SENATOR DORGAN: If I can have your attention, we want to begin the afternoon session today, and I'll ask Joanne if she'll introduce the next panel.

JOANNE SHENANDOAH: Good afternoon, and thank you for this morning and the expert witnesses that came forward.

Now I'd like to introduce to you Michelle Rivard Parks. Ms. Parks is a licensed attorney in the State of Illinois and in the U.S. District Court for the State of North Dakota and is an appointed member of the North Dakota Supreme Court State and Tribal Court Committee. In January 2011, Mrs. Parks was appointed by the
U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder to serve on the
U.S. Department of Justice Violence Against Women
Federal and Tribal Prosecution Task Force. She
served as the Chief Prosecutor for the Spirit
Lake Nation for approximately four years and
served the tribe as Tribal Attorney until the
fall of 2012. Thank you for sharing with us
today, Ms. Parks.

MICHELLE RIVARD-PARKS: Thank
you. Good afternoon committee members, my name
is Michelle Rivard Parks. By way of background,
I am a former tribal prosecutor, tribal attorney,
also a special tribal judge with the Turtle
Mountain Band of Chippewa located here in North
Dakota. I'm also an Adjunct Professor of law at
the University of North Dakota School of Law
where I teach classes in tribal economic
development, Indian law as well as Tribal Law.

I am currently the Associate Director
of the Tribal Judicial Institute which is a
training and technical assistance provider. We
provide training and technical assistance,
predominantly on tribal court development, in the
lower 48 as well as Alaska.

It is an honor to be present before
you today to discuss what is possibly one of the
greatest challenges currently facing tribal and
justice system officials, American Indian
children exposed to violence.

How do we reconcile the notion that
American Indian and Alaska Native children are
considered sacred in their communities with the
factual data that is indicating high rates of
exposure to violence? To understand the answer
to this question, we must gain an understanding
of historical trauma and we must acknowledge that
American Indian families were systemically
attacked for generations in an effort to achieve
federal goals of assimilating tribes.

American Indian and Alaska Native
children who have been exposed to violence suffer
from depression, guilt, anger, fear, loss of
faith, and many physical injuries and disorders.
These children grow into adults and without
proper intervention to promote their healing, we
often see these very same individuals, once
viewed as victims, criminalized for their
behaviors.

The aftermath of attempts to
assimilate American and Alaska Natives remains

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ever present in modern societies and is visible in higher than average rates of suicide, addiction, and in some cases, family violence. This reality must be widely acknowledged and accepted if we are going to develop and implement programs and services that are meaningful and that make a difference in the lives of American Indian and Alaska Native children.

Further, to address the exposure of violence that is experienced by Native American and Alaska Native children, we must consider the how, the who, and the what. We must look at each jurisdiction and just exactly how American Indian and Alaska Native children are being or have been exposed to violence. Are they experiencing this violence as a result of domestic violence that's occurring within their households at the hands of sexual perpetrators? Are they experiencing violence associated with alcohol and substance abuse, drug trafficking? Is it the gang activity within the tribal communities? Or is it other violent crime that is occurring?

And I think when we look at the how, the answer may vary a little bit from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, from tribe to
It's been our experience across the country and in the work that we've been doing that there are varying levels of crimes within different communities. For example, some of the southern most tribes have recorded high rates of gang activity. And so, a lot of the exposure to violence to the children in those communities are encountering is really at the hands of the gang activity.

For a lot of the tribes that we work with in this particular region, we are seeing very high rates of domestic violence, high rates of sexual abuse against children, and other types of violent crime that they are encountering within their communities.

I think we also have to look at the "who." And by the who, I don't mean who is perpetrating the crime. I mean who is responsible for addressing the crimes. And in doing so, we need to look at the federal responses that are in place, the tribal responses that are in place and the state responses that are in place.

And finally, we must ask ourselves...
"what." What is working and what is not working within each of those response systems. And I listened a little bit this morning to Chairman McDonald's comments and one of the words that he used was "multifaceted." And I think that blends well into my portion of the discussion in that it is a multifaceted issue.

There is no one single answer to the problem and simply pumping resources in terms of money into the issue, is not going to address everything that is necessary to be done in this regard.

For my part, I was asked to speak today based on my experience as a former tribal prosecutor and also based as a national training and technical assistance provider. More specifically, I was asked to focus my comments on the importance and effectiveness of multidisciplinary approaches to these issues.

Multidisciplinary approaches to problem solving really emerged in the 1950s. And, what they do is bring justice system professionals, whether that be first responders or service providers, together to share resources, to improve collaboration and
communication and there is no one size or one
means of accomplishing a multidisciplinary
approach. It can be adapted and modified to meet
the needs of any respected community.

There are legislatively mandated MDTs
set forth in the Indian Child Protection and
Family Violence Prevention Act. These particular
multidisciplinary teams are really more of a
federal mandate geared towards prosecution. And
although this mandate does exist, over the years
we have seen varying degrees of implementation of
those MDTs.

When I was prosecuting, I didn't
recall -- I don't recall seeing a whole lot of
the MDT process. Although, it's my understanding
that here in North Dakota through the current
U.S. Attorney Tim Purdon, the MDT process has
been revived, if you will, for many of the tribal
communities. And I think they've been seeing
some success in terms of how that's helped them
to collaborate and to preserve evidence and to
more effectively prosecute cases in the federal
system. But that doesn't take into account the
needs that are at the grassroots level and within
the tribal communities as well.
So, why are the multidisciplinary approaches important? Well, they are important because they help to prevent cases from falling through the cracks. Very often we hear things such as, well I thought law enforcement was doing this or was addressing the issue or I thought Child Welfare or Child Protection was responding to this case or I thought that the prosecutor was doing something. And if those individuals are not communicating with one another, the cases tend to fall through the cracks. And that is where further victimization occurs, and it's the victimization that occurs at the end of the system.

It also helps to provide a means for the prosecution strategy moving forward. As I stated earlier, we have multiple jurisdictions with responsibilities in these cases: Federal, state, and tribal. And there are instances where it may be important for the federal and tribal prosecutors to be dialoging to make sure that they are talking about how a case should proceed. Should it proceed in a criminal prosecution in federal court? In tribal court? Or perhaps in both? And that dialogue is an important part to
make sure that we have accountability and that we are making sure we're not further victimizing the victims through the process.

It also helps to preserve the necessary evidence when we're moving forward in cases. Because when we're looking at criminal courts, it is not enough just to have a statement of an individual saying this happened to me. We wish it was enough, but when we're dealing in a court of law, we deal in evidence and we need something tangible to bring before the Court.

And so bringing law enforcement professionals to the table with prosecutors can really help through the investigative process and can help us, as tribal prosecutors, to make sure that we have what we need when we get into the court to get the outcome that we're seeking.

When we are looking to implement multidisciplinary practices in a tribal context for purposes of prosecuting cases in tribal court or perhaps to adjudicate the cases in child deprivation, which may occur through a juvenile or civil court, tribes are really in terms of preparedness going to need to look at several
things within their own community in terms of infrastructure such as drafting or amending existing codes or ordinances, drafting or amending cooperative efforts or cooperative agreements.

And, you know, we can look at cooperative agreement and we'll say, well, that just may be between providers within the tribe, maybe it's a BIA law enforcement agency, tribal prosecutor, victim advocacy program, et cetera. But what we'll find as we really look at having a multifaceted approach is we are probably going to need multiple memorandums of agreement. And often times, those agreements are going to require signatories from different jurisdictions. And so, the tribe really needs support in navigating through those waters.

And I think it's also important that we have education on the multidisciplinary process. And, you know, a lot of -- one of the common terms that a lot of people hear is Child Protection Teams or CPT.

And when I was a tribal prosecutor, I had the opportunity to participate in a Child Protection Team and the one thing about the Child
Protection Team as a multidisciplinary approach, is that there are emphasis and focuses really on child welfare on safety for the victim, family reunification efforts, et cetera. It's not a criminally focused team typically.

Whereas the MDT which is a different type of multidisciplinary approach really has that prosecution focus.

And of course in many tribal communities, you may have a smaller community so you may have a lot of the same people at the table. But when we were at the table, there needs to be support to provide process to what happens when we are gathering grassroots. That can happen in terms of providing procedures, protocols as to how those meetings will take place to make sure that we are really being effective in those meetings and that we are not simply gathering to talk about the issue but rather that we are also strategizing about solutions for the family and accountability for the offender.

So, the multidisciplinary process is one that I think is important to support moving forward as we're addressing children exposed to
violence. It's something that we need to support
not only at the federal level but we really need
to bring this approach or emphasize this approach
at the tribal level, and it needs to be a
grassroots effort.

So, the question then becomes what
can the -- what role should the federal
government have to play if we're really saying
that we need something to happen at the
grassroots and tribal level? And really it comes
in the form of support, and support can happen in
any number of ways. It can happen through
support for training and technical assistance
that can be brought to the tribal communities if
they need it or are requesting it; it can be
brought through the development of resources,
checklists, co-development guides, some of those
protocol and procedures for MDTs that I talked
about. Those can be circulated and developed;
community education on the MDT process and on
children exposed to violence; and then also
supporting those grassroots or community-based
efforts to plan, implement, and enhance existing
tribal programs.

And I think earlier today, you heard

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from a tribal program that is very culturally
based at the Spirit Lake Tribe as Darla Thiele I
believe was here today. And I had an opportunity
to view that program. It's very culturally
rooted, and she seen some really -- done some
really great work with youth in the community
through that program. And those are the types of
programs that we really need ongoing support for.

And I just want to end my comments
today with also adding the importance of tribal
courts. Tribal courts really are important in
terms of the enforcement component. You know,
it's one thing to have legislation in place that
will mandate that things be done such as MDTs.
But where do we go and what do we do if the
people responsible aren't fulfilling that
legislative mandate? How do we ensure that
happens? And tribal courts are really effective
in providing the checks and balances in terms of,
organizing service providers. But more
importantly, in terms of case management, making
sure that those child welfare workers or tribal
attorneys who are bringing the cases before the
court have the things in place that need to be in
place, that they are following the tribal law as

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well as federal law and that they are working with the families in a culturally appropriate way.

To that end, I would just point out that we have about 566 federally recognized tribes in this nation, and we have a little more than 300 tribal courts. And, we need those numbers to be the same. We need tribal courts in every single community. Not necessarily an adversarial court but some sort of a forum that is available to the community members that they can go to seek the help that their families and their children require.

So, I would like to end my comments by thanking you for starting this dialogue, for looking into these issues, and for trying to develop some resources and support for tribal communities who I know are working hard to try to do what they can to safeguard their most sacred resource, which is their children. Thank you.

JOANNE SHENANDOAH: Thank you, Ms. Parks, for your testimony. Next, we have Leila Kawar Goldsmith. Leila is a Child Advocacy Coordinator with the Tulalip Tribes in Washington. She was born in Saudi Arabia and
raised in Amman, Jordan, in a bilingual and
bicultral home. Leila taught in pubic schools
and in a hospital-affiliated speech and language
clinic with children who had learning
disabilities and severe emotional disturbances.
She is an advocate for children in the criminal
justice system and has an interest in focusing on
children's issues. And I'm sure that there is
much more that I can say, but as an advocate for
children, she's probably more significantly an
incredible mom of three children who inspire her,
challenge her to grow, and teach her everyday.
Thank you for joining us.

LEILA KAWAR GOLDSMITH: Thank
you for the opportunity to share with you about
multidisciplinary teams and their effect on
systems as we try to find solutions for children
who are exposed to violence.

I've been with the Tulalip Tribe
since 2007. I was hired and asked to develop a
program to comprehensively address sexual
violence and physical violence against children.
When I first came, what I heard often over those
first months was, we reported the abuse but
nothing happened. I've heard people say that

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several times again today, out of their own experience.

Before Tulalip formed their own police department, they did depend on state policing and their people who are in their 30s today who told me, well, we've been calling 911 but nobody would come. And, as I began to understand the problems facing -- the barriers facing the tribe in terms of serving children, I began to understand I was dealing with something that I had never seen before. I was a teacher but I also was an attorney. I worked in state courts with high-conflict family law custody cases. But, the level of -- the degree of invisibility that tribal children had was remarkable and stunning.

So I was tasked with creating a children's advocacy center in 2007, and today we are a team of four. We have a child forensic interviewer, who has worked for the tribe for eight years. We have a full-time child therapist. We have a child advocate and myself. I write grants and manage grants and supervise staff, and I do direct advocacy as well. My goal was to be -- the first thing I did really was to

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establish the baby beginnings of a multidisciplinary team for criminal cases. And my first partner was the Supervisor of the Detectives over criminal investigation. And we began to talk about old cases, that's how we began. And our group grew to include the FBI who were very willing and energetic participants in the formation of our MDT.

And today, we meet every other week on Tuesday mornings at 10 in the morning. We have usually a medical professional there, we have Indian Child Welfare present at the table, a tribal prosecutor, Assistant U.S. Attorney, we have our forensic interviewer present and a child therapist who's there to represent victims and our child advocate as well as the FBI Specialist which is the federal counterpart to victim advocate.

Again, I facilitate and set the agenda and we talk about current cases. There are some multidisciplinary teams that are more educational and they have guest speakers or ones that focus on just one case and asks to voluntarily bring in a case. Those are some models that I've heard of on the outside.

But we are an indigenous tribal multidisciplinary team and the decision of our team has been that we talk about current cases and they don't go off our agenda until there's been some kind of solution. That has created a lot of heated difficult meetings. But we are -- our philosophy from the beginning has been that if we keep the victim at the center of our decisions, we'll make the right decisions.

In our center -- in our comprehensive program, we focus on three things and three things only: The prevention of child abuse, intervention when an allegation has been made, and we do child forensic interviews in our building. We have a fully equipped interview room, audio video equipped with an observation room attached, and we take children to the hospital for a forensic medical exam, we provide court tours. If there is a case taken to trial, we -- I have sat up with children as they testify to be their support and we provide impact statements as well for children. We do that all the way through trial and beyond.

We also provide -- the third component is healing; offering a healing path for
those children. And we have a full-time	herapist and a part-time therapist who provide
amazing trauma informed therapy for our children.

And I'm smiling at D. Big Foot
because -- honestly, this program has developed
very organically, not been by accident. These
meetings I've had with people, and Dr. Big Foot
has been one of them, who could investigate early
on that evidence-based trauma treatment was
essential for us and we were at the point of
having to make a decision about what we were
going to do. And we do only provide trauma
focused behavioral therapy, primarily, we do that
when it's possible. And our therapists have been
trained in criminal adaptive types of programs,
traditional focused safety.

So the first -- there are very few
indigenous tribal based multidisciplinary teams.
There are, I believe, 25 tribes on the Western
side of Washington where we are. I'm told that
we're the only regularly meeting
multidisciplinary team. We do have good federal
participation. As has already been stated, there
are federal statutes that require the U.S.
Attorney participation if an MDT exists. And, I
will just say that if more tribes did begin to
have their own multidisciplinary team meetings,
it would require a huge effort and an increased
commitment and investment of staff on the U.S.
Attorneys Office's part to actually meet the
need.

We've had several other tribes come
and visit our MDT, speak to team members, ask for
our code of law, we've had other tribes bring
their victims to our center for interviews. So,
we try as much as we can to be a resource to
other tribes around us. But we are the only
regularly functioning MDT on our side of the
mountains.

We have talked about having a
regional multidisciplinary team which is perhaps
this committee could consider in supporting in
that we face common barriers, common challenges
on working in tribes, and it would be helpful to
be able to leverage our resources.

So, for example, we do -- as I've
said we provide interviews for other tribes and
communities and not every community could have a
forensic interviewer program.

I did -- in closing about MDTs, which
is my first recommendation. Creating a
stand-alone program regardless of how effective
for individual victims, it will not replace the
collaborative work and the work that happens on a
team.

MDTs are very difficult work.

Facilitating the MDTs for people has been one of
the most challenging activities that I
participate in. It's very difficult to keep so
many people with different mandates, powerful
personalities, and have their own political
consideration together focusing on victims and
moving things forward.

But systemically, I do believe it is
a powerful tool for change. Otherwise, we do
revictimize because the criminal justice system
does not heal children and it never will.

We talked about just becoming a
healing center, but I believe in improving the
victims, and I believe that the MDT can be a part
of that for our victims.

My second recommendation is about
having adequate, responsive funding for holistic
centers that are tribal based. We have not yet
aligned our words and our budgets when it comes

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Children are quiet victims. They are often invisible victims, and so their needs are almost always under-funded, marginally met, or completely ignored, and this is especially true in Native children.

The federal government has a trust responsibility to enable tribes to protect their people, and especially their children. This must encompass far more than grant funding which often includes restrictions and limitations that essentially cut out many smaller tribe that don't have the resources that we do.

I say this with humility because our program has been developed with federal funding and grants. It continues to be supported by tribal -- by CTAS and federal grant funding. Tulalip Tribes, as with any other successful tribe, has overwhelming competing interests for their funding and their limited financial resources.

Children who are exposed to violence should be served with adequate funding through crime victim funds overseen by the Office of Victims of Crime. We should not have to compete
with other tribes for a very small pool of funds. We should not have to develop programs and complete them in three years only to try constantly to be looking for another funding source and in the meantime losing good staff, having to close down the programs and ultimately letting down victims.

When there are staff changes, we let down our victims. When there are programs that get off the ground and get going and develop trust and then they go away, we lose trust and it's very difficult to gain that traction once again.

When I scan grant funding opportunities, I cannot help but be stunned by the disparity between funding levels for adult victims of violence through the Office of Violence Against Women and the limited funding available for children who are crime victims. Who is fighting for adequate funding to protect our children? Our children cannot fight for themselves.

My third recommendation is about training and technical assistance which has also been mentioned by my co-panelists. Effective
resources for tribes to address the needs of children exposed to violence is essential and should include targeted, expert level training for tribal and MDT formation, for facilitator training to ensure the health and longevity of the team so they don't have a good start but disappear, and also for ongoing support to the facilitator and the team as they face barriers and improve collaboration.

To be successful, it is essential that there be readily available training for the formation of the teams within tribes for those that want that and that team facilitators have access to support from people who have facilitated challenging teams, hopefully, preferably Indian-Country-based teams.

Mainstream training, while available through the National Children's Alliance and their regional chapters, is limited for people starting tribal based teams. I have done that training and there are good things to take away; however, mainstream training simply does not fit and if a person is not incredibly stubborn, I believe they may give up in the process because it's like trying to put on a suit that just does
not fit.

The National Children's Alliance receive virtually all of the funding for advocacy centers and we know advocacy centers are a very powerful, effective model but the NCA does receive that funding and they, although tried I think, to reach out to tribes but have not been necessarily particularly effective.

And so nationally, this leaves a gap for those of us who work in Indian Country. We need a well-funded resource for assisting tribes that want MDTs, to create their own indigenous teams and then obtain the basic components of a tribal victim advocacy program. It's really not complicated and we do know what works, but we can't do it without adequate funding, and it's very difficult to ask them to do the job that they do and constantly be worried about their funding.

Please don't forget about the needs of workers in this field. I'm not sure if this is beyond the scope of this committee; however, meaningfully addressing trauma exposure is essential to develop and keeping talented people with the heart for this work. We ask people to
do more with fewer resources and to look squarely at some of the most horrific, disturbing things that humans do to each other and then go home to meet the needs of their own families and then get up and do it again the next day.

All too often, I see one of two things happen: One, good people leave because the weight of this work is too much and they begin to feel toxic, and in order to avoid total burnout, they have to leave as an act of self-preservation.

The second thing that happens is that good people cross over into toxicity and burn out, but they stay. I'm not sure which is worse. They become -- they lose their ability to be healers. But I do believe this is avoidable and this is part of addressing resources for tribal MDTs.

One of the huge advantages with working on disciplinary teams is we support each other as professionals. We support each other and are able to talk to each other about what we're seeing and experiencing.

We are in this work because we believe that healing is possible, and I have seen
it. I have seen children and youth begin to -- 
their healing journey once they give their 
forensic interview.

As has been said earlier by Barbara 
Bettelyoun, I have seen it myself when a child 
speaks the truth about what's happened to them, 
they begin to heal. We've had teenagers stop 
cutting, we've had people -- children stop 
experiencing nightmares and anxiety as victims. 
It's the beginning of their healing to have an 
adult, a safe adult look at them and believe 
them.

And I have seen many times families 
and children have this huge sense of relief that 
they can stay on the reservation and get the 
services they need. They can stay on the 
reservation and have an interview. We've taken 
children to outside interviewers when we had to, 
and I've watched children begin to understand 
that they will have to explain particular words 
or customs or traditions to this interviewer 
because they are not being understood. And I can 
watch the shutting down process begin because 
they haven't even gotten to the hard part of 
their story yet.
So I believe -- again having these tribal based indigenous resources are so important. Thank you for your sacrifice, each one of you here, and the dedication to finding meaningful solutions to meet the real needs of our children and to bring those solutions to our communities. Thank you.

JOANNE SHENANDOAH: Thank you so much for your testimony. It was very heartfelt. And I, at this moment, going to turn over the microphone over to Senator Dorgan, he has a question for you.

SENATOR DORGAN: Well, thank you, and I appreciate very much the testimony of both of you. In many ways it brings together a lot of the things we've heard all morning. A multidisciplinary approach to address these things are essential.

Michelle, the -- your description of the importance of tribal courts, you know, we try to strengthen them in the Tribal Law and Order Act, which I wrote in the last couple years I was in Congress and which is now being implemented, and I think it's going to have significant contribution in the years ahead.
Ms. Goldsmith, I want to ask you about Tulalip. I've been to Tulalip a number of times, and I know the first visit to Tulalip was to show me their children's program which is a very substantial program, one that had developed very successfully.

In your discussions today about the team approach, the multidisciplinary team is eluminated. One of the things I was a little surprised about is that you indicated that the bulk of that funding to create the work that you're doing comes from the federal government. That's where it should come from. But, all of us in this room will admit the federal government has failed badly in providing sufficient resources that have been promised over many, many, many decades to address these issues.

The federal government has just failed. It provides funding but it's an inadequate amount of funding that kind of dribbles out and so people try to make do with what exists.

The Tulalip Tribe, unlike a lot of other tribes, there's what 566 tribes, Tulalip Tribe has significant advantages. Near a major

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city, near a major highway, a significant casino operation, gaming operation, significant resort facility, very big hotel, right on I-5 so you've got a significant business plan that is very successful, I mean really successful, and so the question for me is: Is a circumstance like that, with a tribe like Tulalip where you have those multiple successes that are revenue driven or that drive the revenue stream I should say, what claim of those revenues will programs like yours have on the tribe where they meet and talk about priorities? Because there are resources on that reservation and they are significant resources.

LEILA KAWAR GOLDSMITH: Yeah. That is true. There are -- and I did speak of that in my written testimony because I know there are many tribes who have, you know, that do not have the opportunity -- the financial opportunity that the Tulalip Tribe has; however, in every government organization across the world, children's services and programs are never adequately funded. Child victims are invisible. And, we have had a lot of interest and concern from leadership. I want to highlight that; however, there are so many competing
priorities that it's difficult to find actual
funding for programs which is so highly
specialized.

And in addition, in every community,
people don't want to believe about the prevalence
of sexual abuse and severe physical abuse. We
want to turn a blind eye in every community in
Tulalip or any other tribe. And so, I do believe
that crime victim funds are -- they're secured
through court fines and things like
that, where our tribal court is fairly well
developed but it's still developing, and we're
not going to be anywhere near their top
priorities and we do not get funding through the
state. They get it from the federal government.
They would ask our victims to use state resources
-- to use the state advocacy centers, and the
problem with that is that we don't have -- it
hasn't historically worked well.

SENATOR DORGAN: Just a comment.

Isn't it interesting that in our personal lives,
if asked the question what's number one? What's
most important? Kids are not number two or
three, they're number one always in our personal
lives. And in our budgeting, in our priorities
whether it's at the federal level or the tribal level, somehow kids don't quite have the same command, you know, they don't -- kids aren't able to be organized, to speak up, they don't contribute to anybody. Right? And campaign.

Somehow kids are left behind too long and it's at every level but of course especially the federal level because the federal government made promises it hasn't kept.

ANITA FINEDAY: Thank you. I have a question for Leila, also. You talked about the term multidisciplinary teams in criminal cases, and I just wonder if Tulalip had multidisciplinary teams if it's just the child protection case if there's not criminal charges attached, do you have special teams in addressing those issues as well?

LEILA KAWAR GOLDSMITH: Well, as Senator Dorgan stated, he's visited the Indian Child Welfare building at Tulalip that has an impressive program and it's the program in which we began. That's our, really, out mother program and it's made up of child therapists and social workers. They meet as a team and we haven't historically met with them. Where we -- if we
have something to -- to contribute to a case -- a child protection case, we'll speak up and share.

Also, our interviewers do -- our interviewer does do some CPS only or ICW only interviews because we have a flexible protocol. Some interviewers will not ever do anything other than the law enforcement interview and we have the ability to be flexible about that. But we will sometimes do forensic interviews for a child welfare case. So we work very closely with child welfare.

EDDIE BROWN: I noticed that chief -- or former Police Chief Edward Reina was unable to be here today, but he submitted testimony and he was successful as he describes in creating a multidisciplinary process at the Tohono O'odham Nation. And he was adamant in his written testimony that he said it started without any additional funding and said that -- and stated again that additional funding was not necessary.

And yet I hear why we have so few indigenous multidisciplinary components being developed. I'd like to hear your response to that, given that you -- in all testimonies we've
heard, resources, resources, resources. And that can be for either of you.

MICHELLE RIVARD-PARKS: I'll speak to that question. From my experience, simply getting together -- pulling the disciplines together to have a meeting, one might equate that to a multidisciplinary team. And, to simply do that, does not require resources. It simply requires a facilitator and a date and a time.

However, once we start actually addressing the issues that are brought before the MDT, is where we start to see the need for resources. And, my experience -- and I participated as part of a CPT, Child Protection Team, we were not criminally focused, we were focused on child welfare cases. And, I participated in that team for a number of years, and it was my experience that there were times when the team came together and there was a very clear understanding of what each discipline's role was at the table, and then there would be turnover in some of the various agencies, and a lot of that information was lost. And I think that's where my co-panelists earlier comments

"Transcript from the First Hearing of the Advisory Committee of the Attorney General’s Task Force on American Indian/Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence. Bismarck, ND. December 9, 2013."
were going in terms of turning a technical
assistance and financial resources and support
with that because like any group, like any team,
we may all start off with the best of intentions;
however, we often run into barriers and obstacles
and that's really where the resources come in in
helping that team to overcome those barriers and
obstacles. And effective training and technical
assistance and effective written tools and
resources can really help those grassroots teams
from disbanding. And I think all too often,
that's what we've seen for tribes that have
started an MDT for a child protection team, they
may have begun one, but ultimately it's
disbanded.

And so part of the dialogue on the
MDTs I think is not only having to start one but
how you maintain that.

LEILA KAWAR GOLDSMITH: If I may
just briefly, it's not having -- you could have a
very baseline multidisciplinary team, as my
co-panelist said, but to have a high functioning
multidisciplinary team where there are people who
are truly engaged in collaboration willing to
consider other opinions and do the negotiating
that happens sometimes at the table, that requires a tremendous amount of constancy, and I can't -- I'd lost track of the number of times we have our detectives change, the FBI agent change, the U.S. Attorney change, the tribal prosecutor change, just in the six years that I've been with the tribe.

So I don't think it can be overemphasized how important it is to have somebody who's victim focused taking the lead on that and really saying this is the heart of what we do. This is the real work where it happens but to be that consistent person and a liaison for all those other agencies.

MICHELLE RIVARD-PARKS: Just one last thing -- actually made me think of one last thing too. And Senator Dorgan had mentioned in terms of demographics with Tulalip and what their experience is. My experience has been predominantly here in North Dakota. And here in North Dakota, the majority of the tribes do not have access to a lot of the specialists that are required to really do good work with a lot of the children and families and in their healing process.
There's that coupled with also some of the grassroots or traditional healers that may need to be involved in that process and making sure that we have the resources to support the involvement of those individuals as well is important.

And again, you know, we may already have a funded prosecutor or we may have a funded law enforcement officer, but when we start to do work with the families, some of those other individuals that really get to the healing component here in North Dakota; although, a lot of the tribes simply just have an access issue in getting those individuals to attend and some resources in that regard can help to bring that into the community as well.

DOLORES SUBIA BIGFOOT: Thank you. You guys did a great job. Appreciate it. MDTs have been one of the things that have always been promoted. In that light, can both of you speak to the jurisdictional authority to bring MDTs together? I think that should be emphasized a little bit more and also, the capacity to facilitate. 'Cause I think both -- that's what you're talking about to keep it going, the
consistency. I always say that children need consistency, predictability and reassurance. And, it has to come from multiple levels. And so, I think that that's the success that you've had, but it's a success that others can have given the right tools. So if you could speak to that, I would really greatly appreciate it.

MICHELLE RIVARD-PARKS: Well, the first comment that I would have is with respect to jurisdictional authority. And I will say, I was once speaking at a conference and speaking about jurisdiction as the attorney and started to talk about authority and power and control and I found myself kind of sounding like an offender.

So, one of the elders suggested that when we look at jurisdiction, perhaps we reframe our thought a little bit to responsibility. And, when we think about it in terms of responsibility, people have a tendency to open up and be more collaborative in nature. So, that would be the first comment.

But in terms of jurisdiction, again, in terms of mandating participation, if a tribe wants to begin an MDT and there are neighboring
resources at the state level, for example, it's very difficult for a tribe to mandate participation of those state agencies. However, if we can get the buy-in that we need the multi-disciplinary process at the legislative levels in terms of tribal legislators, state legislators, federal legislators, then that will trickle down to the service providers. And once those services providers see that legislative support at each of those levels, we see increased participation and a willingness to share those resources and work together. And there is a lot of benefit I think to the parties involved to be collaborative in our approaches.

So -- so I think the biggest thing is really also reeducating ourselves to -- to think about jurisdiction differently.

LEILA KAWAR GOLDSMITH: All I would have to add is that it was very clear to me early on at Tulalip that there is a broad ethic among all the service providers that we share responsibility for these problems and we share the responsibility to find the solutions. It wasn't just Indian Child Welfare who was -- their problem or Health Clinic's problem.
However, in terms of jurisdiction, I did seek and obtain resolution from the Board of Directors stating that our program was wanted and needed and it integrated basically Child Victim Bill of Rights. And I look at child victim rights as human rights. And, that's sort of how it was framed. And so, there was that, you know, at the highest level of support for creating our program; however, again, you really can't mandate outside programs and you don't want to. You could get all the bodies in a room, but that's completely different from collaborating.

And to be honest, we haven't had a lot of difficulty getting people to come because it's to their advantage and people from all different disciplines begin to realize fairly quickly that it is to their advantage. We can help each other. But, if there is a facilitator -- a large group of people need one in building relationships with all of those different agencies.

JOANNE SHENANDOAH: I'd like to thank you for your testimony, your insights, and your time with us today. Thank you very much.

SENATOR DORGAN: The next panel