That's another thing I think we saw today. It's going to be very difficult if not impossible to identify and provide one-to-one services to every adult and child that's been hurt by violence and victimization, but these wide scale resilience building that would include, in my view, youth engagement, community mobilization, and then that would in turn build more resilience. Those can be very effective.

I'll talk to you on a question you all raised. Part of that resilience building would be public awareness about what's working. In our opinion, what good news do we have to share with the communities and where does our hope come from? I think communities need to know that people working on these issues do have hope for them.

Third, I talked about the collaboration, just one more note on that. There's this real false division between prevention and intervention in our work and I believe it was probably originally funding driven but we could really use some reinforcement about breaking down those walls, as well.

And that's all, thank you.

*Robert Listenbee:* Thank you very much. Are there any questions from the task force? Okay, thank you very much.

*Mitru Ciarlante:* Thank you.

*Female 1:* Josh **Genta**.

*Josh:* Good afternoon. My name is Josh Genta. I'm not representing any agency.

*Robert Listenbee:* Would you please pronounce your last name, again?

*Josh:* Genta.

*Robert Listenbee:* Okay, Mr. Genta. Thank you very much.

*Josh:* Genta, yep. First of all, thank you for the opportunity to share my experiences today and my thoughts. I once read that some of the most common first memories of childhood range from a trip to the dentist, a birthday party, a family vacation, or your first day of school. For me, my first memory is of my sister being raped by my uncle. In my memory, I'm about four years old. My sister is about six.

I recently learned that this happened pretty regularly for about seven years. One would think nobody else in my family had any knowledge of what was going on, however that was not the case. When my family caught my uncle in the act, they decided it would be best not to report him. They figured he was not the type of person that would handle confinement well, plus they did not want to bring any shame or embarrassment to the family. Their solution was simply to ask him to stop. Years later and being caught several more times later, he finally did.

My sister and I were always taught not to discuss what happens. Unfortunately, we both listened, thinking there must be some good reason why we shouldn't say anything. It took me over 30 years before I talked about it. My sister recently told me that she remembered feeling shame as if she had did something wrong as a child. She even felt that if she had let my uncle keep hurting her, perhaps he would not hurt anybody else.

Yesterday, I asked my sister, "What could we have changed? What could we have done differently? What would have made it stop?" Her response seemed pretty simple. "If someone had asked

me,” she said, “I would have told them.” I feel the same way. If a trusted teacher, coach, doctor, or any adult that we held in trust had ever brought up the subject, we both feel we would have told them what was happening and hopefully that would have put an end to it.

Although certainly an uncomfortable subject, children need to be asked about and educated on the issue of childhood violence. Parents, teachers, coaches, need to have training on how to spot signs and symptoms of children exposed to violence. Children need to feel safe and need to feel that it is okay to talk about what they may have experienced or witnessed. Children need to know that whatever may have happened, it was not their fault. Kids will most likely be told by those involved to keep things a secret. It needs to be reinforced that any exposure to violence should not be held in secrecy. It is okay to talk about it.

Perhaps there is little my sister and I could have done to prevent the act from happening the first time, however with a little education and simply being asked one question, perhaps it could have been prevented from reoccurring. True the need to have the knowledge of whom to report incidents to before something ever happens so if something ever did happen, at least it could be reported immediately, hopefully not 30 years later, because every child deserves a good first memory. Thank you.

*Robert Listenbee:* Are there any questions of the task force? Yes.

*Lauren Abramson:* Thank you for sharing this story, Mr. Genta. Was your sister ever able to get help after this, at some point in her life?

*Josh:* No. She has not. She has never talked to a counselor, a professional. She’s still under the belief that it’s really something we shouldn’t talk about and she still feels the shame and she’s afraid to dig up old memories. I’ve been trying to help her and talk to her. I told her the best thing I ever did was talk to someone. It opened up a whole new world and urging her to do the same.

*Lauren Abramson* Thank you.

*Robert Listenbee:* Thank you very much, Mr. –

*Female 1:* Deborah Young.

*Deborah Young:* Hello, everyone. How are you? I understand you've been here a long time. I'll try to make this as brief as possible. My name is Deborah Young. I'm a victim of abuse. I'm also a justice for families and children in Philadelphia. I'm a family advocate. I fight to end abuse towards children in and out of the system.

Every five hours in the United States, a child dies from abuse or neglect. Each year, our country fails to protect thousands of children in circumstances that CPS, Child Protective Services, courts, and abusers have caused. And sadly, our priceless children and grandchildren are suffering horribly in a system that is supposed to protect them. 67 percent of all child abuse deaths have some type of Child Protective Services involvement and there's no accountability in the system. The latest government figures show an estimated 1,770 children were killed as a result of maltreatment in 2009. A recent congressional report concludes the real number could be nearer to 2,500 children.

In fact, America has the worst child abuse record in the industrialized world. Children are **needlessly** dying and we look the other way. The media will only cover the death, not the abuse, not the realities of the abuse. Our system is broken. We as a society do nothing but throw monetary incentives into the fires for further abuse. Parents cry out. Children cry out. Advocates scream to get the help these children need and parents need. No one hears the cries of the innocence lost.

Henry Kissinger once said, "Power is an aphrodisiac." Child Protective Services and the courts and the systems has given the ultimate power right now without accountability to match and everyone has seen it in the media. There's no accountability. I can line parents up here to speak for months in every state about how their efforts are futile within the system, trying to protect their child and their grandchildren from the system and in foster care. I will share but only a couple of stories knowing that every state and every country in the United States is experiencing the same stories, just different names.

I will start with my own daughter and son who were abused at visits at their father's. I was never married to this man. When I got a frantic call from my daughter screaming, "Daddy is choking me," I called police. I rushed over to get my children. The Special Victims Unit found what he did but the father was never arrested. He never went to court for it.

I went to court numerous times to get PFA's for my kids. The judge denied it. He continues his stalking. My children and I were harassed everywhere. He was arrested five times but they let him go to continue to torment us. Child Protective Services called because of the fact of my numerous calls to the police to protect my children and for false allegations from the abuser. Instead of helping us, they took my children from me and put them with the abuser.

My children lived another four years with that abuser who failed the drug test in the courtroom. I appealed every court hearing, wrote senators letters to protest. All got news of retaliation and victims are abused or re-victimized in the courtrooms. Children are not listened to at all. An overhaul right now of the nation's Child Protective Services system and the court system is needed and is long overdue. National review on the nation's systems and new federal policies and resources to be reconstructed for safeguarding the children who depend on every one of us. I'm sorry. I lost my train of thought.

Thousands of children right now will suffer abuse or be killed each year for federal **funding**. The number of cases per 100,000 children can be found on the United States website. It comes from the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect in Washington. The nation's present commitment of resources, laws, and policies is too little. Only by enacting federal policy committed to protecting children will our children be safe and our grandchildren have a future. No states are in full compliance of child welfare laws and in fact, Child Protective Services has been given unchecked power to abuse laws and our children and our abusers. It is their job to protect our children.

When abuse is brought up in a court of law, truly investigate the issues. Don't give our children to the very abusers that hurt our children or put them in a foster care to be abused. Help the parents instead of destroying the family, our God-given family. There is no accountability to any agencies.

Look at the headline death of Danielle Kelly, tortured and starved to death. Marcus Fiesel, wrapped like a mummy for two days in a closet and died. Gabriel Myer, seven years old, beaten six times a day and tortured. Katherine Frances, six years old, skull fractured, brain damage. **Shyla** Thomas, nine years old, disabled, starved to death in care, weighed 33 pounds at death.

There is immediate correction to this lack of child protection and the court systems. Stop the \_\_\_\_\_ adoption and foster which is \$7 billion and put it into preventive and helping children with abuse. Put accountability back in the system and give non-abusing parents, advocates, and especially children a place to speak of abuse within the system. There can be no true child protection when a government agency is given virtually unchecked power, no accountability, and operates in secret or when victims of abuse are in courts and judges don't look at the evidence and put the children back with abusers time and time again to be abused and killed, tortured, raped, and murdered.

Without new legislations, we, the people, feel that it is only a matter of time before another child is beaten, molested, raped, and murdered in our country. There is too much judicial discretion when it comes to sentences to these criminals due to the lack of federal, national, and state mandatory minimum sentences requirements. In order to provide equal justice under the law and to have punishment that is appropriate for the crime and the best interests for our children, justice and crime prevention that we must pass comprehensive legislation to protect our children from abuse, from rape, from torture, from sexually violent offenders and child abusers who endanger the welfare of the child.

Child Protective Services agencies and law enforcement must collaborate. Law enforcements are trained to detect abuse, not Child Protective Services. There needs to be congressional hearings. If you abuse a child anyway, there must be criminal sanctions but there also must be evidence behind that beyond a shadow of a doubt.

There was a little boy. His name is Matthew Patrone. He's four years old with cerebral palsy. He was taken from his mother for false allegations, was almost starved to death by a foster mother. We made calls. We got him help. And while his mother was at the hospital, gained 11 pounds. When he got to the hospital, he weighed 49 pounds at 14 years old. Foster mother never got charged. Nobody ever got charged.

There is no accountability in the system at all and our children are suffering. My daughter and my son are suffering because of four years of put with abusers. My daughter had to get surgery. I had just gotten my children back after four years. I never abused my children. He did and he got the chance to abuse them for four more years. Please listen to the children. That's what needs to

happen. The children aren't being listened to right now. Thank you very much for all your \_\_\_\_\_.

*Robert Listenbee:* Thank you very much, Ms. Young. Any questions by the task force? Thank you very much, ma'am.

*Female 1:* That's the last one.

*Joe Torre:* Just a couple of comments from Robert and myself before we break today. I want to thank all our panels and of course the public testimony. It was very informative, very emotional. I thank our task force for their passion. With everything we've heard today, I think – and it's been mentioned a couple of times, the conversation about Penn State. This is something that happened a long time ago and it's been kept under wraps. The fact that I think a deterrent to abuse and to violence is awareness and the secret's out now. The secret's out.

I think it's so important if we're going to end the cycle that we embrace our children.

*[End of Part 2] [Beginning of Part 3]*

*Joe Torre:* And it's been said here before today, "Listen to our children," but it's our responsibility to help them and I just feel very touched by the testimonies today and I'm looking forward to being able to do something impactful.

*Robert Listenbee:* Thank you very much, Joe. To Dean McFadden, we'd like to thank you for your hospitality here at the Law School. We, as members of the task force, know that the National Council on Crime and Delinquency has really helped us get prepared for the hearings today and done an excellent job of organizing the witnesses who have appeared and we'd like to thank you, as well, and also the Department of Justice for the work that you've done in getting us here, as well. And finally, of course, we want to thank the attorney general for his vision and his commitment to this monumental task but one which we think that we're capable of addressing and we look forward to our meetings coming up tomorrow for the task force alone to work on and try and understand and comprehend some of the testimony that was given today after we've had a chance to think it over tonight.

So thank you very much. At this point, the hearing is adjourned.

*[End of Audio]*