

Public Testimony Day 2: Concerning Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence in the Home, Community, and Juvenile Justice System Response

Joanne Shenandoah:

We are now going to proceed to the scheduled public witness testimony, and thank you all again for your time and energy that you put in and your dedication. I'm going to call out the following names if you will please kindly come to the microphones. We have Pam Karalunas, Chapter Coordinator, Alaska Children's Alliance; Julie Kitka, Chugash Eskimo, President of the Alaska Federation of Nations; David Smith, retired City Manager of Anchorage, Alaska; Lauree Morton, Council on DV and Sexual Assault, Juneau; Linda Sharp, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska; Tony Kaliss, retired, from Anchorage; Becky Judd, Rural Community Action Project in Anchorage. So if you'd all take your seats, I believe there should be seven of you at this moment.

Okay, just a quick reminder and not to be disrespectful to anyone, as you know, in our Native ways, it's always very difficult to interrupt someone, but we've always wanted to let you know that you can submit as much testimony as you want that we will read at testimony.tlpi.org and each and every one of you will have five minutes, and we will try to take some time for a little bit of question and answer as well.

So with that, we will move through the testimony, and when you begin to give your testimony, if you would just speak your name for the record, and speak closely to the microphone because you are being recorded, and that way we can transcribe what you are saying, because we won't all have written testimony. So with that, I'd like to begin please, and try to keep in mind that we're only asking for five minutes and I'm—apologize up front for that, but we are all very dedicated to hear what you have to say, and thank you for being here with us today. So we'll start with Pam Karalunas.

Pam Karalunas:

Thank you. You did a good job. I had originally been invited to be part of a panel, so taking my testimony from 15 minutes to five minutes was a challenge, which is why you have the information there in front of you. Thank you, quyana, for allowing me to come and share my experiences and my observations as a lifelong Alaskan who grew up in Fairbanks, who lived in Nome, in Kotzebue, in a community that doesn't exist anymore outside of Northway, and now in Chugiak.

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In over 28 years of working with over 800 families in which there were—in which a child had been molested, I learned a lot of lessons and I learned those lessons through experience through going through the journey with so many of these people, many of them for years, as well as from trainings and workshops and all those other things over the years, and that gave me the foundation or the basis to be the Chapter Coordinator of the Alaska Children's Alliance where we provide training and technical assistance and support for child advocacy centers—CACs—and communities wanting to develop child advocacy centers in the state. We have a brand new one that's not in your book, in Kotzebue, that has been functioning for about a year and Barrow is developing a child advocacy center. I also gave you a map—I know some of you are aware of the challenges of Alaska, but I also know that for some of you it's hard to really envision what that's like—so I gave you a map of Alaska superimposed across the United States so that you understand, you know, the geographic challenges.

I'm speaking from my heart and from the belief that every child, no matter where they live, no matter what their culture, no matter what their life experiences or what family they're born in, deserve to be safe and loved, and out of sorrow that that's not the case. I've seen that way too many times in my life. I've learned from elders that the Alaska Native culture values children and what happens to our Alaska Native children is not part of the culture, in spite of what some people in the white society have told me, multiple times. It's not my intent to be disrespectful in any way, and if I am, please forgive me.

The mission of the Alaska Children's Alliance is to promote a culturally appropriate multidisciplinary response to child maltreatment throughout Alaska, and although CACs are expected to strive to meet certain best practices, each CAC is designed by its own community to meet their specific needs. It's a very adaptable model and that's why it's now been adopted in Canada, Guam, Guatemala, Brazil, Israel, Turkey, Iceland, Peru and Portugal.

Additionally, our rural victims of childhood sexual abuse are particularly vulnerable to being victims of commercial sexual exploitation, as you heard earlier today. While we don't

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know the depth of this problem in Alaska, we do know that victims are lured into our larger communities, particularly and especially Anchorage, by friends and families from their villages who've been forced to recruit more kids. And the emerging national data suggests that children who have been placed in foster care are particularly vulnerable to this. So it's kind of daunting when you think that as of April of this year, 63 percent of our children in foster care in this state were Alaskan Native. That's really scary, and that is why the Child Advocacy Centers—not just in Alaska, but around the nation—are working with other organizations to figure out how we can provide child friendly, victim friendly services to victims of sexual exploitation.

You've heard about the ACES study, you've heard about historical trauma which—I know most of you know this, but—this is not something that happened a long time ago. When I was growing up in Fairbanks, I had very few Alaskan Native classmates. Why? They were in boarding school. This is not way back when, and if you really think that, don't say it to my face because I'm not ready to admit I'm that old.

Substance and alcohol abuse, suicide and violence—they're ways to deaden the pain and the shame and the memories. They're symptoms which cause the cycle of abuse to be repeated generation after generation. I've heard this from young people and in meetings. In a state where only a third of our communities are actually on a road system, it's just amazing how we so devalue investigating child abuse in rural Alaska. What happens is a child in some small community may have made an outcry and they...they send in someone who has no training to talk to the child in their very own house, oftentimes. I remember one time I started a child—the child advocacy center in Fairbanks, I was the founding manager—a person came and a child came, made a disclosure because she was feeling safe—oh, good, thank you—and I asked her, I knew that she'd been interviewed multiple times before—I asked her, "Why didn't you tell before?" She was 11 or 12. And she said, quote: "Grownups are so stupid. He was right there in the village and no one would have believed me." She finally was able to tell when she felt safe.

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Another specific challenge is the high, high turnover—we get so many people new to their disciplines here, new to the state, they have no experience in living in rural Alaska, much less Alaska in a lot of instances, and like many people fresh out of school, they have all the answers, and they end up, whether they mean to or not, looking and acting racist. And they wonder why peop—why they're not trusted. I don't trust them. And it's so disruptive, it's so disrespectful. I don't know what the answer is except grow our own service providers. It's been my—and when we do try and provide training—for example, in Bethel, of a couple of years ago, they provided a two day training on cultural issues in the YK district. They had, I believe it was 32 Yup'ik elders from 30 different villages come to provide this training to their team members, to people within the system. I was there. I'm not part of their team but I was there to provide some piece of the training. The only people that came were the troopers. Nobody else came from within the system. They were too busy. The troopers told me they got a lot of value out of being there. They were so glad that they had been invited. It's my experience that we are not too busy if it's a priority to us or to our supervisors. I would love to see those kinds of trainings become more of a priority and I know I'm running out of time...we have some great—one of the things that I've seen over and over and over again is that kids come, they disclose, they talk about what happened, and it's not safe for them to go back to their home village. They're ostracized. We need programs such as Pathway to Hope or the emerging Arctic Winds, Healing Winds leadership development to provide communities what they need to know how to respond in those kinds of situations.

I remember for a year I co-facilitated an offender's group while I was still in Fairbanks. What we found, heard from them was that it wasn't safe for them to go back because people would bring them children to babysit, and they knew that the children weren't safe with them. They knew, because they knew, you know, what their offense had been and what their arousal pattern had been, and so that it was heartbreaking to watch those Native men realize they couldn't go back to their community because it wasn't safe for them, either. And so those kinds of things, you know, we

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really need. I've got a list of recommendations, suggestions based on my experience state-wide that you have there and—

Joanne Shenandoah: Oh, thank you so much for your testimony—

Pam Karalunas: Thank you.

Joanne Shenandoah: We appreciate that, and we have your written testimony and we will look at your recommendations. Thank you so very much. Our second testimony will come from the President of Alaska Federal of Na—or, Federation of Nations, Julie Kitka.

Julie Kitka: Good afternoon.

Joanne Shenandoah: And could you speak right into the microphone? Thank you.

Julie Kitka: Yes. Can you hear me?

Joanne Shenandoah: Yes.

Julie Kitka: Okay. My name is Julie Kitka and I have the honor of serving as President of the Alaska Federation of Natives and I want to tell you how much I appreciate all your witnesses that have come before you yesterday and today on that, as a lot of wonderful people working, and like I said, so it's an honor to be sitting at the table with you and to be listening yesterday on some of the recommendations and ideas that came forward.

There's a few things I wanted to share with you. One is we have our annual convention in October every year, the third week in October, and I'd like you, to invite you to present your final report to our delegates at the convention and also invite you to host a hearing to get feedback on your final report if it's timely in your schedule and that. Also, like to invite you to come up—we're going to be having convention-wide workshops on justice issues on that, and we've already been in discussions with the Department of Justice on a number of different educational workshops that could take place, but we'd welcome your participation. It would be an honor for us to have you join us.

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On the—we have a couple of things that I wanted to raise, and many of them are one—I mean, the few that I’m going to raise—they really weren’t covered in the testimony yesterday or today that I heard and so keep in mind that I’m not a social worker, I’m not in that field on that, but been involved in Native public policy for a long time. One point I wanted to mention, which I hope you’ll notice...note in your report, is we really live in a culture that glorifies violence. Everything from, you know, the extreme fighting that goes on, the cage fighting, even in Anchorage, I know many of my young relatives on that love to go to the extreme fighting. It’s a big social event. Video games, television, movies, the celebrities; it really does surround us, so I think that it’s important to include that in there. It’s not just the Native community that has a lot of violence, we actually are living in a very glorified violence society at this point.

Couple things is, one, would like you to include in your report that the rule of law is critically important. It is a key protection for women and children in our society and it’s true in Alaska as it is in every country in the world, so the question—if the rule of law is centrally important to protect the rights of women and children, what laws and rules need to be in place and updated to be effective for women and children. Basically tribal laws, state laws, modernizing state laws, threshold—and I’ll give you an example on modernizing state laws. We had a issue in the state legislative session this year on raising the threshold, the dollar threshold for felony convictions on that, and that didn’t pass in the legislature and that’s something that’s we’re continuing—but there’s a whole host of state laws on the books that are no longer really relevant and current that really trips an awful lot of people into felony convictions, which in many other places would only be a misdemeanor, so the updating and modernizing the law.

Also in the rule of law, that really urge you to focus on structural frameworks within the Department of Justice that could be very helpful to us and a couple structural components is in BIA and Indian Health Service have what’s known as compacting, which many of you know that. There is no reason the Department of Justice can’t initiate a

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demonstration project on compacting its programs and move into that model. Use the example of BIA when Kawerak was in the second round of demonstration projects on compacting, the exact same amount of money that was put into the program by the time it got to the grassroots level was \$750,000.00 more money without even any more appropriations, so the Department of Justice really needs to take a look at compacting and try to move that forward. That will get you out of the whole thing, depending on year or three year grants and start/stop, you get into the compacting model, you're just going to make it smoother, you're going to get rid of some of those things and I really urge that that be brought into that and brought in a way...in a real leadership way, and I think Attorney General Eric Holder would be open to ideas on the structural things that they could do that would last beyond the current administration into the next ones, and that's really important.

Another one which I would urge them to take a look at is you heard testimony from the Alaska Tribal Health Consortium earlier and I just wanted to reiterate and probably you already know it, but they are an all Alaska tribal compact that associated that. It is less than 20 years old; that compact that created it. There's no reason you cannot address violence and children's issues with all tribal compact, all Alaska tribal compact. Use that mechanism of negotiations with all the tribes to bring them together and to lineup some resources behind that. Like I said, the Tribal Health Consortium compact is, we're really proud of that, we think it's really effective and we're able to prioritize and use resources but it's the thing of working together and having everybody learn and grow and be part of that thing that would be really helpful and add something more to what's going on in regard to the violence issues, in my judgment.

And then the last one on the structural one which really probably requires legislation, is federal liquor ordinances. We need to have the authority for our tribes to follow under federal liquor ordinances, and in particular in that...the jurisdiction on that, we need the ability to have search and seizure. We need to be able to stop bootlegging or importation of drugs into our areas by being able to have

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search and seizure to take planes, snow machines, boats, cars; whatever. And I think that that would prove to be a big deterrent. I mean if you were going to be bringing in drugs into a community and you know that the tribal council has the ability to take your boat or your small plane or whatever...it's just right now there's not a lot of threats and deterrents out there. And moving federal Indian control to our tribes, and then especially the search and seizure, I think would be really helpful.

The second major aspect other than the laws and the structural things is what I would call aspirational leadership. We really need to nurture more trainings and conversations among the leadership of people that care about the wellbeing of our people. You can just see the dedication of the social workers and the people involved in there and it just broke your heart when you heard about burnout of people and stuff. That is absolutely so real. And so there really needs to not be like additional social worker trainer, it really needs to be on aspirational leadership in this whole field where people get recognized for their leadership role in our state in providing for the wellbeing of our people. And it doesn't need to be, have to be a negative thing; it's burnout, that's why you're doing this stuff. It really is, it's recognizing and providing additional leadership training for those are on the front lines and that are doing outstanding work. Like I said, I think that could— aspirational leadership in my view, actually helps foster and creates movements, not just programs and not just projects on that, and it just builds solidarity between people that are working on things, so I'd urge you to include that.

And then the third area that I wanted to raise is economics. We live in the most powerful country in the world, it is a capitalist society and expanding economic growth is a core value in our country and a driver in our country and to ignore economics when we talk about violence in our communities, ignores, in my view, how our country operates. Really think that there needs to be economic recommendations in your report. It does matter whether or not our people are among the poorest in the country, it does matter whether or not there are jobs for our people or not jobs, and to recommend economic solutions such as innovation zones, tax free zones

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in which the additional job creations for our village is incentivized by our government will do as much good as social services programs after the fact of things. And I really think that that needs to be included.

And I also think kind of along the line of tax free zones or innovation zones is many of you have spent on the planes and you've seen the little notices that talk about, you know, the effects of alcohol if you're pregnant and things like that; that didn't just happen by itself. Senator John Binkley from the Bethel area came up with that idea and enacted it. You go around schools, you see drug free zones, whatever, and stuff; why not think in terms of certifications for violence free zones and award communities special recognition or incentive grants for communities that are 100 percent violence free and, you know, rather than reward people that have the worst statistics in the world and therefore they're piling on all these grants, you know, turn the incentives around and try to go forward on that.

I also think it's important that you include issues such as affordable energy and additional housing. If you can eliminate the overcrowding in our homes, you will take a stressor away from families. When you have overcrowding in homes it's just human nature that you're just going to have a lot more problems, and so put in that they need to fill that gap on housing and build additional housing so to eliminate that.

And affordable energy, over last couple years, you could read in the paper about people being choosing whether or not they're going to pay their heating bills or buy food. There needs to be affordable energy. The cost of living for families living in the villages need to be dropped down, so again, you're taking away the stressors. On food security, the Department of Justice has been an excellent partner with the Native community in helping us protecting our hunting and fishing rights, and they can do more in supporting on the Magnuson Stevens reauthorization on the fish issue. The Department of Justice needs to step in on the side of our native villages to ensure that they get the access to those fish and the regulatory process that's

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in place doesn't leave them on the beach watching everybody else fish and they have nothing, so...

There's also the intertribal fish commission that's being developed for the Yukon river from the Bethel area and the interior. Department of Justice has again, a part of, you know, supporting the community, supporting their goals, supporting their ability to support themselves, these type of things are...would be really helpful. There's the (Otna @ 1:46:05) co-management initiative again, it's supporting those villages to be able to feed their family, so the whole issue of food security.

Access to health care, I think that we can acknowledge that there's been tremendous strides in the last 20-plus years in access to healthcare with—I noted that it was really only 17, 18 years ago our brand new Anchorage hospital was dedicated and I had the honor of speaking at the dedication of that, and I think that among many Native leaders, what we're most proud of is the hospitals and the regional hospitals and the 100-plus health clinics that have been built, but now we need the staffing structures and the infrastructures for all these beautiful facilities to make sure we deal with the behavioral issues as well. I think that we made great strides in education, but we can always use more help on that, and support for caring teachers and—especially in curriculum and Department of Justice can assist the educational system in making sure that the curriculum is what needs to be done. And the Department of Justice, I know, has been following the class action litigations on rural schools—it's been going on for some time--but again, paying attention particularly to curriculum and...would be very helpful.

And then kind of my miscellaneous items on that—hearing the issue about trafficking, I'd urge you to take a look at...we have one or we might have two visa-free zones in the state and if there is an international component to this trafficking that's going on, I urge the Department of Justice take a look at the trade—the visa-free zone to see whether or not that needs to be temporarily closed or closed if there's that—there's a tie in there.

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I think that's it I wanted to share with you. We have lots of areas that we've been working on. This area of dealing with violence that affects our children is very, very important to us and we also recognize it's extremely difficult to deal with and we just pledge our support to, you know, anything we can do taking your report to get that out in front of policy makers or requesting congressional hearings on it. We're very supportive of the work you're doing and thanks for coming to Alaska.

Joanne Shenandoah:

Thank you so very much for your comments and I want to apologize to the other ones who will be giving testimony because as the president of AFN we realize that your comments are very important to us and we—this was the best time I—I—evidently, so we wanted to give you a little extra time. Thank you for your testimony.

Next we are going to talk to David—or listen—from David Smith from Anchorage.

David Smith:

My name is David Smith. I am 83 years old. I am a retired city manager in rural Alaska. I've spent 30 years working in eight to nine villages. I have a Yup'ik name, it's called [speaking NATIVE LANGUAGE @ 1:49:26_1008] means stranger with a tall hat, and what we're going to talk about is what is known as [speaking NATIVE LANGUAGE @ 1:49:37_1008] list. [speaking NATIVE LANGUAGE @ 1:49:39_1008] list contains 56 Yup'ik teenagers raped in my jail 25 years ago. And we can't seem to get anybody interested in that.

In rural Alaska we have about 200 small communities, all rural, all Native in nature, and they have either a sleep off or an adult jail where people that are found drinking on the street are normally placed and since about 1985, young people picked up under what we call Title 47 are put there for their safety and sent home the following morning.

Back in 1991 in one of these villages, eight young girls came to me—I call them girls because they're the same age as my daughters—and they wanted to talk about rape in my jail. We had already talked about rape of teenage women and girls by stepfathers, so I was aware that there was a problem

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in the village, but I just let it pass. As a result of the discussion with these young teenagers—I still call them my girls 30 years ago—I filed case number 9116875. As a result of that case the Alaska troopers investigated and talked to 20 women, teenagers. Eight of those women wanted to talk about their many friends and family who had been raped in the jail. Three of them said that they were raped at the age of 14, 15, 16, and they were too afraid to tell anybody. That report was filed away and collected dust.

I am a university student now, I'm in my 14th or 15th year of graduate school—professional student, I guess—and I wrote a report on sexual abuse and looked up that case, which I had never examined before. And I wrote about a 20 page article on that. I keep updating it and I am in touch with these girls and after many, many discussions, you can see the trauma, the unusual experiences in their life, they have nightmares, but they have no place to go. They're still afraid to speak out and they're still being threatened with banishment if they discuss this with an outsider. I'm an outsider. It's difficult for me to complain about what looks to me like a cultural experience. Most of these girls were sent to the sleep off by their mother for punishment. I have 20 page detail, I'm going to advance that to you. I did forward this list to the Department of Justice in Washington about three months ago and they said they were interested. I think they're not so much interested in the rape as they are in the fact that it appears we have documented that the state of Alaska buried this to protect their own interest.

So I will be forwarding that to you, but I do think we have to look at the conditions in rural Alaska. There isn't enough police force to satisfy the needs. We have primitive facilities where people that are drinking can be housed. I think the state of Alaska is very concerned that teenagers are being placed in what they call adult jails. This is an issue you should be looking at. Most of these communities have facilities, whether they call them a sleep off or a jail—either way, it's probably illegal, but we do it anyways—so I thank you—I didn't hear about this meeting until 12:00, so I wasn't really prepared, but it does bother me that I'm an outsider here complaining about what may be an acceptable cultural

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practice in some villages. It's my personal experience that the sexual abuse in rural Alaska is far greater than the newspapers want to discuss, and they make us, I think, the worst in the country. But we have a real problem here and it's my personal opinion the state of Alaska doesn't want to talk about it. Thank you.

Joanne Shenandoah: Thank you very much, Mr. Smith, for your conscious efforts in what you're doing, and we will read your report or your paper that you put together. I also want to thank you for being a voice for those who do not have one. Thank you very much for sharing with us today. Next we have testimony from Lauree Morton, Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in Juneau.

Lauree Morton: Good afternoon, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you this evening. Thank you for your willingness for the past two days to hear the stories, the sadness, the horror, and the hope for what we want to do as we move forward. My name is Lauree Morton, I'm the Executive Director of the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. I came to this work knowing that sexual assault was not a respecter of persons. When I moved to Bethel in 1989, I began learning about historical trauma, not only as sexual assault and domestic violence, not a respecter of persons. It sometimes takes forms that take generations to move through and no fault of the person's own.

I'd like to talk a little bit about statistics. In addition to the Emmonak Women's Shelter that you were able to visit this week, there are 20 shelters and rape crisis centers across the state that we fund. There are 200 women and men who day in and day out work to provide safety and a place where people can flee the crimes that are being perpetrated against them. In the last year there were 3,000 people who volunteered over 73,000 hours of service in those facilities. There were 9,330 people who sought services there. We only have 418 beds for the entire state. With those beds in the last year we provided 99,500 shelter nights. Sixty four percent of the participants that came for services identified themselves as non-Native, 36 percent as Alaska Native. Twenty eight percent of those people were children, and if you look at the children just seeking shelter services with

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their non-offending parent, that percentage raises up to 44 percent of the total who came.

Services for children and shelters need strengthening. Only one of our programs has a full complement of children's services, from childcare to a child psychologist on staff. Many programs only have limited childcare, and there are a few programs that have groups for children. For the first time beginning this July, the legislature has appropriated funds to initiate programs specifically for children in shelters, but it's not enough. I believe you've heard testimony that over 60 percent of the cases through the Office of Children's Services also involve adult domestic violence. One of the projects that we are undertaking to be able to work with OCS with Tribal Family Services and with advocates is a program called SAFT, Safe Alaska Family Teams, which focuses on ways that those systems' advocates and workers can together find ways that will help families be safe.

We also administer the state (FVPSA @ 1:59) program and while I understand that's in Health and Human Services, not the Department of Justice, it is something that comes into the state that helps us respond to domestic violence. There are also 43 tribal entities that receive FVPSA funding and in the last year we met with 11 of them and began working on ways to coordinate those services.

Before I move on to prevention efforts, I'd like to echo the concern stated earlier in the hearing about sustained funding for tribes from the federal government without having to rely on a grant process. The tribal entities I mentioned receiving the FVPSA dollars as well as those that receive STOP and SASP funds have to apply for those on a yearly basis. That funding can be changed, it's hardly ever raised; it's almost always lowered and it restricts the efforts that we're able to incorporate in being able to provide the safety net.

I'd also like to suggest that you would examine the formula grants that are given to states and not use that as an example for how you're going to work with tribes, because in the formula grants that use population as a base, Alaska is always going to be left behind. The formula doesn't take into

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account the rates of these crimes in our state or the geographic isolation which compounds the difficulty in providing appropriate responses. Through the 2010 statewide Alaska Victimization Survey, we know that 58 out of every 100 Alaska women have suffered intimate partner violence, sexual violence or both in their lifetime. Using the current formula, the state receives less than \$3.5 million federal dollars to address those crimes against Native and non-Native alike.

Until every child is safe, our work isn't done and crisis intervention isn't enough. Through the governor's Choose Respect Initiative and federal programs such as DELTA and Rape Prevention, primary prevention dollars are being made available and youth from around the state are engaging in the process of promoting peace. Through community focus groups with youth, parents, and general community partners, we support local efforts to address domestic violence and sexual assault. I probably am running out of time but I'd like to mention a couple of them. Lead On is a annual youth leadership conference providing space for youth to strengthen their leadership skills in promoting non-violence in relationships and equality in communities. Last year's conference participants included youth from Angoon, Atmautluak, Chicout, Chevak, Good News Bay, Kake, Kotlik, Napaskiak and St. Paul Island. Through Lead On, youth focus groups and efforts lead to the creation of a media campaign that's for youth, by youth, called Stand Up, Speak Up Alaska. Now I encourage you to go to their websites, standupspeakupalaska.org and look at the materials that they have created for their selves and for their peers, look at the public service announcements that they've created. You may be familiar with a media campaign called When I Am An Elder, which was developed through the Teens Acting Against Violence in Bethel. In 2001, they created a poem called, "When I Am An Elder" that talked about a day when they would be elders and what they wanted their world to look like without violence. So they're very inspirational, they show you that the youth even as young as five and six years old want to have a better world than the world they're in now.

I'd also like to let you know that we support local villages in their communal efforts to prevent domestic violence and

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sexual assault. This is the second year that we've provided a prevention summit for community prevention teams to allow them to join together in developing and strengthening their own prevention plans, hearing from each other about what is working and learning about new and different strategies to try. After the summit we provide technical assistance to the communities and for FY 2015, the state legislature has appropriated approximately one million dollars to assist local communities in their prevention efforts. Some of these communities include the villages of Allakaket, Emmonak, Heidelberg, Klawock, Nulato and Old Harbor. The council funds small grants to young people to work on projects in their home communities to strengthen their peace efforts. They know how to reach each other and support at the federal and state level can help them achieve their goals. I would ask you to examine the amount of federal dollars that are available for prevention efforts, both for tribes and states, because you will find they are few and far between, and once again, the difficulty in sustaining projects that are funded through competitive grants awards usually don't allow time for strategies to take root.

Finally, I'd like to say children exposed to violence endure unimaginable emotional and physical violence. If we can provide them safety, a place to share their stories, a place to learn that violence is not their fault and provide support as they seek ways to end the violence, they can change our world for the better. They need our help to make it happen.

Joanne Shenandoah:

Thank you very much, Miss Morton, for your testimony and also for you and the volunteers who help to create a safe space for all those who are in need. Thank you very much. Next we're going to hear from Linda Sharp from Anchorage. Linda, you may begin.

Linda Sharp:

Thank you, my name is Linda Sharp and I am speaking on behalf of myself. I'm a retired public school teacher and principal. I came here from North Dakota when I was halfway through college and the Alaskan Native Claims Settlement Act had just been passed. I funded most of the rest of my college education by taking temporary jobs for AFN, RurAL CAP and tribal and other Native corporations that were getting started at that time. And since then I've

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taken a lot of interest in issues such as what is being discussed here today. I have some suggestions for everybody based on 40 years.

One is to stop blaming others. That's a really big one. Until you stop blaming others you're still going to be the victim and a victim can't help themselves. Number two is I don't believe that more money is the solution. I think a reallocation of existing funds and resources is well within what could be expected and could be successful. Alaska has the highest fetal alcohol and fetal alcohol FAS and FAE in the world and Alaskan Natives are higher than the rest of the Alaska population. The rate of Alaska Native children coming to school who can't learn as easily as other children is higher in my observation, because of what happened at home the night before or that morning. I would like to see more Alaska Native leaders at summits like this listening to what other people have to say, especially those in the Native corporations that are for profit. Many of those people are earning very good money and could be better advocates for these children, for the protection of the children at places like the AFN conference and other places, they could help to assure that children and women will not be retaliated against when they speak out about these problems. The retaliation against children and vulnerable people for speaking out is one of the biggest hindrances in getting the facts on the table and getting the help in a timely way.

The free health care that's available cradle to grave is unmatched here in this country. The opportunities for funded public education for Native peoples is unmatched for non-Native peoples in this country. I don't want anything that I say to reflect on any other group that I might be participating with or any people that I've worked with or children or families that I may have had as a teacher or as principal. It really is over 40 years in many different walks of life here in Alaska. At a different summit today I heard that US health care is costing 18 percent of GDP and that's nationwide, on the average, and that Alaska's health care is costing 21 percent of GDP, and I believe that the Alaska Native health care is costing even higher. The average health care worldwide is costing about eight and a half

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percent. I just returned from Norway; those people are funding their health care and their retirement at less than 8 percent of their wages, and it is funded through that.

So again, I would just like to summarize that I urge everybody involved to stop blaming others. We can all come up with stories of somebody who did it to us, but that won't solve any problem that's going on. It's only when adults say we can do this without blaming anybody else, that the victimization will go away. Thank you very kindly.

Joanne Shenandoah: Thank you very much, Miss Sharp, for your testimony. We understand the importance of education and teachers and how much effect they have on us, so thank you for your words. Okay, next we're going to hear from Mr. Tony Kaliss from Anchorage.

Tony Kaliss: Yes, my name is Tony Kaliss, I'm 72. Want to add five points by adding my voice to those you have heard, speaking to the need to strengthen tribal sovereignty here in Alaska. I might mention we—my wife and I recently re—made our southern retirement to Anchorage from Barrow and I do want to thank you folks, all of you, for coming up here to Alaska for all the work you're doing nationwide. Particularly good to hear that you've been out to the villages. I think that's...you just cannot understand without having seen that. Also want to thank you for your stamina in sitting through all of this and God knows how much else in terms of hours you folks have been putting in. And to the commissioner who made the point about colonial stress induced disorder; that really ought to get its code in the disease code, diagnosis code, and definitely be included, absolutely.

In terms of sovereignty, that can get awfully tangled up in legalities and very often the state of Alaska has done just that. That's my first point. There are plenty of legalities concerning sovereignty, Native sovereignty in the US; I know I've sometimes joked across the years—and I should mention I've been involved 48 years now in issues between Native and non-Native communities going back to my home state of Maine when I worked for the Department of Indian Affairs, the State Department of Indian Affairs—in 1966. I

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think I can probably safely say—boy, somebody jacked the volume on that—I didn't do that—I can probably safely say that there's more law per square Indian than there is for any other ethnic or racial group in this country; however, the reality, the real practical effect of sovereignty is that it is a tool for local control. That is really what's important about it. That is the bottom line. To bring that local control to the Native communities in Alaska in a way that non-Native individuals, organizations, whatever, governments cannot do and have done actually, of course, such a miserable job of it over the years. So the bottom line is that it is practical. I think that's one point.

Second point is that sovereignty has an advantage in that it applies to all the areas of concern in the Native communities. It speaks not only to what you've been listening to here, but to all the elements, and of course, everything is in fact, connected when you're talking about the Native communities. There we're talking about disconnection, not connection, and that's still a third point here that not only is it practical, it's connected to the spiritual, it's connected to everything. In the years that I've been involved, if I wanted to sum them up, I'd say what I've seen Native communities do is to try to maintain the connections that exist and to mend the commun—the connections that have been broken, strained, broken...strained or broken. And of course in that straining and breaking, there's been a tremendous cost. But every program I can think of from land claims to road building to spirit camps all has to do with connection, and so much of what we've been discussing today has to do with disconnection. Sovereignty is that local tool to deal with that effectively.

In that regard, the state of Alaska needs to stop this constant knee-jerk attack on sovereignty. The Indian Law and Order Commission has spoken to that, the Rural Law and Order Commission in the state here has spoken to that, I will speak to it. I have seen the useful effects of tribal government in many, many places I've worked. It is necessary here. The state needs to stop this because this in effect becomes an attack on Native communities. That's really what it is. So it's a way of disrupting Native communities as they try to pull themselves together. Enough already. I think that this really

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cannot be stated too strongly, it's an ideas whose time has come here in this state. It is enough already. The state needs to stop.

At the same time I want to stress that below the governor's level there is much cooperation with the tribes and with the native communities and it's increasing. There is very good relations with magistrates, with the judges, in many cases with troopers, in many cases with state departments, Department of Health and Human Services, the state OCS, the Office of Child Services. There are many people who are willing to cooperate and if the state at the governor's level would just give the go ahead, there is so much that could be done. I can't tell you how much time, effort and money has gone in from various governor's offices—millions of dollars, literally—in legal fees. That time and money and creativity could be much better spent in working with the tribes and if there is a concern on the issue of sovereignty, let it be worked out in a positive way. It would be so much better on every front.

Lastly, my fifth point, I think we need to, in talking about this and understanding these issues and perhaps if I can suggest it in your presentation of how you present these issues, we should never forget the strength of Native communities. That should never be forgotten. It is necessary in the testimony you've had to be dealing with some tremendous disconnections, and too often—while that was necessary—too often, outside observers focus on this. Too often it's the same outsiders observers who caused the problem in the first place and now say, "Oh, look, isn't it terrible to be an Indian or to grow up in such a discombobulated community." Well, nonsense. These communities—these over 200 Native communities in Alaska—think about what a sign of strength this is—that these communities are still here in the 21st century. Think of the creativity that went into it, without outside experts in economic development. These communities are still here and functioning.

Another point that relates to that is that we talk often again—and it was necessary to do so—that they are isolated in regard to services. These communities are not isolated in terms of themselves; they are right where they need to be.

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They are right in the middle of everything, at least talking about folks who haven't been forcibly relocated. Where they are is where they belong. That's their place. In that place is—are the connections. Those connections are deep, they are practical, they spiritual, they have a history that goes far, far back. They are the base for building these connections. They really are. So I say in presenting this material to other people, particularly to non-Natives, particularly to folks at a distance, need to emphasize that strength that is there, the folks wouldn't be there if weren't for that strength. Again, in saying that I am in no way diminishing the difficulties. After 48 years I could make as good list as difficulties as anybody, but I can also make a darn good list of strengths. So I think I will stop with that and if there's any questions, they're welcome.

Joanne Shenandoah: Thank you, Mr. Kaliss, for your perspective and your service as a catalyst to Native and non-Native people, also recognizing that our land is sacred to us, how much we are connected to it. I hear that in your voice and also in your words. Thank you. We're going to now turn to Becky Judd. You may begin.

Becky Judd: Thanks. I'm on, great. Thank you so much for this opportunity. I came today to just listen, and I was really very moved by what I heard today and I was encouraged by a few people to say, you know, maybe you should let the committee hear about some things. So I thought, oh, okay, I'll try to prepare something. I've never done this before.

In any case, my name is Becky Judd. I'm working with the Rural Community Action Program. The Community Action Program is one of many that's around the country right now to address poverty and in Alaska it's known for its work with Head Starts, with housing, weatherization, community development, AmeriCorps, Vista members. Their presence is in hundreds of communities around Alaska.

I wanted to let you know about a really unique opportunity, I think, for Alaska and something that's happened for us at RurAL CAP, and that is we received funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention—okay? Wanted to make sure he was here... [CHUCKLES] to

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establish an Alaskan training and technical assistance center, specifically for tribes, with the purpose of Alaskan Native youth success. Now, the funding you heard was right—the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention—but when we did the due diligence of listening to people on what they wanted and what was important and what was needed, it was beyond delinquency prevention. It was looking at what is it the communities need to be whole and strong, and families as well. And what we need to have training and support for. So we did our surveys, we had our stakeholder meetings and I wanted to share with you sort of their four areas that they said you must focus on in this training and technical assistance center.

So the first was—as you can see, I got quite passionate about—was around family healing and community development. The second was on education and youth development. The third is early intervention and diversion programs, and the fourth is in reentry. There is no way that RurAL CAP can do this alone, even though it's a large agency and it's out there. It only does this through partnerships and collaborations with lots of organizations around Alaska. It has on its steering committee the Alaskan Native Justice Center, First Alaskans, I always say ANTHC, the Alaskan Native Tribal Health Consortium, and the Division of Juvenile Justice and elder and youth and some other people.

What I wanted you to know and I thought was so interesting—I came today and really wanted to hear about the promising approaches because that's what we do with our resource center, is our purpose is to let people know, let rural communities know what's going on—and this is what they said—what's working in Alaska? What's working in villages like mine? We need to know that. And so I come to listen always, what's working and in that process to focus especially on what's happening with communities. We asked somebody, we hired somebody to go ahead and do a scan of what are the community healing processes or the community healing programs for Alaskan Native people and their communities? What are those programs, the home grown ones, not the ones from the Lower 48. And so to my delight, many of them we heard today. So you heard Diane

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and you heard Elsie talk, you also—the Wellness Warriors. Pam referenced two of them from Yup'ik country. There are two out there—there's actually a third one that was developed by the Center for Native Research up in University of Fairbanks, and it is a very, very powerful model as well.

And so what I wanted to let you know is that—so we paid somebody to go ahead and do this, do the interviews, do the research, summarize it and get it all on one page or two, so that it would be useful to other communities so they would know what was out there and available to them. And I thought, ooh, you might be interested in this, right? So it was fun to get to hear some people talk about it with a real passion because I wasn't the one that did the interviews. So I have this and I will submit this to you. Behind each one, of course, is the interview itself, and to honor the integrity of truly, of people's words, it was not edited, it was...the information was taken and then given back to them—I'm looking at Diane—and then given back to us and so that's what we will have and we can share with you. So thank you for this opportunity to let you know about that and also to let you know that this resource center, it's for Alaskans. It is our own homegrown TA center, it is for all of us and it is really driven by Alaskan Native people. It's for them. I'm just a servant of this work. And so thank you for this opportunity.

Joanne Shenandoah:

Thank you very much, Ms. Judd, for your work and for this exciting news to the task force. I'd like to ask the task force if you have any questions for our...no? Anyone? Okay. Thank you very much for submitting testimony.

[APPLAUSE]

There are a few things I'd like to share with you all before we leave the room. The written testimony from the hearing will be available online at Defending Childhood website, usdoj.gov/defendingchildhood and that will happen later next week and transcripts from this hearing available online in a few weeks...this is from the Tribal Law and Policy Institute. As well, I'd like to remind you all Tribal Law and Policy Institute will be having a—did you need something?

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Valerie Davidson: When you're done.

Joanne Shenandoah: Oh.

Valerie Davidson: Go ahead. When you're done.

Joanne Shenandoah: Yeah. Will be having a conference the 14th, the National Indian Nations Conference, Justice for Victims of Crime on December 11 through 13, 2014, and this will be in Palm—Coachella Valley?—Coachella Valley—in Agua Caliente, so this conference is very important and it's a national conference, which will provide opportunities for tribal, state, and federal participants to share knowledge, experiences and ideas for developing and improving strategies and programs that serve the unique needs of crime victims in Indian country. For information on this I want you to go to www.ovcinc.org and we hope to see you there December 11th through the 13th. In addition, on behalf of the advisory committee, I would like to say thank you for our witnesses and our audience, all those who took their time to be at this hearing, because there's nothing more important than the health and safety of our children. We are committed and passionate to improving the lives of our children. So with that, I know that Valerie has a few words as well, so Valerie Davidson.

Valerie Davidson: *Thank you, and with your indulgence, I wasn't planning to do this, but as an Alaskan Native person I think sometimes there are perceptions about our community that are...that continue to persist and I think that when we have a perception that is not based on fact, I think it's really important, since it is a part of the federal record, that those inaccuracies be corrected, and so I wanted to address two of them.*

One is the perception in Alaska and certainly elsewhere in the country that Indian people, Alaskan Native and American people have access to free health care from cradle to grave, and that's not actually true. The health care that we receive is actually pre-paid health care and it was...we had a promise from our forefathers and our foremothers based upon treaty and special relationship with the federal government in exchange for peace and exchange for land, that we would be promised for time immemorial for the

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people who are alive at the time and people who came after, for time immemorial, for pre-paid health care. And so it is not free. There were a lot of lives lost, there was a lot of land lost, including the land that we are meeting on today, that was the price for that health care. It was not free. And even according to the federal government's own independent evaluation of what it costs to provide health care—by the federal government's own indication, here in Alaska—the tribally operated health care programs that are providing health care are only funded at 50 percent of the level of needed funding. Fifty percent. So if it costs \$1,000.00 to provide care to someone, we receive \$500.00 of that funding. And so I just want to correct for the record this notion of free health care. It is not free, it is certainly not fully funded.

The other is—another perception, and I think—the other perception is that we also have free post-secondary education, and oh, how I wish that were true, certainly with children who I expect to go to college, because that's a family expectation. I was born in Bethel, raised in Aniak, but when I graduated from high school I graduated from Eielson Air Force base in—outside of—in the Fairbanks North Star school district at the time that the dropout rate among Alaskan Native kids was 60 percent. So only 40 percent of us made it. I was ready to graduate because I had finished all of my requirements at the end of my junior year and they wanted me to graduate early and I said, "No, I'm not emotionally ready to leave my family to go to college, I'm not ready to leave the house." And so they arranged for me to take advanced placement classes including history and calculus as a senior, and the other half of the day I spent at a vocational center learning child care.

So I graduated from high school with a 4.2 grade point average. And it depends on the region that you were from whether you have access to scholarship information, and I'm a person who graduated from high school with a 4.2 grade point average and I graduated—by the time I was done with college—\$76,000.00 in student loan debt. So I think to the extent that we...as an Alaskan Native person, when we encounter that kind of perception, I think we need to make

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sure that we clarify it for the record, because otherwise we set expectations for our families and our children and for people who are dealing with Indian people, that are simply not based on fact, and as those perceptions happen it's our responsibility to correct the record where it exists. And so I wasn't planning to speak today but I appreciate the...you indulging me and allowing me to do that, so thank you.

Joanne Shenandoah:

Thank you, Valerie, for your words and your heartfelt dedication to your people. That's very noble. And I also want to thank each and every one of the advisory committee for their dedication, because these people have put a lot of effort into thinking things through, along also with the DOJ and with the Tribal Law and Policy Institute for their hard work in putting all this together.

In closing I just want to say that in our traditional way, I'd like to honor you with a little song that is a song because it's important, I think, to leave everyone with a good thought and a good mind as we lift our hearts and souls. Since we've heard a lot of seeds planted, very good seeds today, this has been a very enlightening and terrific hearing, and we—I have a seed song that I want to sing for you. And so with that, this is in our Iroquois way; I hope you enjoy.

[SINGS SONG]

May all those seeds continue to grow, and may we have a blessed life, and I want to thank you all again and this will be the time now where we'll formally adjourn the fourth and final public hearing of the Advisory Committee of the Attorney General's Task Force on American Indian, Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence. Safe travels, everyone and in our language, we say, [speaking NATIVE LANGUAGE @ 2:33:29_1008], because we don't say goodbye, we say, "Until we meet again." [Speaking NATIVE LANGUAGE @ 2:33:33_1008]

[END FILE]