

Moderator: Let me resume with our final part of this discussion. It's part of the hypothetical, but it's also part of the issue of the attorney general's task force mission. And this audience, other than those who are working on this, probably know little about the actual mission and the objectives of the task force. I don't know whether Joe and Robert wanted to summarize very quickly what you're trying to do, and then we're gonna talk about how do we take this hypothetical to a higher level. What can we do?

You want to say a little bit about what you're trying to do and what you've accomplished so far?

Robert: Attorney General, Eric Holder, has charged the task force with examining the causes of violence that expose children to that violence, both in schools, in homes and in the community. We have had two other hearings, one in Baltimore, Maryland, and another in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where we've looked at violence in urban areas and violence in rural areas and travel areas. And we've tried to bring in experts to inform us about the causes of that violence and also some recommended solutions.

The attorney general has tasked us with producing a report by December of this year that recommends to him possible solutions to this major national epidemic, and we have brought together – or he has brought together, rather, some of the best experts in the nation. They're sitting around this table – people with an awful lot of experience in this area, and he's challenged us to come up with some bold, new recommendations that address this horrible epidemic. So that's basically where we are. Joe, you wanna add anything to that?

Joe Torre: No, and, you know, initially when I was a part of this and named co-chair with Robert is I realized how overwhelmed I was with all the experience in this room with clinicians, and I realized that I think we've got a great mix of people to really hopefully send the attorney general in the right direction come the end of this year because we all are so passionate. That's one thing – even though this has been most of these people's business, and I'm more personally involved, everybody is so passionate about trying to find the right path and the contributions that have been generously shared here has been – it's really been a wonderful experience that we all I think have equally shared the enjoyment of it.

Moderator: Well, it's great. I – two points. One is that – just a general recommendation to the task force before you make and give your insights, and that is if you want to look under the hood you have to address everything that's under that hood. There may be some

surprises there. And I said something similar in an article that I wrote to President Clinton in the early 1990s. You remember **Cawley** had the task force looking at the issue of race in America, and my suggestion was a simple one: if you're going to open people up to do the surgery to look at why we have problems of race in America, you've gotta be prepared to treat it once you open it up.

You can't just look at it and say, "Oh, that's terrible." You've gotta figure out the treatment. And that's the same thing I'm saying to the task force, that if you're going to look at the problem, you've gotta figure out how to treat it and give the attorney general not what he may want to hear, but what he may need to hear in order to address what we saw in just this hypothetical – it was a massive problem. The more we focus on Chris, the more we can see the problems that face Natalie, and the more we looked at Natalie, we could see the consequences that Natalie would have to suffer by looking for help for being a victim of violence. The consequences may outweigh the help that she might get and the restraining order that might – you know, and so that's part of it.

And so it would be great to spend some of this time now with the task force members thinking about policy – what can we do? What should we do? What's on your minds? And I know Dr. James has talked about cyber-bullying, how we need to address that issue. Dr. Macy's talked about other things. So it would be very interesting to think about without, in a sense, committing yourself to one point of view. And let me just say again, these folks are – they didn't know the hypothetical, and this couple's – they're actually very friendly even though they were getting divorced by the end of the hypothetical.

Joe Torre: Yeah, we hugged and made up.

Moderator: But it just tells you the reality of – all of you were thinking through them. I'm getting notes and comments from people. You were thinking as if – how you would respond. It was very difficult. But now we've done the difficult part in terms of thinking about it hypothetically; how we think about it concretely in terms of policies. And I'll start with Dr. Macy, from your point of view, what do you want – I don't want the whole menu, but what do you see as at least something from your point of view that needs to be –

Dr. Macy: How much time do I have, **Chuck**?

Moderator: Not as much as you'd like, right! But you know what I'm saying – the whole idea – the summary – what are the key points that you'd

like to see to make sure the task force gets under those things to make some things happen.

Dr. Macy:

Oh, well, thank you for giving me the opportunity to kick it off. I would like to go with what you just – the great description you just gave around lifting up the hood or doing the surgery, and this suggestion may be fraught with just as many ills as our current system, but I think not, mainly from field experience and research. The system that we looked at today with respect to removal of the child from the home who's endangered by abuse for both the 18-month-old and the 16-year-old, I think in all states the reigning paradigm is if the child's in danger, remove the child, and in my experience and opinion that is the actual opposite of what we should be doing.

You need to remove the perpetrator, which would turn the system on its head. And the reason – we won't need to turn the system on its head unless we're gonna get a better result. So in terms of bold initiative and spending some time and resource really looking at that – and you can see right away there are some issues if we do that. Anytime you find a case, you have to do something with the case. That's why we don't normally do case-finding because it's expensive. And gosh, what do we do if we open up as a surgeon and we find things that are wrong?

Oh, let's just sew it back up because we don't have the money; we don't have the time; we don't know where to put the disease. But I think that's what I would just suggest at this point. Given the incredible depiction of the layers of complexity here, we're struggling to figure out how to protect the child by figuring out whether we should remove him or her from their home and create a whole 'nother home system. So my suggestion would be the task force look at as a primary solution what if we had a system that removed the perpetrator.

Moderator:

Dr. Lieberman, your sense professionally and personally about what are the sort of policy issues the task force should be confronting?

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I would like to have our work organized around building relationships. It seems to me that relationships need to be nurtured across the lifetime starting with babies through adolescence and across systems, and across systems starting with the family, schools, child welfare, mental health system, the judicial system so that we relate to each other across systems always around the relationships within the family. And I actually would like not to

exclude anybody until it becomes clear that exclusion is the only form of achieving safety.

And it seems to me that too many men have been excluded, and that it is exclusion that becomes an impetus to violence – is the pain under their rage that needs to be healed by restoring relationship whenever possible.

Moderator: What I like about that is it's two sides of the same idea of a policy, right, because you're saying the alleged perpetrator needs some help, too.

F1 Yes.

Moderator: And there has to be a systematic way because you're just moving a problem aside rather than addressing that problem, because that person is still gonna be around 30, 40, 50, 60 years. How do you make that person a part of society? And those things may not be inconsistent. They may be complementary in some sense.

F1 Yes.

Dr. Macy: Yes.

Moderator: Protect the child, no question about that, and also figure out what can you do from that point of view. Chief McDonnell?

Chief McDonnell: Thank you, yes. Usually, I'm not a big fan of role-playing like this. And I'll tell you this morning I was impressed because it brought out a lot of the complexity of a situation like this that normally I don't think we get to see. Some of the issues that jumped out at me are kind of the focus within the system, if it is a system, tends to be myopic. We all have our own role. We all have our own set of tools, and when we come in, we only use the tools available to us and sometimes forget about what else there is around the table or don't have the relationships necessary in advance to be able to share the resources that are out there that others have to offer.

In this case, what the military has to offer, which is significant, what probation has to offer – and too often, I think we don't get to offer a lot of these things until way into the process after an arrest has been made, after they've been referred a number of times, so that's an issue, I think. Also, the feeling of varying levels of comfort about calling the police, you know. What happens when you call the police? And that's certainly not uniform throughout whether you get a response to begin with or what the response will be when the police do get there.

When they do get there – when they come out, it certainly complicates things because the officers have a responsibility to take action when they get there, dependent on what they're confronted with. Depending on the jurisdiction, I would say, what the comfort level is or what the resources that may be available to the officer to refer. The issue that Dr. Macy brought up of turning it on its head and removing the perpetrator – and while in concept, I think that's a good way to look at it, the problem is the perpetrator when you remove them gets bail, and if the kid's still in the house, the perpetrator will be back in the house.

And unless we go real deep, I think we end up with a scenario where we're putting people in danger. But certainly it's something I think worth exploring. And then how do we get to a position across America where the police department is looked upon as a resource and not just a hammer – that when you call the police you're doing it to get somebody else locked up, and that there are other alternatives? And I think that's something certainly – a position we'd like to be in somewhere down the road across America where there is some level of uniformity that the police are there to help to sort things out, to offer resources and not just to come in and take dad off to jail.

And then the ability to be able to bring in secondary resources to deal with the kids in the house if you do have to come in and take dad off to jail, because you've just left a lifelong impression on some young people, and if we do nothing to change that perception that will be their perception of the police, and we deal with that on a daily basis. And then the immigration issue that was raised here this morning is one that in Southern California we deal with on a regular basis. Something we've given an awful lot of thought to, something we're very comfortable in saying as local police we're not immigration agents. We don't ask what somebody's status is.

We don't – that doesn't enter into it at all in our jurisdictions, and the reason for that is if you do start going down that road, the reality is people are not gonna call the police to a situation at all. And then when you do get called down the road, it's not to be a peacekeeper; it's the pick up the parts that are spread out all over the place, and you'll end up with a homicide, a stabbing, a shooting or something that could have been avoided had you had an intervention much earlier. But if there's a fear that by calling the police you're subjecting yourself to deportation or that the federal authorities are gonna get involved for that reason, people just won't call. And it's not only the immediate people but also the neighbors and the community.

Moderator: Which brings up a great point, understanding both the valuable resource that law enforcement provides, but also they're asked to be everything and do everything in some respects. I never heard a 911 caller say, "Sorry, I'm busy; call me back tomorrow." Right? The whole idea is that if there's an emergency, however we define it, the whole idea is that there's somebody who can intercede. But I'm hearing you say there other people who can play a big role, and you can make sure you can do that. What's our training? Why are we even in immigration as opposed to domestic matters that happen right in our neighborhoods and our cities?

And that's an interesting issue with the federal government, because they have a federal issue about safe communities, and they have a local issue about police being responsible in their communities.

Chief McDonnell: And I think the difficulty there is that it's even more complicated in that you can't say local police shouldn't be in that business because we have an obligation to work with our partners in the law enforcement community – federal, state and local – and the ICE, Immigration, are a tremendous tool in working with us on issues such as human trafficking, a lot of the other things that they deal with on a daily basis. They're a tremendous help in that, and it's trying to define where is the line, and what's reasonable in regard to how we use those resources.

Moderator: And to understand what law enforcement can and should do and cannot and should not be doing is part of the idea – look at law enforcement not in a silo, but as an aspect of our broader effort to look at these issues of violence. Dr. Cooper?

Dr. Cooper: From a policy change perspective I have three recommendations. The first is that we need to really consider the brain development of children and youth as a critical element in our determining their ability to realize the consequences of actions that they take. And because of that, we should be far less willing to make a youth a criminal perpetrator; we should have a different category because of the fact that we know that the prefrontal cortex is not really completely mature. Very often, we also – when we think about brain development, we also have to consider children who have been exposed to violence in their lives as even higher risk for making poor decisions, and we shouldn't hold that against them.

In fact, that should be a mitigating circumstance. It should make our court system say, "Well, hang on for a second. This is a more vulnerable victim – or offender. This is a more vulnerable offender. We need to have a toolbox of other options." So if

they've been exposed to violence as a child or if they have ill-defined mental health problems – many times these children have significant mental health problems that have never been diagnosed, and that's another option for us in our decision on how to handle them within the court system.

The second policy change that I think we ought to do is that we should really assure that we have – just like we have Special Victim Unit investigators, we should have SVU defense attorneys who are well trained in how to bring up the right pieces of information to a judge so that some kind of diversionary response would be better than incarceration for children. I have been in many cases – testified in many cases where I felt the defense attorneys were ill-prepared and just didn't know the different things that they could suggest for their client so their client would not necessarily end up with a sentence of 15 to life.

I've just seen that many times. And then the third thing that I think from a policy perspective is that we should do away with zero tolerance. We should do away with that because we – that's hold – again, that's holding children to the cognitive abilities of adults, which we should not – we should not do. Everybody should have a second chance, but children more so than anybody should have a second chance. This means, that school systems should have an opportunity to have in-school ramifications that don't get to the criminal justice system: school courts.

You know, military boarding schools frequently have school courts with peer “jurors,” and they're called “honor courts,” and they often make determinations about what has happened and what the consequences were. But whatever the problem was doesn't get almost never to a criminal justice outcome. And I think in keeping with that, we should listen very carefully to the Annie E. Casey Foundation testimony that we heard when we were in Baltimore about how ineffective and how costly – not a good use of our money – putting children into youth prisons actually is. We need to really look at that carefully and consider a major policy change in that area.

Moderator:

Very helpful. I think one of the other aspects – all of these recommendations are gonna be helpful. The legal system has set rules, but courts will look at information. They'll look at international law. They'll look at policy reports. They'll look at data-driven reports that might influence their thinking about issues like that. I know a lot of research has been done – you talk about one to three – there's no intelligence difference between a one-year-old Black and White babies, putting aside if there is a drug

addiction or something else at birth, the environment changes, and that's what everyone's talking about.

Once the environment changes that means that it's gonna influence if you hear it, see it – it stays with you even if you're too young to absorb it.

Dr. Cooper: Absolutely.

Moderator: And so I hope I'm hearing that – you know, we're gonna look at one to three, but it's a lifelong issue that we have to look at, too, in terms of the issue of violence. It's not just children. It's not just infants. It's not just toddlers. It can happen at any time, and if you don't pay attention to it, it can raise up its ugly head again.

Dr. Cooper: And what you are making reference to is the really emerging research on mira neurons in the brain and how when we see things enough we begin to believe we are experiencing it. And that's compelling research that we should pay close attention to because of what our children are exposed to, not just in the communities but in media and on the Internet. So all of those factors should be taken into consideration when we're trying to determine outcomes.

Moderator: I'm gonna go to Father Boyle in just a second, but I also wanna make sure that the whole idea of violence, one of the big areas that we didn't talk about at all was violence against those who have disabilities that happens routinely. The disabilities are wide in range – and to make sure that somehow that's hooked to, it's not ignored as – it is a broad category that – whether it's physical, whether it's sight, whether it's hearing – whatever it might be, it can have an impact. And we don't know it because many people who suffer from disabilities can't complain, and how do you make sure that the system has a safety net to deal with that as well? Father Boyle?

Fr. Boyle: Speaking for the entire church – no, I'm just kidding.

[Laughter]

Fr. Boyle: You know, I think the case study sort of underscores how intertwined everything – how interconnected – you know, we wanna kind of deal with things in isolation, but to talk to this kid is to reveal that issue, is to reveal that concern, is to look at that source. So again, reverence for complexity is where it should lead us. I think there always – two assumptions: we wanna keep kids out of systems, and we wanna return kids to their families. And I don't – I just – I guess sometimes I – and I'm jaded maybe or colored by the fact that I work with gang members, and I just think

– I’ve watched how kids taken into the system – and again, not jail, but a probation camp in L.A. County where you have by and large adults who are appropriate, and suddenly you have a time to get up and a time to go to bed, and you have your chores, and you have structure, and they thrive.

I’ve watched – they become unrecognizable. And then the only problem comes when they are being returned to a situation that’s largely unchanged, but we have this bias that says, “This is always bad, and this is” – and that’s not my experience. And then the other one is just about everyone who works for me in a hugely trauma-informed community, I keep thinking what would have happened if this kid had been rescued? But he wasn’t or he was continually returned to a nightmare situation, and so they had to carry more than the average kid of torture and abuse and abandonment.

And I’ll give the parents the benefit of the doubt and just say that they were probably mentally ill because you just don’t – healthy people don’t do this to kids. But that’s sort of a bias we have, and – anyway, my experience is something else. Obviously, you protect children, but if you don’t actively engage in the healing of the perpetrator then this will continue. So the protection of the child does not in fact stop anything except – and this is good – it protects the child. But it doesn’t break any cycle.

So – and it’s sort of the way we see crime in general, but if we continue to punish sickness instead of treat it, what you don’t get – it doesn’t bring you health; it just brings you more illness. And so that’s a huge – we’ve been talking in this committee about a change in the norm and a shift and a paradigm shift and somehow turn stuff upside-down that would be huge if we said, “Let’s treat illness and not punish it.” That would have impact, and that would be a huge shift in how we currently operate.

Moderator: Thank you. Ms. Briggs?

Ms. Briggs: I guess the first thing I wanna say is having seen and read so many state operated entities that are in charge of taking care of whether it’s the elderly, the mentally infirmed, the deaf, or juvenile probationers that are mismanaged, the most heinous violation is when the caretaker becomes the perpetrator of physical, sexual or emotional abuse. So I will also err on keeping a child out of the system than trying to put the child in the system because it always gets out of hand somewhere along the line. So that’s where my bias comes from, and I work in probation – or have worked in probation.

That being said, at some point, we should all be going to school, so I'm focusing on school. So my recommendations would be loading up – we keep taking money out of the school systems. We need to be throwing money into school systems where we can have the quality assessments because teacher after teacher after teacher after teacher will tell you that they can see children's behavior manifesting in kindergarten, and they may not know what it's about, but they know it's not "normal." So why not start building in the supports so that we are –

[End of Audio]

Ms. Briggs:

-- training teachers and providing them with the tools and equipment and resources to be able to start working with behaviors that begin to manifest, whether it's through mental health assessments, whether it's through really trained guidance counselors who aren't stuck in paperwork but actually get to talk to students. Why not build in those community and agency supports that are – you know, it's a six-month waiting list if somebody refers you to them, but if they're in the school the kid gets to walk in and sit down and say, "Hey, I need" – or the parent gets to come in and say, "Hey I need."

And it's a non-stigmatized locale that shouldn't have a six-month waiting list because it's structured and loaded up with supports. The community-based outreach entities ought to have some visibility in the school and a bridge, fish-hook, whatever that connects them from the school back to the community so that that conversation is always going on so people know where the supports are, or who are the good ones, where they are and have easy access. I think we ought to be building into every school peer mediation because when we talk about bullying you better sit down and start talking about this.

It's not only the instruction about what is proper conduct, but it's, "We need to talk about the harm you've done and maybe the harm that's been done to you that got you to be this person that you are," but we need to be talking about that so that kids are realizing that there are consequences every time they do a thing. It's a good consequence or a bad consequence depending upon the behavior. But it's a way to begin to get to conduct. It gets to bullying. It gets to any other kind of dispute. "I'm a teacher. You act up in my classroom, I wanna talk about that, and I wanna talk about that to you in a way that's healthy and that's going to build you.

And maybe because of all the pressures I have as a teacher, I can't do it in this time period, but you and I are going to have an appointment at the mediation office at 3:05 p.m., and we're gonna talk this out." But I think that's that. Public policy and nonprofit and for-profit entities ought to find a way to build into supporting the schools as well. Drop-in resource centers, again – I said that already as it relates to school, because everything I'm talking about is school-based. School-based – school is where law enforcement can come in and become the friendly face to the community, not "the man."

Where when law enforcement knows Harry Smith, Jose Gonzales, Cynthia Johnson – when law enforcement knows these kids by face, they're not gonna pull out the gun and shoot 'em. They'll

stop it. And when Cynthia Johnson, Henry Gonzales and Monica whoever – Harper – sees Officer Jones, they can say, “Hey, Officer Jones,” not, “Oh, damn, there he is. Go!” You know, we can change the conditioning on both sides of the spectrum. MacArthur Foundation has – because every – a lot of the schools, for safety’s sake, are bringing in law enforcement, which is creating more harm than good in a lot of instances when done normally and when done improperly.

But when done abnormally, those officers are trained well to work with children and recognize when there might be a mental health issue or when something just doesn’t look right how to have a healthy conversation with a child. The MacArthur Foundation has a curriculum for that. Anybody interested ought to contact the MacArthur Foundation. And then whatever policies are set up, we need to think through the unintended consequences, because when you start talking about, Arizona, “Let’s deport all the immigrants,” well, all of a sudden people go underground with issues, and so this whole underground network of stuff starts to happen, and a lot of times that’s bad stuff.

When we have agency policies that contradict each other, then all of a sudden we can’t even work together because my policy says I can’t do this. We’re both trying to help the child, but my policy says I can’t do this, or I can’t do that, and as a result this kid is falling through the gaps. You know, hundreds of them fall through the gaps all the time because I can’t talk to you, or you can’t talk to me, or we can’t share the information that’s going to make the qualitative difference in the child’s life.

So we need to be thinking about the unintended consequences of anything that’s – that we think about creating as policy because often good intentions pave the road to Hell. We want Heaven. We want something that’s really gonna work that’s gonna lift people up, not take them down and out.

Moderator:

Great. I’m gonna go to Joe Torre next. I wanna say two things before I do that, and then I’m gonna switch over and start with Dan and go around the other way and end with Robert, who’s the other co-chair here. I just wanted to say this to Joe, but to all of you, how grateful I am that you’re doing this because the attorney general had the good insight to get a very diverse group of folks. You’ve had many careers. Your entire life has been in sports as the adult life, and you’re running great programs in New York and in California, and to have the time to think about this is very important.

To see that people who may not be predictable are concerned about violence and your presence here makes an enormous amount of difference. And so on behalf of the country let me thank you for doing what you've done.

Joe Torre: Does that include Boston?

Moderator: It includes Boston.

Joe Torre: Well, thank you, Charles. Yeah, when I was first asked to do this – I'm on the NAC committee – the National Advisory Committee – also for the attorney general on violence against women. And this – when I was asked to co-chair, certainly I didn't know if I was capable and – because as I said before, there are so many learned people here. And I have so many things written down – I'm all over the place, so bear with me. I know we've talked about perpetrators. They're frightening.

They're frightening. I think to the Penn State situation – it was so secretive for the longest time because perpetrators are cunning, and they're manipulative, and they just make you feel you owe them what they're doing to you, and if there's any way we could ever trace the gene that maybe predisposes them to do things like this – I don't know if that's medically possible. But they – I mentioned yesterday where there was an article about a person moving into a particular community with a thought in mind that – have the community embrace him so he could be asked maybe to work with the Boy Scouts, and it did come to fruition after a couple of years, put himself in a position to be with young boys and, you know, did the unthinkable.

It's very dangerous, and it's absolutely frightening. I have a 16-year-old daughter. And the biggest thing about abuse – and of course, when I came onboard, I'm – there was abuse that happened in my home. My dad abused my mom – made her very ashamed that she was born in Italy and just abused her in more ways other than the physical part. And I carried scars from that not knowing where they came from, and it was something you kept a secret. I mean, the Penn State thing was kept a secret.

Everybody thinks they're the only ones that are experiencing this, and to me I think the biggest deterrent would be just let the secret out and make people aware. Make youngsters understand that it's not the right thing what's being done to them, and they could share it with somebody they trust. And I know just in our information here – and I know you have a relationship with Lady Gaga – you know, someone – and I could talk to kids, you know, but I'm 71

years old, and even though they'd be politely listen, someone who kids look up to to have – just make them aware, and make them understand about certain behavioral things, that would certainly would help and put them in a good place emotionally I think is important.

You know, I've said here several times that we talk about the children, and I – what we've heard here the last couple of days about children being incarcerated, it's so frightening because, I mean, where's our future if we incarcerate so many youngsters for doing bad things. And I said before, there are no bad kids; they just do bad things. And I think it's our job to work and do whatever we can to try to get them in a good place. And I've been exposed here to so many different things I never even thought of thinking about, which has certainly been beneficial to me in understanding certain things.

And I had mentioned to Mack before – I said, “If all the 911 calls went to him, we'd be great, you know, because he'd ask if they wanted some lemonade on the way over or something like that.” But – and you know, as far as the laws, sometimes they're so stringent, you know, you can't – it's like the job I have with Major League Baseball; I think I know what makes sense for certain aspects of the game, but you have to deal with the bureaucracy of it. And I think there has to be more sensitivity and more flexibility in order to keep the family together, keep the community together, because the one thing that seems to be a solution is a community that sort of reinforces the good feelings that kids have.

And again, what Vicki said here a minute ago about the schoolteachers – my daughter was like eight years old. We were in spring training, and she came home one day, and she says, “Mom, can I talk to you?” And says, “You know, that work that you and dad do, I think a little girl in my class needs your help.” And we went up to the school, and we presented it to the teacher. The teacher says, “What am I supposed to do about it?” So they – really, a lot of them don't know what to do. It's not that they don't care, but they really don't have the tools, and I think it's our responsibility to pay a great deal of attention to the education that the educators get – that need, I should say.

My wife and I have talked about it so much with our Safe at Home Foundation. We put safe rooms in schools because I – as I say, I never shared it. I have people I've grown up with and had no idea what went on in my house until I started our foundation and went public with what went on behind closed doors. And you know, we – I keep pounding at this feeling that I think we have to have a

widespread awareness campaign, because what abuse is – it's a health issue. You know, we raise money for a lot of – you know, cancer and heart disease and Parkinson's, and certainly that's worthwhile.

But this is a health issue, and we need to get it out there and have people understand it. And you realize how powerful the media is. I mean, I think they've lost a lot of credibility because they have the sense to tell you how to think, and I think we need to give them the proper information. And when I talk about – I don't know what the answer is other than to have it cool to act the right way and do the right things and – and try to live a respectful life. But on a lighter side, I think we all know because of the media campaign and all the – awareness campaign, I should say, we all know what Viagra and Cialis do, I think.

Now, if any of us balding people had taking Propecia, now you find out that there's a danger to that, too, because your hair may grow, but nothing else does. So that's – that becomes a danger. But I think we need to find a way to have the message out there of what we're doing here and what's important to us and make it important to the masses out there, especially because I don't think they know. I think people like the schoolteacher says, "I don't know what to do." I think if we get the message out there – and to me I think that would be important to let the attorney general know – it obviously has to be something that would resonate with people and something that just stays in their mind.

And I think that's so important because getting – circling back to where I started, the perpetrator – the best thing that happens for the perpetrator is the veil of silence, and we just need to eliminate that. And that's about all I have.

Moderator: Thank you. Deanne Tilton Durfee, your sense about policy issues?

Deanne: Yes, and, I'm sorry. I have to leave because I have conference on children's traumatic loss and grief that I have to open tomorrow morning in L.A. at 8:00 a.m., which is gonna be great because it won't be like 5:00 a.m. that 8:00 a.m. is here to those of us who live on the West Coast. Let me just start by picking up on what Joe Torre just said about institutional – really institutional abuse is what it is – that people who have access through institutions and organizations to children and why it is so important for us to emphasize not only how important it is for the kids to know that they can tell somebody and for the general society and parents and community to know that this might happen and they should be vigilant, but also that there be consequences for failure to report.

To me, the worst thing that can happen – it’s horrible for a kid to be hurt or molested, but for that to be covered up and not reported results in exponential numbers of children being victimized, and it has over and over again. And we don’t know the full extent of it yet. Every time we find a child who’s been hurt by someone in the school system, for example – we have a case now where all of a sudden there are adults coming forward who had this same teacher who will talk about being molested by that same teacher. Then we find out there are several teachers who shared with each other what was going on.

Nobody told anybody, and it finally ends up usually being either a witness, which is probably the saddest of all – when you have to wait for somebody to see this happen – or an adult. And as we saw within the Catholic Church, thousands and thousands of adults coming forward talking about how they were severely physically and emotionally damaged. So I just wanted to pick up on the fact that kids need to know this is not okay, and the schools need to communicate that, and the schools need to hold their teachers accountable, but not just schools: any organization that provides access to children.

And that’s not to be paranoid, because there are great Big Brothers and Big Sisters and great organizations. I don’t wanna get in the way of that. In Dublin, Ireland, at this point in time priests are never allowed to be alone with a child, and the numbers of priests have diminished so incredibly that they can hardly hold a service because of the number of kids who have been molested and the incredible fallout from discovering this decades later and understanding it’s still going on. So I think as a law enforcement-sponsored organization, this is something – you know, the prosecution for not reporting – and that’s almost never ever done.

I can’t remember a situation where somebody’s actually been prosecuted for failing to comply with a child abuse reporting law. Certainly, the consequences at Penn State are the only consequences that we’ve heard of. In terms of reporting to law enforcement or to DCFS, I always say that the saddest child report ever is one that isn’t made. There are no bad reports; there are only bad responses to reports. So if in fact you have a suspicion a child may be harmed, rather than rolling through your head, “Oh, they’ll go through the system, and it’ll be a bad thing. We’ll fix it before somebody else messes this family up further,” that isn’t the way it should be.

Our challenge should be that if you report your suspicions, which you should always do, you should have confidence in what the

response will be and that that will be better for this child and safer for this child and better for the family. So I think that is our challenge. Again, as a law enforcement-sponsored entity, I think we can start with law enforcement in terms of the response, but that also applies to the child welfare agency and probation, for that matter. It isn't that we don't – we don't wanna say we don't wanna know.

We don't wanna say that we're gonna keep this covered up or hidden because it's a bad system. I hear that so often. "We don't want the kids going in the system. Oh, if you report, they'll go into the system." Why is the system such a bad thing? I actually agree with Father Greg on this, that there are kids who really do better once they are a part of the system. But that doesn't mean there aren't problems with the system, and I think that's our challenge, too.

Relationships – I agree with Alicia that relationships – that is the key to creating a better society and a safer society and a better system for kids, because I wanna be really good at what I do, and I don't wanna have to learn what everybody else does, but I sure wanna know who does know. I want to know who to call. I want to know who to refer to. We had an issue of human trafficking, and I actually had an FBI representative come to me and say, "We can't deal with human trafficking of kids. We need your organization to pull a group together so we can address it."

So we had to pull together ICE, FBI, the U.S. Attorney, police, probation, parole, DPSS, DCFS. We pulled in _____ Public School – Schools and Community Treatment. The room was full of people who were all there saying, "Thank you because we're all struggling with this issue, and we can't do it alone." And so much has come out of that. I won't go into detail, but every time we do this, whether it comes down to reviewing – multiagency review of abductions or suicides or deaths or severe abuse or hospitalized children, you always need to have a multidisciplinary or at least a broad-based input and perspective in order to do the best thing for that family and that child because somebody's gonna be focusing on the family.

Somebody's gonna be focusing on the child. Somebody's gonna be noticing the health problems. And then there's this person who will say, "Hey, they broke the law, and there needs to be consequences." I love the idea of removing the perpetrator in domestic violence cases in particular. Then we always deal with where do the women go. That happens to be the human trafficking issue right now. You can take the kids off the street, but then

where do they go. They go back to their pimps as soon as they're – you know, they aren't criminals; they're victims.

And I think we're going to resolve that issue. I think that with domestic violence and child abuse, that's the great nexus, and that's why I keep saying if you're responding to child – if you're responding to child abuse, look for domestic violence; if you're responding to domestic violence call, every police officer who goes out on a domestic violence call should have on their protocol, "Are there children in the home? Where are they? Find them. Interview them. Evaluate whether or not they need protection or whether the family needs counseling."

So again, I think each specialty needs to be the best it can be, and if it's a silo, fine; as long as those silos connect – I think the "silo" is kind of overdone. I think that it gives the impression that we aren't doing well for kids. And the fact of the matter is there are people who know more than they have ever known about this issue. I can tell you that the state of the knowledge and expertise now in the area of child protection, in the area of domestic violence is higher than it's ever been.

The saddest thing is when they don't talk to each other so that the child isn't surrounded by a coordinated response system, and a lot of that has to do with communication, relationships, combined data, and a will to work together, and a respect for each other. We talk about respecting children. We need to respect each other because there has been the day when certain disciplines – law enforcement – did not respect social workers, or therapists were considered ineffective. Schools were out of the loop. So I think we all respect each other.

I certainly respect everyone on this task force. I'll tell you, Joe, you're not the only one who's learned new things, and I've been in this business I bet longer than anybody here, and I still learned so much by being a part of this effort. So – and I think you can make a difference, and I think it can make a difference in terms of not only the public health, but the safety, the justice and the quality of life for families throughout our society. So I'm looking forward to next time. And I'm sorry to miss you this afternoon.

Moderator: Thank you. General Taguba, you're next.

Gen. Taguba: My turn?

Moderator: I just wanted to say before you speak on behalf of all of us how grateful we are to the military for protecting our families and our

communities. I'm not the only one in this room who lost a close friend on September 11, 2001, and we don't say it enough publicly. I hope you'll convey to those who are veterans and who are still protecting our country how grateful we are for what you do, what you've done and what you will do. Very much appreciate it.

Gen. Taguba:

Thank you, Professor. You know, 9/11 was such a dramatic thing, and I recall being with a three-star general, who was the highest ranking official who I was meeting with, and then five minutes later he was – he was dead. And what saved me was a bathroom break just down the hall. So my mom said that my work on earth is not done yet. But I'm very blessed. You know, it's – hearken back to the scenario because it's very, very close to my own event – my family event.

An absent father – been to war, prisoner of war, was beaten, tortured by the Japanese forces, and we didn't live with him until we were about 10 or 11 years old to the point where there was no love in the family from his side, but there was love from my mother. She was our – you might say our center of influence in our life, and this caused my brother to be disassociated, and he's 56 years old, and all that time he had this trauma to the point where I don't think he and my father ever reconciled their differences even after my father died in December of last year.

So I made him carry the coffin along with me as a matter of consolation, and he spent a year in jail in Huntsville, Texas. Y'all know where Huntsville, Texas, is? The only penal institution in Texas where they execute criminals.

Moderator:

Right.

Gen. Taguba:

So – but any case, let me take it from the military perspective, because as we were talking about this scenario, we did have – I grew up in a military family, and I have a son that's in Afghanistan somewhere – some high mountain regions killing the enemy. We borrowed a lot of what we're talking today from the community at large because we are a reflection of our community, and we just didn't invent a lot of these things. So a lot of this was from when I was growing up in the military was through discovery and learning, through having a soldier and his wife who abandoned their children on the military installation and somebody calls me and says, "We have three children who was languishing in filth in their quarters, and somebody needs to take care of them."

Or a mother, Mrs. Green, who killed and maimed her children on the installation **and for life**, she sat on her two-year-old son and

suffocated him, and she was a large woman. It brings about all these other programs that we have today. Law enforcement – in the military, we tend to use law enforcement as the last resort, only because it stigmatizes the family. You know, we have this thing called – when you appear on the blotter report, whether on the installation or off the installation, it's a blotter –

[End of Audio]

Gen. Taguba:

-- for life. That report will stay on that jurisdiction or whatever have you forever. There's no way to expunge it, so it's a lifelong stigmatization that happens to the family. Our responsibility – we have the authority to persuade and coerce. Commanders have that authority, to persuade and coerce. Why? Because we wanna keep that family unit together. We don't want that family to separate because it has a more serious debilitating effect on the family than it is to try to keep a unit together because it affects the unit, as I mentioned to you, and because people talk, and we're a close-knit unit.

So we do have support systems to try and help the family get through their dilemma. We have a whole host of programs in the military that we call family support programs. Every unit today has what we call a Family Readiness Group. That's governed by or headed by what I always call the 51 percent of the vote – that's the family members because they know exactly what happens when their loved ones go off to war, because they have to take care of what's going on in the back with kids and whatever have you. We have a program, so hopefully we'll preview that to you when we went to Joint Base Lewis and McChord, which is universally and commonly used.

It's called a New Parent Support Program for new parents who like Natalie and – you know, for that matter, are given assistance on how to go be a parent. We have women and infant care programs – the WIC programs that – that's actually a community-based program that we use to help out our youngsters and the like. We also have what we call for the – since 1984 – a program that the Army institutionalizes called Army Family Action Plan program. Grassroots – again, 51 percent of the vote – that does all these good things about well-being of the family to include family domestic abusers and the like, and this is actually a very powerful force because they have the ear of Congress.

Family members today, they don't have to report to their chain of command. They'll call the commander if there's a problem at home, but if the commander does not react to that, guess what?

“Senator Taguba, I’m not getting any help from my chain of command.” And the last thing you want from us is getting a congressional inquiry, which you have seven days to respond to. It’s immediate. So they have their attention, and this happens today as well. They have teen counsels. Every installation that we have, over 300 – whatever the case may be – have teen counsels, and they have the ear of the Chief of Staff of the Army, because they meet with him once a year, and the operative word is “no.” It’s “no.”

If they want something to help protect their installation or engage in any kind of programs – child and youth programs, most likely they’ll get it. When I commanded this unit, it was called Army Community and Family Support Center, probably the most hardest, difficult job I’ve ever had next to raising a family. My kids used to call me “ghost dad” because I was never around. It was a worldwide, and it really opened my eyes, and this is where all of the programs that we had, whether it was in Kosovo or whether it’s in some remote post in north of Syracuse called Fort Drum or Port Hunter Liggett or whatever have you – all of the programs to help our families are standardized.

They’re all standardized. So if someone has a problem with the unit – and this is part of our issue today is we have issues that are community-wide, but they’re all fragmented, you might say, and they’re repetitive. They’re dual and whatever have you – this is where you start having problems with resourcing. Ours is a bit more standardized. We have programs that we just discovered at Fort Lewis. It was called the “Divorce Course,” mandated by Washington state and the Army to help prevent our young soldiers with multiple deployments from divorcing.

That’s pretty darn good, you know. No cost to the soldiers and no cost to the families. They just attend. They have a backlog of about 75 couples today, and the issue that we heard from them was that some of the soldiers who did go through a divorce wished that they had gone to this Divorce Course. And Dr. Cooper was there with us. So there’s a whole multitude of programs that we have that perhaps it could be utilized in the community because we’re talking about – I’m gonna assume here most of the problems that exist today, other than the ones we heard from Albuquerque, were urbanized metropolitan areas or whatever have you.

What about the remote and isolated areas like in Alaska where people don’t have any access? Where do they go? What about in American Samoa? Have you ever thought about that? Where do they go? Well, the closest place that they could go is in Guam or –

you know, that's a long boat ride – or Hawaii. So it's a unique sort of circumstances for us, and something that is often not reflected is that 60 to 70 percent of our troops and their families live outside an installation, so we have to rely on community partnership.

We have what we call “family-community **combinance**” with the community at large where the mayor is invited, where the commanding general is invited, and they sign an agreement that says, “We have to deal with each other.” Military life is not a stable life. We played it today. It's a very unpredictable life. People move around two to three years at a time. My kids went to three high schools. Now, you talk about trauma of relocating and making new friends and whatever have you to the point where they actually hate you for a while, you know, it's kind of a sensitive issue that leads to trauma.

My next-door neighbor's father, a general officer, moved him on his second year – or his final year in high school committed such a serious crime, and we've known this kid for a long, long time, but because the trauma of having relocated from Germany to Fort Belvoir and – you know, caused him such a grief that he damaged property all over the place and was convicted and went to counseling. And Matt would say to us, “I wish I did not do that. If somebody just paid attention to me.” Now he can't get a job because he has a federal conviction.

That's one of the – just one of the examples that we go through. So all the things that I think we could use as a model for standardizing some of our programs today, there are things – if you want – the thing about – there's a huge cost when it comes to counseling, medical treatment, that sort of thing. TriCare is such a part of this healthcare issue, but TriCare for the families today in the military is such a nominal fee that it doesn't even cost them maybe \$500.00 a year.

But the power of persuasion and coercion is that when I tell Sergeant Torre, “We wanna keep you together, but these are the things that you need to do. You need to get counseling. You need to do this. You need to get your child back. You need child counseling for that. We can refer you to the let's say Madigan Medical Center. We have counselors there. Let's leave the court system out of the way first until it's absolutely necessary that we have to use them unless that's the last recourse.”

Law enforcement – when somebody gets picked up off post, we negotiate, mediate jurisdiction because ultimately it goes back to that commanding officer. Trust me. I used to be 6'4”, 225

pounds. You know, when it goes through that system, you say, “Good Lord! Another one!” right? And then you have to trust the social services in the military that if Chief McDonnell misses an appointment with his spouse, I get notified, then we go through where’s the chain of command, this and that, this and that. That’s the coercion and the persuasion because we wanna keep that family together.

Now, if the family decides it’s not going to be compatible to the point where that soldier ends up doing something egregious and puts that family in danger, then I take action, and I say, “You’re going for a court-martial, and I’m going to separate you.” What do we do with the family? They didn’t do anything. This guy did all the stuff, right. We have what we call a Transitional Compensation Program, and I’ll tell you what that is.

Moderator: We’re gonna have to end because we’ve got about five minutes left for the rest of the panelists, so one last point.

Gen. Taguba: Just one – I just wanna tell you that these families are given financial and medical assistance between \$5,000.00 to \$6,000.00 a month for a period of three years. That’s how the military provides for their military – you won’t find that in a civilian community. Thank you.

Moderator: Thank you. And I apologize to the other panelists. We ran out of time, but I do wanna hear from everybody, and I surely want for Mr. _____ to sort of conclude about what the task is going to be. So let me go to Georgina and then Dr. Marans and then Dr. James to give us a little sense – the bullet points that are critical in terms of what should be the policy issues. And then we’ll – there’ll be more time, but the cameras are gonna go off. The lights are gonna go off. They’re gonna evict us in about eight minutes.

Georgina: Okay – I’ll keep it really brief then. One of our mandates is to raise national awareness of this serious issue. We have to raise awareness so that everybody knows how serious and how urgent this matter is. Now, I believe it’s important that everybody knows and is aware of this because everybody has a role, and everybody in this country can do something to improve the situation. The way I would look at it, and the way I think about it, and I would suggest for the task force to also look at it this way is that this is the Children Exposed to Violence Task Force, so let’s keep the child in the center – always be youth-focused.

So that can mean zero to whatever age we decide is a child. Keeping that child in the core, we then look at the circumstances in

the family, in the school and in the neighborhoods. So when we look at it like that, it's impossible not to agree that we need a multidisciplinary partnership. Law enforcement is absolutely critical to that, not just in the traditional suppression method, but also in prevention and intervention. Sometimes they're uniquely in that role to help in that matter. Schools, absolutely important – I agree with a number of my colleagues here.

Essential role – why? Because most of the day that's where the kids are. The very people that we just said are in the center of this circle. However, I would caution the group that if we're gonna recommend that certain responsibilities – extra responsibilities are given to schoolteachers, we know how overworked they are, how little they get paid, and to add on an additional responsibility I think should also correlate with additional pay and additional maybe distribution of work with administration of schools – just to keep that in mind.

We should also include nonprofits already doing such tremendous work, already based in the community, having the trust of the community. National organizations like United Way, Boys and Girls Club, Big Sisters, Big Brothers – and really just backing up and working on the work that already exists, making sure that everybody's talking. Everybody has a specialty and that's great, but a number of things that happens – and I know it's not just in Salinas – a different family can have a number of different issues. So with those different issues comes different specialties that are needed.

Now, I would suggest that it would take the agencies or us as government or organizations to take it upon ourselves, take the burden off of the family and say, “Okay, Steve, you're working with behavioral health. You're working, Thea, with public health. I'm working with law enforcement. Let's all work together and see how we can help this one family,” and that family not having to talk to six – seven different people, but designate one person to talk. They already have enough problems where else I would suggest that this is our job.

So again, really keeping it community-driven, looking at it with certain levels, understanding youth is in the center, home, family, school and neighborhoods. Thank you.

Moderator: Thank you. Dr. Marans?

Dr. Marans: You know, our country has been at its greatest when we're facing tragedy and crisis, and I would agree that this country needs to

know what we are facing tragedy and crisis. The problem is is that when we confront people with what people – what folks have been describing as “ugly, painful, awful-to-think-about,” that it makes people turn around and walk away and makes us feel helpless. So we need to know that we’re in a tragic crisis because this is not about whether we do something in the schools or in this place or in that place.

This is about recognizing that we are losing our children, and it is costing them, their families and their communities, and it is a false economy. It is costing this country over \$108 billion a year with all of the costs associated – and that’s probably an underestimated – associated with the exposure to violence. The good news is that what we do when we make the announcements and get it out there that this is a critical public health crisis in our country is we know what to do about it.

And we need to put our efforts and our resources – both federal, state, local and private – to addressing the crisis that confronts us. And if we don’t, we’re gonna be having this same kind of testimony 10 years down the road like we did 15 years ago. We have developed ways and models of bringing people together from the community, from law enforcement, mental health, the courts, emergency rooms, etc. We know what to do. We know how to interrupt the cycle of violence in our work with gang members, in our work with kids like Natalie and the boy, Chris.

We know what to do for returning veterans, but we have not made a commitment as a country that we are tired of the same old same old, and it is time to put our money, our resources and our efforts where our mouths are. One last comment, the idea of the federal government stimulating growth and new ideas is fantastic, but when the federal government does not build in the possibility of taking successful intervention strategies and models to scale, and they then fund new ideas to address the same old problems when our colleagues on Capitol Hill talk about wasteful spending, this is not a good use of our efforts and resources.

But bottom line is we have a tragic crisis in front of us. We don’t have to feel helpless. We don’t have to be scared. We have to step up and take advantage of what we’ve learned because we can fix these problems and save the lives of children and improve our country.

Moderator: Thank you. Dr. James?

Dr. James:

My decision to become an emergency medicine physician was the best decision I ever made in my life, and it has been far better than I could have ever imagined, truly. And one of the reasons is because being an emergency physician in an urban hospital is like setting up a clinic or an emergency department in the busiest street in the most precarious urban neighborhoods in the United State. But I love that! I really love it. I mean, I get multiple opportunities every day to make a difference in somebody's life. The injury is one thing, but it's the thing that caused the injury that's really what I feel like I'm called to deal with.

And so I get to deal with everything that was enacted or in this role-play that we had this morning. I see the police. I see the social workers. I see – occasionally, I see a judge or a lawyer or somebody at the bedside of somebody. I see everybody: domestic violence, violence against children, interpersonal violence. I see every bit of it, so it gives me a bit of a window – a different lens to look at all the players and the entire situation. And sometimes – so I deal with the perpetrators as well, and oftentimes the perpetrators are people you wouldn't imagine, like they often are physicians. They often are nurses, and these are people who don't understand trauma.

They don't understand how trauma is manifested. They don't understand when a child or a victim is quiet and doesn't want to talk today because they just got shot or just got stabbed, and then they say, "The person's uncooperative. They're a bad person," stigmatized because they were shot or stabbed, and so they decide that when they ask for pain medication they're gonna take their time giving it to them, and then they become perpetrators by doing this type of thing. And then the kid suffers more, becomes more angry or whatever.

Long story short, my reason for saying this is that I think one of the things we need to do is, number one, this needs to be a cultural shift in the nation. I think what this task force has a great opportunity – a great opportunity to make a cultural shift in the nation. And it's been called a public health problem 20 years ago, but we need to raise that up again. And that shift should be about educating people about all the different ways in which they themselves can be affected by what other people do or what happens to other people.

People feel helpless. They feel like they can't do anything about it, and they say, "This happens to other people; not my problem," but we need to be able to shift the culture so that people understand this. We need to educate the people who can become perpetrators

without knowing that they are becoming perpetrators, like the ones I just described – the physicians in the hospital. And I've had the opportunity to be the director of a program, and I'm sort of – I'm actually just gonna speak from what I have seen and things that work, you know, for sure.

I think that the interventions that I've been able to see – I think we should have a – it should become a standard in trauma centers when you have that teachable moment – and I used to call it and everybody else calls it a teachable moment for the victim. They're injured now. They're quiet. You can talk to them about what caused this and what led to it. But it's been – it's actually more of a teachable moment for us than for them because it's an opportunity to actually learn about this person.

How did this get to this? How did it lead to that? What other factors are involved, and what other people need to be helped and assisted to prevent this from becoming a ripple effect in the wrong direction? And so the education and the cultural shift should involve neighborhoods, communities, allow communities to have a voice in it, focusing on entire families, and every time I say 360 degrees, that's what I mean. And like Father Boyle, I can tell you for sure people absolutely do become unrecognizable when you can make these types of focused interventions in their lives and giving them an opportunity to become someone else and to do something else in life.

Last, we keep talking about silos. Like Father Boyle said yesterday, silos probably get a bad rap, and I think they only get a bad rap because they're not connected. I think if you connect them and each one is doing their thing and in a very positive way, I think they can be – they can add strength to the work we do. So long story short, a true cultural shift, shift the whole thing, educate people around it, and do 360 degree-interventions.

Moderator:

Thank you. Judge Ryan, we wanna thank you for joining the task force; with all the things you have to do, it's very significant that you spent the time here to enlighten us to some of the complexities of the court system. Appreciate your ideas. Some ideas for the task force in terms of recommendations?

Judge Ryan:

I will adhere to the requirement that we be short because I know that Robert has a great deal that he wants to state, and I know me – when I get a mic, I can go on for a long time. Just ask my wife. But the recommendations that I would like to make are court-centered in that I hope that this task force through their recommendations will reach out to some of the supreme courts –

well, actually, not some, but all of the supreme courts in the country and have them make it a requirement that the judges attend seminars that actually deal with the impact that trauma or violence has had on these children so that the judges are thinking about that when the young people come into the court, be it in the juvenile court setting or in the adult court, because as judges we are not required to go and attend any CO.

We just have to attend a certain amount. But if this is a requirement then I think that'll make a difference because now the judges will have at their disposal more information and making a decision on, "What should we do if the case comes into court?" And I think that'll make – that'll have an impact on those individuals and assure that they don't come back into the court for anything else.

The second thing that I would like the task force to do is in addition to going to the court – going to the supreme courts, make an appeal to some of the judges – and not the judges – excuse me – the prosecuting attorneys and the defense attorneys in some of these states to appeal to the legislators to change the laws, because they are so rigid that the judges don't have room to move. If we can have a process wherein we can bring in evaluators or we can bring in individuals who are doing assessments and if we can actually deal with the victims in the case as opposed to just the defendants, I think that'll make a world of difference for us as judges in the court.

And the last thing that I would suggest is just more so a dovetail to what Joe was saying and what I think Deanne was saying – and also Georgina – in that there needs to be more exposure or a national movement to provide information or awareness about this issue – about violence that children are exposed to. I think it'll make a huge difference because it will give people the opportunity to talk about some of the issues that they've experienced. Like myself, I was very quiet, very silent about the things that I had experienced as a child, and I thought it was embarrassing.

I thought I would be embarrassed if I told people what actually happened to me, and it was actually my wife who convinced me that I needed to speak because then I – it could be therapeutic for other people, they could talk about it, and they can be given a chance to heal. And so being the victim of a stepfather who violently and frequently beat my mother, you know, seeing my uncle shot by my grandmother, actually being the victim of an armed robbery, those are things that I kept inside, and they could have impacted me negatively, but I didn't allow them.

My resiliency may be different from someone else, but if we can put this information out, do it through public service announcements, do it through the Internet – these social medias – do it through Twitter, but give these young people an opportunity or a forum to say, “I’m not the only person going through these things.” I think that is one of the key things this task force should focus on.

Moderator: Thank you very much. Robert Listenbee?

Robert: I basically would just like to adopt most of what’s been said around here. There’s very little new that I can add to it. We need to shine a bright light on the children who are exposed to violence. We know solutions about how to address the trauma that they’ve experienced. We need to develop mechanisms for screening and determining which children have experienced violence.

And every aspect of the system – be it in schools, be it in the court system, be it by prosecutors, defense attorneys, be it by law enforcement – we really need to kinda look across the system and identify those children, then we need to develop these systems to deliver resources to those children across the – through the entire system. I wanna emphasize one thing, and I’ll do that by just a real short story. I’ve been out to a lot of schools to work with law enforcement to teach children how to more effectively interact with law enforcement.

We were at a middle school, and there were about 38 kids in the audience, and we were telling them about – a little bit about the juvenile justice system. And we were asking them about their experiences, and I asked that all the children who had seen someone who had been shot or who knew a relative who’d been shot or who had been injured by shooting themselves, raise their hand. There were about 30 kids in the class; about 20 – 25 kids raised their hands, and I was shocked. I was shocked that there were so many kids in this urban area, and they’re out in southwest Philadelphia, who had experienced violence so directly.

And I came away from that meeting – the thing is the kids couldn’t see the other kids behind them, so they didn’t understand how vast the number was. I came away thinking, “This is horrible. We have an epidemic in this country, and we have to do something about it.” So when I was asked to participate on this task force, I willingly joined hoping that we can shine a bright light on the problem, identify those kids who are exposed to violence, find ways for providing them with some sort of –

Moderator, Robert, Joe Torre, Dr. Macy, Dr. Lieberman, Chief McDonnell,
Dr. Cooper, Fr. Boyle, Ms. Briggs, Gen. Taguba, Deanne, Judge Ryan, Georgina, Dr. Marans

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Robert:

-- treatment to address their needs and then prevent the kind of violence that's happening. I've had so many relatives killed, murdered. I've had friends killed. We just used to count their names when we were growing up, and we can -- I could give you a long list of names of kids who have been killed that I knew when I was going through school. This is horrible! We can no longer accept this as a norm in our country.

We have to change this norm. So those around the table and those of you who are in the audience have to all join with us. We must get the faith community involved. We must get corporations and businesses involved. We must have the federal government give direction through recommendations and otherwise, but the states and the local governments and the tribal governments and the rural governments all have to be a part of this. We need Hollywood involved and those celebrities who wanna be a part of this.

We need to reach out to all those people who testified before us, because they brought us a message: they wanted -- when they came to us, they were coming with still some residue of hope that there might be some solution these problems. We looked in their faces as we had them testify before us, and they were asking us to do something about it. Some were in tears. Some were just traumatized to the point that we wanted to get them treatment immediately as they walked out the door from the testimony that they have here.

We have to dig deep. We have to find some solutions that are gonna address these problems because all those people that we haven't contacted so far are out there waiting for some hope -- some real hope -- more than just the kernel of hope that they brought into the room when they testified before us. That's our charge. That's what we must do. We've all spoken very eloquently about the means.

I mean, what they have in the military, solutions, what all of you have worked on all around the country -- we have to put that in a report that allows the attorney general to be in a position to make good, sound recommendations that will change the norm across this country. It's no longer okay for our children to be murdered. It's no longer okay for us to hear that report on TV about that promising young student who was killed by a stray bullet or killed by a bullet when somebody was trying to shoot someone else. That's no longer okay. We've gotta say that clearly.

That's the message that I would like to see us say as we go forward. I would like to thank everybody who's come out to hear

what we've had to say today. I'd like to thank Professor Ogletree for helping us bring out of us that which was inside that helps clarify some of the issues we're trying to address and then turn it back over to Professor Ogletree.

Moderator: Thank you very much. I want to make sure before we leave Natalie and Chris one closing remark, Georgina, on behalf of Natalie, what's the hope – the optimism? Tell us what really happened that's good news about Natalie.

Georgina: The good news is that there's hope and that there's people out there that can help me. If one person could come and reach out to me, that would make all the difference in the world because I know then that that person cares about me, that there's good people out there and hopefully he or she can recommend me to other people who could also help. Hopefully, if that is a good story, then I would do my best to also help others in my position.

Moderator: Great. And Dr. Cooper, what's the good news about your son, Chris?

Dr. Cooper: My son, Chris, and his dad and I have reconciled as a family.

[Laughter; applause]

Dr. Cooper: And I, as a mother, have decided to allow my husband to have that leadership role as well as that mentoring role to our son so that he will grow up to be all that he can be: an army of one.

Joe Torre: And may –

Male: And Chris says, "I love you, Mom and Dad."

Joe Torre: And may I say that I think what came out of the Natalie and Chris – and thank you, Professor, for bringing this to light – is something that I've known for a long time but never really put it into this perspective, but we – when I was with the Yankees, we won a lot of championships and a lot of credit went to the fact that we had a lot of very well thought-of players, but the thing that got us through was relying on each other. And I don't think we can go through life alone; we need help, and the sooner we understand that we can get help I think the healthier we'll be.

Moderator: Thank you. One thing that's certainly been a benefit for me as the moderator – two things. One, for the task force and for the audience, it seems to me that the real success of this effort is going to be to compel the attorney general to make sure that this report is widely distributed and discussed, and it's not the end of your work,

but the beginning of a community effort to try to address some of these issues, because I'd hate for this to be put on a shelf – the commission has done its work, and we're done.

It's starting a new dialogue, which I think makes a lot of difference. And the other part of it – and I like the optimism about Natalie and about Chris and about the family, of course – but it just reminds me from my own point of view – people say, “Well, he went to Stanford with honors, Harvard Law School, a tenured professor,” but it didn't start that way. And I don't – it's not on my resume, but it should be, right, to have two parents who didn't finish high school.

One came from Arkansas; one came from Alabama, and violence was in that home as well as like many other homes. And the point is that we can't give up on anybody, right, even the father – I don't know if his frustration was from 40 years in Alabama being treated differently? Whatever it was, it wasn't a justification, but it might have been an explanation. I don't know if my mother's tolerance was a part of coming from Arkansas, and you're very subservient, but it shouldn't happen.

But it says that you can't give up on the children, and I think that has to be a central message – that if they look at the profile. He was born here; his parents were from there; he's never gonna make it. Well, I did. And that's because we all have had – all of us have stories, and all of us have friends who've saved us, and some of those friends were bad friends. People said, “Don't go in that room; they're smoking dope. Don't go over there; they've got guns and knives,” right.

“Stay in school; you're the geek.” Right? I mean, all these things that people are mentors and tutors and examples, and some of them didn't make it as far as we've made it, right, but they were part of the ladder that we used to climb up to make a big difference. So – and this is something that – I'm sorry that everyone can't give their testimony, but the whole idea is that I think this committee is a testament to what we have to do, what we have done, and what we will do.

And I hope that you will give them your comments and your ideas, because I think everybody has a story, and that story will make it a much better event and a much better conclusion for all of us. Thank the Attorney General's Task Force, and thank you for being here today.

[Applause]

Moderator, Robert, Joe Torre, Dr. Macy, Dr. Lieberman, Chief McDonnell,
Dr. Cooper, Fr. Boyle, Ms. Briggs, Gen. Taguba, Deanne, Judge Ryan, Georgina, Dr. Marans

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