

Moses Osceola:

We'll pronounce the invocation first and then give you a little word of welcome on behalf of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. And so let's go ahead and have a prayer.

Our Father who art in heaven we thank you for this beautiful day and Father we thank you Lord for the breath of life in it. We thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to be here at this conference. It's been a privilege and an honor to meet those who are working in Indian country, Lord, to preserve the rights and protect the lives of our Indian children. That's a very important work, Father, that we pray that you would just be with all those who are in that field of work, Father.

We pray Lord that you would just bless them, help them to be as effective as they can be, Father, in preserving the welfare of our kids. We pray Lord, that you would be with this meeting now. It's a very important hearing Father, and we pray Lord that you would just join with everyone here, guide their thoughts in their work, Father, while they're here today.

We pray Lord that you would be with the federal officials who are here and we thank you Father for their participation, for making themselves available, for the benefit of Indian country. We thank you, Lord, for all the representatives of our tribes that are here. We pray Lord that you would be with them, help them to work together, Father. We pray Lord and thank you that the government, Father, has taken time to listen the thoughts and the desires and the wishes of our Indian people. We thank you Lord for this very important hearing that you would just bless it and just be with it.

And Father we thank you that this is the week of Easter, Father. Help us all Lord just to keep our thoughts upon you always Father. Help us to keep you in our hearts, to allow you to guide and direct our paths, Father, our thoughts, our words, our deeds each and every day.

Help all to be acceptable in your sight, Father. We thank you now Lord for this day. Once again, we just praise your holy mighty name, Jesus name, Father we pray, thank you Father, amen.

Please be seated. On behalf of the Seminole Tribe I just want to welcome each and every one of you this afternoon to this hearing. And I was just supposed to be a sideline participant, trying to hide in the background but our pastor from the Seminole Tribe, the church that I attend and am a member of, he got called away and couldn't be here today so they asked me to go ahead and step in for him. So it's my privilege and honor to do that today.

And also, I think Teddy Nelson, who is the vice president for the NICWA organization. I think he was going to give the welcome address and he got called away. So here I am. [LAUGHS] But it's my privilege and honor, you know, to give you the welcome today. And thank you for the opportunity as well. You know, it's an honor to do that.

But you know, south Florida is a home of the Seminole Tribe of Florida and our brothers and sisters to the south of us, the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida. And we invite you to come and visit with us if you're able to. The Seminole Tribe of Florida just located about 10, 15 minutes southwest of here, just past the airport. You can get on Griffin Road or go down to Sheridan Street and just head west until you come to that huge guitar standing out there on State Road 7 and the intersection of Stirling Road and Griffin roads. And you can't miss our location there, but we'd invite you to come over and visit with us at the casino and on our grounds there.

Speaking of children, and encouraging them and helping them to become all that they can be, our tribe now is in the process of building a brand-new gymnasium over there, you know?

When we first got on the reservation there years ago, when I was a child, our recreation area consisted of a dirt field. We had some old telephone poles erected for our backstop. And we had chicken wire nailed up and that served as our backstop. And we just had to make do with whatever we had out there, you know? And we used to go and find throw-away bats and balls and gloves and things like that you

know, to play ball with and stuff like that when I was growing up.

But I've been blessed, you know? I just got to say that God has taken care of us over there at Seminole and I'm very thankful for that. But it's a privilege and honor to have been here at this NICWA conference as well this week and again, we just ask the good Lord to, just to bless each and every one of you as you continue your work in that field. It's a very important work. Our children are the future of our tribes and everything and anything that we can do to help our children to grow up to all that they can be within our tribe is very important.

And I think too that you know, it's great that the federal government can come and listen to our tribes, you know, as we try to improve laws and services and you know, things that will help our tribes to improve the lives of our kids, you know, and to protect them, and their rights. This is a very important meeting and I think that it's a great time for all of us to share with the federal officials who are here today.

So I just want to say thank you on behalf of the Seminole Tribe for coming and being a part of this conference today. And before I step down, I want to introduce Stan Wolf. Stan, will you stand up? He is our soon to be court administrator. The Seminole Tribe has just established its court system. And you're all looking at its first ever trial judge. I know nothing of the law. [LAUGHS] So those of you who are attorneys in Indian country I'll be calling on you to help us. And Stan of course is an attorney and so he is our mentor and our guide. And we are taking all the training that we can take: The National Judicial College in Reno and other places.

And so the tribe is endeavoring to now give everybody the opportunity to have a formal resolve and procedure system within the tribe. And I think that it's great that our tribe has taken that final step forward to do that, to add that third branch of government.

And so pray for us and help us if you can. So we thank you. And welcome to South Florida, enjoy your time here and plenty of fishing boats going by. If you got the time. They also have night fishing. I do a lot of that here. So right down here on Los Olas Boulevard, plenty of fishing boats right down there. Very affordable; \$25, \$35 for a fishing trip. So take it and go out on the ocean and catch a few big ones. Thank you very much. [APPLAUSE]

Joanne Shenandoah:

Thank you very much. Mr. Osceola, thank you. We appreciate your kind words and your welcoming remarks. The National Indian Child Welfare Association just completed a very successful 32nd annual conference focused on protecting our children. The NICWA has graciously supported the work of the advisory committee in a variety of ways regarding this public hearing. We are grateful to NICWA for their support. Thank you very much.

I would now like to introduce the administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, OJJDP, Robert Listenbee. Administrator Listenbee was appointed to the position by President Barack Obama on February, 2013. And was sworn into the position on March 25, 2013. Before his appointment to OJJDP, Mr. Listenbee was chief of the Juvenile Unit of the Defender Association of Philadelphia for 16 years and was tribal lawyer for the association for 27 years.

I commend and thank the Department of Justice, attorney general holder Robert Listenbee and his team who are all here today. And thank you for being with us, as your leadership of course is very important to this effort. Please welcome Mr. Robert Listenbee. [APPLAUSE]

Robert Listenbee:

Good afternoon, everybody. Good afternoon everybody. [AUDIENCE RESPONDS] I bring you greetings from the Attorney General of the United States, Eric Holder. And also from Associate Attorney General Tony West. And in addition from Karol Mason, who is the Assistant Attorney General of the United States and responsible for the major grant-making component of the Department of Justice, the Office of Justice programs.

I would like to thank first of all, Judge Moses Osceola for his invocation and remarks and Judge Osceola, I have to say thank you, Your Honor in light of the fact that you are also a judge in beginning to assume your responsibilities here. So thank you very much.

I'd also like to say thank you to Joanne. I'm very pleased to join you for this third hearing of the Attorney General's Committee on American Indian and Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence. Let me say, Joanne, how fortunate we are to have you as co-chair of this committee. Helping us draw attention to this very important issue. I've had the pleasure of working with you as we've started this taskforce and advisory committee, and it has indeed been a pleasure as I've learned more about your background, your experience and also your leadership. So thank you, we really enjoy it.

Let me also thank members of this committee for their dedication. These men and women are not only the most knowledgeable professionals in the field, they're also the most passionate and committed people when it comes to native children. I know it's been said before, but let me say again, how grateful we are for your service.

I'd like to extend a special welcome to U.S. attorneys who are with us. Michael Cotter, U.S. attorney from Montana. Michael? Greg Davis, U.S. attorney from Mississippi. As well as tribal liaisons in the U.S. attorney's office in Florida. Jennifer Parisi. Jennifer? Jennifer King. Don Gast from North Carolina, and Alan Metzger from Kansas. Mr. Metzger. Thank you for joining us and thank you for your leadership in your districts. We realize that you all have traveled long distances to join us here today and we're very appreciative of your interest in this issue and the work that you're doing in your home districts to help us address issues of American Indian and Alaska native children exposed to violence.

Finally, it is my honor also to introduce Brian Cladoosby, and chairman of the Swinomish Indian tribal community. Very

good, pleased to see you. Miss Erma J. Vizenor. And also Cyril Scott, president of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. I'd like to thank you all for joining us here today. I had a chance to speak with President Scott earlier today as we were discussing the Defending Childhood Initiative that he is responsible for.

I also want to acknowledge my colleagues from Washington as well. Mary Lou Leary, Principal Deputy Assistant, Attorney General for the Office of Justice programs. Mary Lou. Catherine Pierce, my senior advisor in the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. There's Marcia Hurd from Departments Office of Tribal Justice. Rodina Cave, Senior Policy Advisor at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. And Jim Antal, the designated federal official responsible for organizing the work of the advisory committee who also works with me. Jim, thank you very much for this wonderful job.

I'm very glad that all of them can join me here today. Finally I'd like to thank our witnesses and speakers. We're grateful to all of you for your participation. We look forward to hearing your insights and about your experiences so that we can address this very serious issue.

It's a privilege to join so many tribal leaders and representatives from Florida, and from across the nation, and to see so many people gathered here to talk about the safety and health of native children. We've come together today to continue a discussion that began, as Joanne mentioned earlier this week, at the 32nd Annual National American Indian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, hosted by the National Indian Child Welfare Association.

We know that violence in tribal communities and its impact on kids is a serious and urgent problem. It's a problem we're still trying very hard to understand which is why we brought so many experts together today and why we've had them in the prior two hearings.

Current research doesn't give us a full picture. But we know that native children are particularly vulnerable to

encountering violence and trauma. In a 2008 report by the Indian Country Child Trauma Center, they calculated that native youth are two and a half times more likely to experience trauma than their non-native peers.

One study found that the rate of post-traumatic stress disorder for Indian youth is almost triple the rate of the general population and is comparable to the rates of post-traumatic stress disorder among soldiers returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We hear from tribal leaders and professionals that kids in tribal communities are at great risk. Rates of crime and violence in some tribal areas are alarming. And children who are there see it and often feel it.

A little over a year ago, a national task force, which I co-chaired, submitted a report to the Attorney General. We mapped out a strategy to address the needs of children exposed to violence across the nation. The report gave a comprehensive account of issues facing children and laid out 56 recommendations for action.

One of the first and I would say one of the most important recommendations of our taskforce report was to create a separate taskforce to study the issue of children's exposure to violence in Indian country. The report cited the testimony of tribal leaders who expressed grave concern about violence and its impact on their youth. They made a strong plea to us for further study and for further action.

The Attorney General acted very quickly and appointed the new advisory committee in the fall of 2013. The taskforce on American Indian and Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence is anchored by two groups. The first is the Federal Working Group that is focused on identifying and recommending immediate short-term actions that federal agencies can take to address the problems of native children exposed to violence. This group has been meeting since last summer and has already taken several steps.

Again, our goal was to see what we could do immediately so we could address problems where studies had already been done, so we could solve problems that were already obvious to us. That group expanded educational services inside juvenile detention facilities managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. They've coordinated wrap-around services for child victims of crime who come in contact with the federal judicial system. And they've improved judicial training under the Indian Child Welfare Act.

The second group that makes up the taskforce is a group meeting here today, the Federal Advisory Committee. Their job is to gather information to improve our understanding of American Indian and Alaska Native children's exposure to violence and recommend ways to address it. They held their first hearing in Bismarck, North Dakota in December. And I want to tell you it was a lot colder there. I think it was like 35 degrees below zero and we couldn't walk outside.

There was interest in a part of a few parties to go get some coffee at a distance at about a hundred yard away and we were advised that that little escapade should not be undertaken for fear you might not return. [LAUGHS] So we've come here to sunny Florida and all we really need is a lot of air conditioning here.

So the tribal leaders and child welfare advocates, Native Americans who live through childhood trauma and others came together to talk about the subject of child sexual abuse, violence in the home, and the link between child maltreatment and domestic violence. That was our hearing that we held in Bismarck, North Dakota.

The advisory committee held a second hearing in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community in February. There the focus was on the intersection of childhood trauma and contact with the juvenile justice system. The testimony of the witnesses at both hearings underscore the fact that Native Americans share a history of displacement, forced assimilation, and cultural suppression. That history elevates the risk of child maltreatment. A legacy of collective

suffering has left today's native children vulnerable to violence.

The message couldn't have been more clear: We must act and we must act now. We must act with knowledge based upon research with a better understanding so that we can develop long-term solutions that will far outlive both this administration and many of us working on these problems. Our kids need our help.

As a Department of Justice we've already begun to take action. Under the Attorney General's Defending Childhood initiative we're supporting efforts across the country to mitigate the impact of children's exposure to violence and prevent that exposure from leading to problems in the future.

One terrific example is the work being done by the Rosebud Sioux Tribe to deliver trauma-informed services rooted in Lakota values that address educational, justice system, and health care needs.

Another great example is a program at the Rocky Boy Reservation in Montana where the Chippewa Cree Tribe is involving stakeholders from throughout the community in the design of prevention and treatment programs that rely on traditional health and healing.

These are promising approaches springing from tribal customs that are aimed at enhancing resiliency in effected children. And they represent some of the exciting work already being done to support native children.

Here in Fort Lauderdale, we will continue to explore this issue and to investigate solutions. We will look at the overall incidents of violence in tribal communities, how it's affecting our tribal members. We will focus some of our attention on the problem of gangs and sex trafficking in rural and urban Indian communities and appropriately, we will discuss the role of child welfare in responding to children who are exposed to violence and providing trauma-informed care.

Today's hearing and the work of the advisory committee are central to our efforts at the Department of Justice to support our tribal partners. The work we do together, nation to nation, is one of the things I'm personally most proud of. I'm proud that we've been able to streamline our tribal grant programs to make them more easily accessible. As a direct result, we made almost 1,000 grant awards to tribes totaling \$440 million over the last four years to help improve public safety.

I'm proud that we're partnering with tribes to make sure they have the assistance and the legal leverage they need to protect native women. I'm proud that the department is actively helping to improve the safety of tribal communities by prosecuting more cases in Indian country. And I'm also proud that through Defending Childhood and our work with the taskforce, we're responding vigorously and with urgency, to the needs of our children.

I believe we're on the right path. We made solid strides in our work to improve safety on tribal lands, extended tribal access to federal resources and support tribal sovereignty. But much remains to be done. And much of the work will depend on those of you who are present here in the room as you go back to your communities. This work won't be easy. And answers will not come quickly. But we're not looking for easy answers. We're looking for the long-term solutions. Sustainable solutions that will make a difference for American Indian and Alaska native children.

I commend all of you for the good work you're already doing, each and every day in your communities. You're already making a difference and we're so grateful. On behalf of the attorney general and the entire Department of Justice, thank you for all that you do for our children and thank you for your participation in this hearing. Thank you for what you learn from this hearing and how you apply it in your communities. Welcome. [APPLAUSE]

Joanne Shenandoah:

Thank you Attorney Listenbee. Witnesses so far have provided valuable information to this committee that will hopefully lead to a deeper understanding of how exposure to

violence affects American Indian and Alaska native children and empower the advisory committee to provide concrete recommendations to this committee such as promising practices, gaps in services and barriers and systems.

Today, this advisory committee gathers for the third time to focus on our children exposed to violence. I'm honored to participate on this advisory committee and would like to take this moment to acknowledge and welcome my esteemed colleagues that comprises the advisory committee.

First, on my left, your right, is Jefferson Keel, Chickasaw Nation, Lieutenant Governor of the Chickasaw Nation. Welcome. [APPLAUSE]

Next we have rear admiral Eric Broderick, former deputy administrator, substance abuse and mental health service administration. Welcome. [APPLAUSE]

Next we have today, co-chair, Anita Fineday. White Earth Managing Director Indian Child Welfare Casey Family Programs. Welcome. [APPLAUSE]

Next we have Valerie Davidson. Senior Director, Legal and Intergovernmental Affairs for the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. Welcome Valerie. [APPLAUSE]

And then we have Ron Whitener. Squaxin Island Tribe. Executive Director, Native American Law Center, University of Washington School of Law. Welcome, Ron. [APPLAUSE]

And last, but certainly not least, we have Dolores Subia Bigfoot. Caddo Nation of Oklahoma. Director of Indian Child Trauma Center at the University of Oklahoma. Welcome, Dee. [APPLAUSE]

At this juncture I would like to have us put our minds together as one and think about how this is going to go today, how important it is and how special it is that we have people who care about our children. I'd like to introduce of course myself, I am Oneida Iroquois composer, singer,

songwriter. And Senator Byron Dorgan serves as co-chair normally on this advisory committee. He's unable to join us for this hearing however. But Senator has sent Erin Bailey to sit in for him, keeping notes of the testimony and is she in the room? She just stepped out. [LAUGHS] And she's reporting back to him as we speak, okay? But we would like to thank Erin Bailey for her dedication and maybe you can pass that word along as she speaks to the senator.

Okay, so with that I'd like to ask us all to put our minds together as one. We were welcomed to the land of the Seminole and the Miccosukee people here in Florida. It is a beautiful place. We have amazing history and an amazing way to go about doing our business. And one of those things that comes to mind to me is our traditional culture and values and how important that is to each and every one of us, and I believe in this room, irrespective of race, age, religion, or culture. Because we need to live in a better world. We need to make our place a better world.

So we had a prophet named Hiawatha. Hiawatha was visited by Skennenrahawi a peacemaker. So he came to him, bringing a message of peace with what we call today the Quohog shell, or you may have heard of it as wampum. So it's this shell that's purple and white, and the purple represents bruising and the white represents purity or truth.

So we've all known what it feels like to have pain in our life and have experienced major pain. And so what happens is when we say that we learn forgiveness or we can let that pain dissolve then the white will come back again like on our skin, how we turn purple. So you will have noticed maybe on the Iroquois flag we have the purple and white as that symbol. So what we have here is what we call the Iroquois confederacy with our tree of peace which represents the Onondaga, we have the Mohawk, the Oneida, Seneca, Cayuga here. And whenever you see the purple and white it reminds us that we can learn forgiveness and that we can learn to heal from our pain.

So I just wanted to have you keep that in mind today as we're talking about the situations in our communities, how

vital and important all this. And as we listen, all of our hearts will be in the right place. When they say we hold the wampum it's our purest form of truth. And everyone on this advisory committee is completely dedicated and passionate about hearing what you have to say. So I just wanted preface those words with that beginning.

So now, just a few housekeeping things. We need to make sure our cell phones are either on vibrate, if you would take a quick look, that would be great. The restrooms are right out the door and to the left. And there's water also available for everyone.

In addition, if there is anyone at anytime who needs to go to a safe room, I'd like to introduce to you now Jim and Bonnie Clairmont who are traditional elders and healers and they will be available to you in a safe room. Jim and Bonnie, could you wave? There they are. And so if you go out this door and just down to the right, at the very last door, that's where the safe room will be and they will be happy to spend some time with you if anything truly upsets you as you are going to listen to today. So you're welcome to go there at any time. And then you come back the same way or you can also go out another direction back toward the hotel.

And Erin Bailey would you please wave to everyone because I just introduced you and you weren't in the room. [APPLAUSE] We thank for your efforts and I told them that you'd be reporting to the senator so I figured that's what you were up to.

Okay. So with that I just want to say blessings. I'm really honored to be here sharing this day with you and Anita Fineday will now take over for introducing our first panel.

Anita Fineday:

Thank you, Joanne. Before we get started with a panel, I just want to say that I, along with Joanne, and the whole committee here, we are here because we all truly believe that there's nothing more important than the health and safety of our children. Joanne and I will be presiding over the hearing today. We're going to be listening to testimony and we understand that the people who will be speaking

today are passionate and committed to improving the lives of Native American children. We want everyone to have an opportunity to speak so we do have some time management protocols, so I'm going to give you an overview of the way that the day is planned.

We have witnesses here to testify today and we are going to work really hard to keep everybody on schedule so that we will be able to hear from everyone and that we will have adequate time to ask questions of our experts. The structure and the timeframe for this hearing will be as follows:

The testimony will consist of panels and each panel will have three to four speakers. They each have a designated time, between 10 and 15 minutes to present followed by a short question and answer session by the advisory committee. We will be taking breaks during the afternoon and the breaks are listed in your agenda.

At the conclusion of the third panel and again tomorrow, at the conclusion of the fifth panel, we will move to the public testimony segment of the hearing. And at the conclusion of the scheduled public testimony we will then move to an open microphone public testimony segment of the hearing.

The scheduled public testimony segment will provide a group of individuals who have already registered prior to the hearing to provide five minutes of oral testimony time. Once this scheduled segment of the public testimony has concluded, we will proceed to the public testimony through the open microphone segment of the hearing. And each of those public witnesses will be allowed five minutes of testimony time. It's really critical that we stay within our time restraint so that we can hear from as many public witnesses as possible.

[END]