

The Presidential Task Force on
Missing and Murdered American Indians
and Alaska Natives
Tribal Regional Virtual Listening Session
Midwest and Great Plains Regions
June 2, 2020

Operator: The room is now open.

Tara Sweeney: Good afternoon, and thank you for joining us today. The Task Force hopes that you are all safe and continuing to check the CDC's website for the latest information, guidelines, and resources. And, in addition, we hope you are also checking our website at bia.gov/covid-19 for additional updates relevant to Indian Country from Indian Affairs.

To formally begin, my name is Tara Sweeney, I am the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs at the U.S. Department of the Interior. Today is the eighth listening session that the Task Force has held since beginning work in February 2020. We appreciate the interests of Tribal leaders and others in joining this call and that the information shared here today is very important and valuable.

In honor of the United States government-to-government relationship when it comes for question and answers, I respectfully request that the questions come from Tribal leaders for the first 30 minutes. The remaining time will then be for comments by other Indian Country stakeholders. We ask that you keep comments to three minutes, given the number of participants. The program that we are using will automatically mute a line at the three-minute mark. We have over 200 people registered for this session and so it is important that we continue to adhere to that three-minute mark, so that we can hear from as many individuals representing Indian Country as possible during this time.

A couple of routine housekeeping items include that when you wish to speak, please use the “raise to hand” button located in the dropdown at the top of your screen, indicated by either a hand icon or the figure with the arm raised.

Your microphone will be unmuted when it is your turn. You can only speak if you have registered. When you are up to speak, please identify yourself with your name, spelling, and the Tribe or organization you represent. There is a three-minute timer as I have mentioned before, and you should be able to see it at the bottom of your screen.

For everyone's awareness, everything said during this telephonic listening session will be recorded and become part of the final transcript. If you wish to provide written comments, please use the "comment" box on your screen. If you wish to submit more detailed written comments, you can submit them directly to OperationLadyJustice@usdoj.gov.

I am also proud to announce that we have added a new section on the Operation Lady Justice website that features all of the publicly available information from the NCMEC (missing less than six months) and NamUs (missing more than six months) on missing American Indian and Alaska Native children. The link to the new section can be found on the Operation Lady Justice website, which is www.OperationLadyJustice.usdoj.gov.

We will now share a short presentation about the Executive Order on Operation Lady Justice, and then turn to our participants for their comments and questions. It is now my honor to ask the White House personnel working with Operation Lady Justice to provide brief remarks. I am proud to introduce the team within the Trump Administration that has provided unwavering support across the federal government for Operation Lady Justice.

First, I will introduce Ms. Brooke Rollins, Assistant to the President and Acting Director of the Domestic Policy Council. Ms. Rollins. Operator, is Ms. Rollins available?

Operator: Sorry we are trying to call her in.

Tara Sweeney: OK. Sorry.

Operator: She should be on in just a second, it is dialing.

Tara Sweeney: Can I have an update on Ms. Rollins, please?

Operator: Yes, she just picked up. Ms. Rollins, are you there?

Brooke Rollins: Hey, you all, it is Brooke Rollins. Sorry about that. We were having some technical difficulty.

Tara Sweeney: Well, welcome to the listening session, Ms. Rollins.

Brooke Rollins: Well, thank you so much. It is an absolute honor to be with you all. I have the amazing Jennie Lichter here with me, the Deputy in the Domestic Policy Council. I know she has been working so hard on this, and is so passionate about it. We also all know that this issue is of such importance to the President and to our entire Administration. After hearing concerns from Tribal Governments, he knew that he needed to take action and as we all now know which is why we are all on this call; [he] signed the Executive Order to establish this Task Force just last November, focusing on missing and murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives.

We are so grateful to all of the leadership on the call. We know that these calls are vital for this Task Force to fulfill its mission. Most of you do not know and there is no reason that you should, but I was named the Acting Director of the Domestic Policy Council now two or three weeks ago, but I have been with this White House for more than two years now, running the Office of American Innovation, and working on key legacy projects for the President. And now, I am so excited to have this project which I also believe is a key legacy project for this President as part of my portfolio as well.

So I am on, Jennie is on. We are so happy to be here and we are very grateful, and we are just looking forward to listening. Thank you so much.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you very much. At this time, I would also like to call on Ms. Rachel Collins who is the Senior Policy Advisor for the Domestic Policy Council. Ms. Collins?

Rachel Collins: Thank you, Tara. Hi everyone, this is Rachel Collins. As she said, I am also with the Domestic Policy Council and I just want to echo the sentiments that

Brooke just shared. We are excited to be on this call and look forward to hearing all of your comments. Thank you.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you. And at this time I would like to introduce Mr. Doug Hoelscher, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director for the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. Mr. Hoelscher?

Operator: We lost him on the line. He should be picking up.

Tara Sweeney: I know he was trying to call in, so give him maybe a second.

Operator: Yes.

Tara Sweeney: Doug, are you there?

Doug Hoelscher: Hi, can you hear me? Yes, can you hear me?

Tara Sweeney: Yes, yes, go ahead, Doug.

Doug Hoelscher: OK, all right, all right. Thank you very much. I appreciate the chance to join and I am glad that Brooke was able to join; she is a great champion for looking out for all Americans. And the reason we are on this phone call today is because we all care deeply about the long-overlooked issue of missing and murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives, and so I am proud to work for the President. [He] was the first President who formally acknowledged this as an important issue. About a little over a year ago he was the first President to sign a proclamation – a Presidential proclamation on the issue to elevate awareness and to shine a light on a need to address this important issue.

And then, after a lot of coordination with stakeholders from both HHS and DOJ, and Department of Interior, and the White House, the President last November invited several Native American leaders to join him in the Oval Office where he signed an Executive Order creating this Task Force that is working with you today – that is learning from you today – that created Operation Lady Justice in the work that is ongoing and very important.

I want to just add a little bit more perspective on some of the President's other priorities in Indian Country [that] serve American Indians and Alaskan Natives more generally. Last fall, the President announced two important things. One, the work of the Domestic Policy Council helped advance a longstanding policy change on Eagle Feather remains. And so that went into effect last fall.

A couple of months later, last fall, the President announced on the State floor of the White House that we had worked with Finland in a process that began repatriating important artifacts and cultural remains that are very important to the Mesa Verde Region, and so that was something that the President was very proud to accomplish and make progress on.

Also, the President signed an Executive Order creating a Task Force on the Indian Health Service to make sure that Alaska Natives and American Indian children are protected in the Indian Health Service. And those recommendations, I think, will be coming out in the near future. And so [that was] another issue that had been long overlooked by Administrations of both parties and something that the President cared a lot about, and wanted to focus on and make sure that systematic abuse does not happen ever again. So in short, a lot of work has gone on in the last year or two to support Indian Country. Brooke, I am sure, talked about Opportunity Zones and a variety of other things that we are doing to help disadvantaged communities around the country.

But again coming back to the reason we are all on this phone call today, the issue of missing and murdered Alaska Natives and American Indians, is because you all care about, and we care about it, we want to make progress both at DOJ and at the Department of Interior, HHS, the White House, the entire federal family. I have to say one of the most moving experiences of my life was traveling to Alaska last year for several listening sessions on this topic. And it moved me in a powerful way, and I am glad to stay involved in this important issue set. Thank you and look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you, Mr. Hoelscher. We will continue along with the PowerPoint. Certainly appreciative of all of the support that the Trump Administration has

provided across the federal government for support for Operation Lady Justice. And as you mentioned, the signing of the Executive Order 13898 launched the inter-agency Operation Lady Justice Task Force. The primary charge of the Task Force is to develop an aggressive government-wide strategy to improve federal, local, state, and Tribal law enforcement cooperation to combat violence against women and youth in Native American communities.

We will establish protocols for new and unsolved cases, establish multi-jurisdictional cold case teams, improve the response to investigative challenges, and collect and manage data across jurisdictions.

And, at this time I would like to introduce the Task Force for those participating today. I am Tara Sweeney as I said, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs at the U.S. Department of the Interior. I am also Secretary Bernhardt's Co-Chair designee, and the Attorney General's Co-Chair designee from the Department of Justice is Katharine "Katie" Sullivan. As you can see on the slide, she is the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Office of Justice Programs. And sitting in for Katie today is Jessica Hart.

Jessica Hart: Thank you, Tara. Good afternoon, everyone. As Tara said, I am here representing Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General and Operation Lady Justice Co-Chair designee Katie Sullivan. My name is Jessica Hart. I am the Director of the Office for Victims of Crime, which is within the Office of Justice Programs and the Department of Justice.

I am so grateful really to have everyone here to speak with us today, and I am especially grateful for your willingness and your openness to discuss this painful topic with us. And I know Attorney General Barr and Katie both value the importance of hearing from Tribal members and professionals directly affected by this crisis, and that is why these listening sessions are just so important and valuable to the Task Force. The Department remains committed to working with Tribal leaders and with all law enforcement agencies to better understand this problem and develop more effective responses to turn this tide of violence. So thank you again for being with us here today, and allowing me

to introduce myself. I am excited to hear from all of you. Thank you so much.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you. And representing the Federal Bureau of Investigations, we have Terry Wade as the Executive Assistant Director for Criminal, Cyber, Response, and Services Branch. Representing Mr. Wade on the Task Force today is Jay Greenberg.

Jay Greenberg: Thank you, Tara. Good afternoon, everybody. This is Jay Greenberg, on behalf of the FBI Executive Assistant Director, Terry Wade, and Director Christopher Wray. I am the Chief of our Violent Crime Section, which manages all of the training and investigations, partnerships, and outreach that we provide for all Indian Country matters Nationwide. It is an honor to be representing the FBI here today and I look forward to your input on how we can do better to serve your needs. Thank you.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you. And the Acting Director for the Office on Violence Against Women at the Department of Justice, Laura Rogers. Representing Laura Rogers today is Frances Cook.

Frances Cook: Good afternoon, all. My name is Frances Cook and I am representing the head of the Office on Violence Against Women, Laura Rogers, who sends her deep regrets that she could not be here today. She asked me to share that she is so appreciative that the President included her on this Task Force. She feels that OVW brings a particular perspective to this work of making the connection between domestic and sexual violence, including sex trafficking and the disappearance or murder of Native people.

We have heard heartbreaking stories at our annual government-to-government consultations on violence against women in Tribal communities, stories about the connection between escalating domestic violence and homicide, as well as the disappearance of Native women and girls related to sex trafficking. We are so grateful to be a part of the critical work of this Task Force and I am pleased to be here today on Laura's behalf. Thank you so much.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you so much. It has come to my attention that the audio seems to be cutting in and out, and operator, can you please explain how to use the app?

Operator: Yes. If you are having audio issues coming through your speakers, if you would just exit the room, re-enter and when prompted, put your phone number in. Then you will get a call from a 404 number and the audio will come clearly through your phone line.

Tara Sweeney: So in order to hear clearly, I guess, folks will need to use the app and the operator will call you from the app to your phone number and the sound quality is significantly better.

Operator: Yes, that is correct.

Tara Sweeney: Moving on to the remaining Task Force members, it is my honor to introduce Charles Addington, Deputy Bureau Director for BIA, Office of Justice Services. Charlie?

Charles Addington: Well, good afternoon, everybody, and thank you Assistant Secretary Sweeney. Like Tara said, my name is Charles Addington. I am the Director for the BIA, Office of Justice Services. We oversee the public safety programs throughout Indian Country and we are just so pleased to be a part of this Task Force and to collaborate with our other partners at the Department of Justice, HHS, and the FBI, [and to] work hand in hand with our Tribal Law Enforcement staff, and the other supporting programs throughout Indian Country to try to address this very critical issue that we are going to talk about here today. We look forward to hearing a lot of good feedback from the panel members and thank you for being here today.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you. Again, my honor to introduce Trent Shores, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Oklahoma. Mr. Shores?

Trent Shores: (Speaking Native language). My name is Trent Shores, I am a citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. I am the United States Attorney in Northern Oklahoma but also have the honor of chairing the Native American Issues Subcommittee for the Attorney General. I look very much forward to hearing

any comments today. I am particularly interested to hear whether the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous persons is impacting both women and girls, and men and boys. I am curious to hear from Tribal leaders about what the law enforcement situation is like on the ground, to be able to receive those reports and follow up on those investigations in a timely manner. I look forward to hearing your comments and taking them to heart.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you, Mr. Shores. And, a woman who needs no introduction. Many of you know Jeannie Hovland, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Native American Affairs and Task Force member. Jeannie?

Jeannie Hovland: Thank you. (Speaking Native language). Good afternoon, my relatives. I greet you with a good heart; Jeannie Hovland, I am Commissioner of the Administration for Native Americans and also Deputy Assistant Secretary of Native American Affairs of the Administration for Children and Families and I am a proud member of the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe. I am so honored to be here with folks from the White House, with Assistant Secretary Sweeney and our Operation Lady Justice Task Force members from Interior and Department of Justice, and I still appreciate the presence and support on this important issue and making this a priority of this Administration.

To the Tribal leaders and members on the phone, I want to say thank you so much for your years of advocacy to remember and to bring justice and healing to families and communities who have experienced the tragedy of a missing or murdered relative. Your voices have been heard, and we are here to work in partnership to help bring our relatives home and keep our communities safe. I am grateful that this Task Force has broadened this issue to include the Department of Health and Human Services, so we can have a holistic approach, which is required if we really want to have a positive impact. I look forward to hearing from our Tribal leaders on the phone today on how we at HHS can support a community-based prevention, intervention, and healing strategy. Thank you for this opportunity. (Speaking Native language).

Tara Sweeney: Thank you, Commissioner Hovland. These next slides will provide an update on the accomplishments so far with respect to the Task Force work projects. To date, the Task Force has held eight listening sessions and will continue to

aggressively consult with Indian Country. The information in the recommendations that we gather from the sessions will help guide the Task Force in developing protocols and recommendations. The Task Force has launched a website that will be regularly updated on important aspects of our activity, including progress to date on upcoming events.

We have developed several workgroups which have been aggressively collaborating on the various aspects of the charges of the Task Force and you can see the various workgroups represented on the slide. We are also maximizing our efforts by coordinating with other federal Task Forces and Commissions such as the ones listed here. The Presidential Report due dates are represented on this slide; by November 26, 2020, we are charged with submitting a report, a progress report, to the President that highlights the activities and accomplishments thus far as well as recommendations for future actions. And then in November 2021, the Task Force will submit its final report to the President.

So, to help guide discussions during our listening sessions and consultations, we have developed several key questions geared towards proposing potential solutions. I believe that those who registered for this event also received a copy of this PowerPoint and so you will have those guiding questions for you. And finally, in an effort to continue to hear from Indian Country, we have a dedicated email address established for individuals to provide the Task Force with comments and recommendations and you can see that here at OperationLadyJustice@usdoj.gov.

You can also find additional information on the website. So, if you are offering testimony and your audio is connected via phone, here are the directions for how you can get in the queue to provide comments. If you are connected via the computer, you will see that there is an icon at the top, where you can raise your hand and [once you] raise your hand, you will be put into the queue for comments. If you would like to provide comments in a chat format, there is that option on your screen, where you can submit questions and we will have the Executive Director, Marcia Good, also monitoring that

box for additional information. So at this time, the lines are open for comments.

Operator: If anyone would like to speak, just as she said, just raise your hand and you will be called in that order.

Tara Sweeney: If there anyone interested in providing comments at this time, please raise your hand. But in the meantime, as we are waiting for people to familiarize themselves with this program, we have heard during prior listening sessions from Tribes who have no law enforcement at all, the need to mobilize partnerships and develop a workable framework. So as you are listening to the comments today, that is a topic that is very important to the Task Force and we would encourage you if you are not providing comments on it today, to submit and include that topic in your written remarks. Are there any Tribal leaders in the queue to speak? Operator?

Operator: I have Monte Fronk on line right now. Monte, go ahead.

Monte Fronk: Yes, can you hear me OK?

Operator: Yes, we can.

Tara Sweeney: Yes.

Monte Fronk: Yes. Yes, I am with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe here in Minnesota and I am Native father of a teenage daughter who was trafficked for almost a year, and very traumatic to our family was that time. She was recovered alive but very traumatically, physically, and emotionally damaged at that time. She was missing from 14 and a half to almost 16 years of age.

Luckily, [she] never left Minnesota but just as a Native father who experienced the struggles of working with all kinds of agent services who felt that young teenage girls were not a high priority to them was a very big struggle; the fact that I am in public safety myself for 32 years and it was really because of my fellow brother in uniform who I could reach out to, that really helped to bring her back home alive but – but very, very damaged.

She is 23 now and you know, still struggling with the results of that. The one thing I have looked at and I am glad to be on this call is, you know, the resources that are out there and how, you know, many agencies see our missing Native girls, you know, as really not worth their time; and I think that is something that I have heard from other Native parents of girls who were missing or trafficked, was that first contact is really – what could either, you know, bring the information forward or not but also in mine, I was very honored and really, my saviors was two organizations which was The Patty Wetterling Foundation here in Minnesota as well as the National Missing and Children's Network, who were always probably more on top of things with getting the word out when my daughter went missing.

And when hope kind of faded away after almost close to a year, and Patty Wetterling was a very excellent resource for myself, just verbalizing what the realities were and for myself, it was pretty much planning for a funeral. But luckily, a tip found her, found her alive at a residence in St. Paul, Minnesota. From that, I guess as a Native father who has a daughter who has been through this and working in public safety, I always felt that through my mentors and a lot of collaboration – I really appreciate the fact that our Chief Executive, Melanie Benjamin, was in that photograph and she has just been a wonderful mentor for what she has done for the Mille Lacs Band, for all of us who are her employees.

We are building relationships and bridges that many states have what is called Fusion Centers and that to me one of those under-tapped resources I think for Indian Country which many of us have always wished there were more of a Tribal presence in those Fusion Centers across the United States. So, if a young Native woman goes missing or murdered or lost, that could be reported to those Fusion Centers as soon as possible, either through law enforcement or through Tribal advocacy. Because sometimes [in] Indian Country, our Tribal advocates who are really our unsung heroes, are the ones who find out about the missing women and children in our communities because sometimes the fear of law enforcement is one they would rather talk to an advocate about their missing family members than going to the criminal justice system with that one.

I know that the FBI does have a Citizens Academy and I know in Minnesota, we have talked about my experiences of why could there not be an Indian Country academy, similar to the FBI Citizens Academy, to help educate Tribal communities about these situations in a good way – and understand the process of when these things happen to families, the historical trauma that is caused by this or added to their own lives with that one, what the prosecution looks like, what the investigation looks like, you know, and to help them understand because when you are in crisis, things do not happen quickly.

So I hope that with this group, you know, and I have told some of my federal resources I would love to be, you know, if I could be a resource as a Native father who has been in a public safety for 32 years, who has a daughter who was missing but found alive which I know is a rarity to most of the stories you have heard, you know, maybe I could be a resource if possible, you know, in that way, having lived with the situation myself. I always hope that the Fusion Centers across the U.S. could be a better resource tool for Indian Country if there was a Tribal liaison assigned to those, to get those reports and the words out as soon as possible so if a Native woman is being trafficked and let us say goes to another state and the traffic stuff happens.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you so much for your comments. As I have mentioned in the beginning of our presentation, the program that we are using will automatically mute the lines after the three-minute mark. At this time, I would like to call on, first, Jessica Hart and Jay Greenberg for just some feedback to Mr. Fronk.

Jessica Hart: Thanks, Tara. I just want to say, thank you for sharing with us. My heart, you know, really goes out to you. I appreciate you stepping up today and being here today and sharing your experience and I am, so glad that you are, one of the few people I think out there that, your daughter came back and I am so happy – you know – that you were reunited with your daughter.

I think your perspective is really useful to this Task Force: kind of, the situation that you and your family have gone through, and then your, it sounds like, public safety experience. I think this is something that the Task Force would like to look into further, the Fusion Center, and I know you got cut off

at the end, but you started mentioning Tribal liaisons and I know we have specific grants for Tribal liaisons. I think that is something we could look into further.

So, I really – you know – appreciate your experience and think you have some really great ideas that we would like to look at further. I can hand it over. I think one of my other colleagues would like to share some remarks.

Tara Sweeney: Mr. Greenberg.

Jay Greenberg: Hi, Mr. Fronk. Jay Greenberg with the FBI. Thank you very much for sharing your story. As an investigator, when I first joined the FBI, I actually worked human trafficking matters and I saw the sort of, trail of destruction that trafficking leaves through families and communities. I will echo the comments that I am very happy your daughter has come back home, although with a heavy heart as a parent knowing that your family has been altered in a very terrible way for the rest of your life because of that experience. So, let me just, you know, deeply sympathize with you for a moment about the experience that your daughter went through and that your family went through.

In terms of the partnership with NCMEC, I am pleased to report, in addition to overseeing Indian Country, I also oversee all of our human trafficking and crimes against children investigations; and we are the only federal agency who has a formal standing footprint with NCMEC, and we help them pass through their leads, both on the crimes against children and missing children areas to help farm those leads out.

So, it is very, very important to our missions, it is very important to the stability of the country, and everybody who is here in our country, and here on all the lands that we have, that we continue to execute that well. So, I would like to just thank you for sharing your story and also for your comments about the opportunity, perhaps, to expand some of the liaison that we do within Native American communities to sort of mimic what we do with Citizens Academy.

For those of you not familiar with it, in Citizens Academy, we bring a group of citizens into the FBI, generally, once a week for six to eight weeks depending on each office and the program they offer there, and talk about all of the investigate equities that we perform. That is certainly something that we would be open to expanding into Indian Country as a possibility, and I will follow up with all of our major offices who service the Indian Country lands and see the possibility and the viability of that going forward.

Thank you for sharing that.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you. Operator, are there additional comments? Next speaker.

Operator: Yes, next we have Danielle. Danielle, your line is open.

Danielle Amick: Thank you very much. Are you able to hear me clearly?

Operator: Yes, please go ahead.

Tara Sweeney: Yes.

Danielle Amick: Thank you. My name is Danielle Amick and a member of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians. I agree, and I think it is a great idea that everyone is gathering. I would like to see some focus on communication. As the gentlemen mentioned, a lot of times, people do not realize what the actual process is when there is a crime that has been committed, especially when it happens on the reservation.

My elderly mother was a victim of a sexual assault, but the communication between ourselves – and I am not currently on the reservation, I live in another state – so it was kind of confusing when we were going back and forth, trying to communicate with the people that were assigned to my mother's case.

So, I just would like to see some improvement and some type of possible additional training to go with that, whether that is – you know – an individual speaking directly with the family members from the FBI and the Tribal member or – and the Tribe, I just think it would be very beneficial to the

victims of the families so that they can understand what the process is, if that makes sense.

Thank you.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you for your comments. Just as a reminder, when you look at the Executive Order, it charges the Task Force with precisely that in terms of improving the response to various challenges including investigation and communication, developing the appropriate protocols to assist families and victims with the multi-jurisdictional challenges that we often find in Indian Country.

I do not know, Jeannie, Commissioner Hovland, if you wanted to provide any information about the toolkit that HHS has developed?

Jeannie Hovland: Thank you, and yes, absolutely agree. Education and communication to families and also the federal agencies learning from lived experience for those that have had the unfortunate situation of having someone human trafficked or victimized. We need to learn from you all, so thank you for sharing and I am sorry for you and your family, that you have had experiences.

We have, at the Administration for Native Americans, partnered with the Office on Trafficking in Persons, which is a department within Department of Health and Human Services, and developed a free online toolkit called "Combating Human Trafficking: Native Youth Toolkit", and it is free. You can download it, distribute it. It is a good way to have a conversation about, "What is human trafficking, what do you do to identify it, and how do you respond to it?"

And in partnership with Assistant Secretary Sweeney, we trained several of the Bureau's Indian Education staff, and also staff from Johnson O'Malley Program, so that they can, one, be aware of what human trafficking is, and teach this to their students, and start those conversations, but also working with Director Addington on how we can also bring this to law enforcement.

And so, we have a lot taking place, we have a lot of work to do, and we do want to have our approach on the Task Force be from lived experience from Native communities, so we would be happy to follow up with you, and visit further about this, and use your insight on this, so, thank you.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you. Operator, next speaker.

Operator: Next, we have Kristin Welch. Kristin, go ahead. You are on the line.

Kristin Welch: (Speaking Native language) My English name is Kristin Welch. I am a descendant of Menominee and I work for the Indigenous led non-profit, Menikanaehkem. I am the lead organizer for Women's Leadership Cohort for MMIW, and we are currently working with Wisconsin DOJ to move the MMIW Task Force forward here in Wisconsin.

So, my question is, how are you actively seeking out families and survivors to guide the work, but also how you are engaging Indigenous-led grassroots leaders in the work as well?

Jeannie Hovland: This is Commissioner Hovland. Currently, at the Administration for Native Americans and Office on Trafficking in Persons, we had a first-ever Native American cohort on human trafficking with providers and survivors of human trafficking who are going to be issuing a white paper on how we can address. And I know, human trafficking – you know – we want to see how much that plays into murdered and missing Indigenous people, so that is one area that we are looking at, and we will be using their white paper as a guidance for us, as well as reaching out through community meetings and our listening sessions. That is part of what we will be doing from HHS on education and communication.

Marcia Good: Kristin, this is Marcia Good. I am the Executive Director of the Task Force, which means that I am responsible for, kind of, the day-to-day operations. Another thing that the Task Force is doing to reach out to the Tribal grassroots organizations is we are putting together, to start with, some webinars to work with the Tribes who are already working in this area so we can all coordinate efforts.

We are doing the same thing with some of the state's Task Forces as well and then trying to coordinate and communicate amongst all of the groups; the Tribal work that is already being done, and then coordinating that with our and the state work, because there are many Tribes who have already done a number of really good things in this area and are – you know – a long way down the line in their own communities. And so, if you could get me your contact information, I would love to visit with you about that.

So, that is kind of for the grassroots section. For families, we are still working on, kind of, the best way to be able to do that. You know – in-person sessions obviously are the best way to be able to do it, because it is such a sensitive topic; and with the – you know – the lack of ability to travel right now, we are kind of struggling with that, but we are thinking about how we can do that, and do that best so that families can discuss this with each other and with us. We will definitely be back in touch when we have something along those lines worked out. Thank you.

Jessica Hart: Thanks, Marcia. This is Jessica. It looks like Tara's phone is having some difficulties. Operator, do we maybe want to move on to the next person, and hopefully Tara will be able to call in by then?

Operator: Yes, I am waiting for – I have Jami Moran. Just waiting for that line to be picked up.

Jessica Hart: Perfect.

Operator: OK, Jami. Your line is open. Go ahead. Jami, are you with us?

Jami Moran: I am. I was just able to log in.

Operator: OK.

Jami Moran: Actually, I had several questions. Well, actually, first, let me introduce myself. Jami Moran. I am the Program Director for the Victim Services Program for Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians in the upper peninsula of Michigan.

The first question I had is when will Tribal justice systems be hearing from the U.S. Attorneys' Offices who received the funding to hire the MMIP Coordinators?

My second question is, is the Task Force intended to encompass collaborative law enforcement networking that includes federal partners in instances of MMIW cases that occur off of Trust land?

And my last question is, what is being done with regard to state statutes and individual law enforcement agency policies that prohibit the acceptance of missing person complaints for "X" number of hours?

Marcia Good: So, this is Marcia. Could I ask – Shannon Cozzoni is on the line. Shannon is a Tribal Liaison in Oklahoma, and their MMIP Coordinator, I believe, starts next Monday. Shannon, could you talk just a little bit about kind of the process for the first question that she had about the contact with the new MMIP Coordinators and U.S. Attorneys' Offices? I know we also have other U.S. Attorneys who are on this call, and we can also hook those folks up.

Shannon Cozzoni: Sure, can you hear me?

Marcia Good: Yes.

Shannon Cozzoni: OK. I know that Montana has theirs – has had theirs in place. Theirs was actually done a little differently. It was not run through that program. So, theirs has been on the ground. Ours starts Monday, and, honestly, they would have started earlier. You know – we just got – with COVID, a lot of things had to slow down.

So, I suspect that several of the other MMIP Coordinators will be coming on in the next – this month. I suspect that process should be right behind us. So, I suspect that those will be – the outreach should start picking up pretty quickly. You know – clearly, we are concerned about COVID and how much in-person we are going to do, but I think there will be – certainly, we will ease into that.

The other question; there are individuals like, for instance, the Oklahoma one. There are three districts in Oklahoma, so that our MMIP Coordinator is

covering all three districts. I think there is one in New Mexico for instance, and so they will be kind of reaching out, and then they will also work together to kind of standardize, and I use that term understanding that every Tribe is different, every state is different, so there will not be, like, a "standard," but there will be some things that we have got to look at.

For instance, Oklahoma did just pass the law that there is no waiting period. I do not know. There is no law that states there is a waiting period in any state that I am aware of. It is usually a policy, and honestly, I think it is kind of one of those policies that may be kind of unwritten.

So, I think that we are seeing some efforts out there to try to affirmatively acknowledge that these arbitrary time periods do not exist, that, instead, what we want to look at is the situation that is going on. It is different for everyone. If this person is always at this place at this time and they do not show up, then that is cause for an immediate report.

And so, that is what, for instance, the Oklahoma law does. I know some other states that had enacted those laws, and hopefully that would be something that we would look to get on a National level.

Marcia, was there anything else you needed me to cover?

Jami Moran: OK, thank you.

Shannon Cozzoni: I am sorry.

Marcia Good: No, I think that is good. Andrew Birge is on the line. He is one of our U.S. Attorneys, and if we could open up his line, he might be able to address the issue about contacting the U.S. Attorneys' MMIP coordinators. Andrew, are you on?

Andrew Birge: I believe I am here. Can you hear me?

Marcia Good: Yes.

Andrew Birge: Excellent. Yes, our MMIP Coordinator is going to be starting July 1. The delays are unfortunately related to the pandemic we have been experiencing, but we do look forward to having him on the ground. An experienced former agent comes recommended to us from former Tribal leaders as well.

Some of the issues that have been asked about are exactly what we anticipate he will be looking at. So, he will be – already, we have talked to him about plans for meeting with the Tribes this summer if possible, but we want to be sensitive about in-person meetings, but definitely, the inquiries will begin and we do want to understand some of these underlying issues and come up with better lines of communication.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you. Any other additional questions? Operator, next speaker.

Operator: I do not have anyone else with their hand raised up at the moment.

Tara Sweeney: OK. I see that there was a question asked in the comments section about the improvement on cellular and internet access in rural communities. It is a major problem if women who are in danger are unable to contact emergency services, and I absolutely agree with that.

At Indian Affairs, we have a National Tribal broadband grant program that is about to close. Applications are due, I believe, June 12 or 13, and it is to provide Tribal governments an opportunity or financial assistance to conduct feasibility studies for broadband infrastructure, especially in our rural communities.

Charlie Addington, can you also talk about the BIA OJS phone app that you have developed?

Charles Addington: You bet. Well, good afternoon, everybody. Yes, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Offices of Justice Services found we kept hearing from our Tribal communities that there was no way for community members to provide tips directly to law enforcement, so the BIA Division of Drug Enforcement began looking at, "How can we set up something that is very simple?" A phone app to where – if you have a smart phone, you can download an app, and you can

just go to that app and actually provide a tip to law enforcement directly through that app.

So, we worked with the contractors to make sure we had a system set up that would work for us, and you can go on any smart phone, whether it be an iPhone or an Android phone, and download our app which is called "BIA Tips," and you can actually go onto that app once you download it and send tips directly to law enforcement officer or a Special Agent, and they will actually assign that to whoever is in the area of where the crime or the tip is coming in at.

And then, you can actually remain anonymous or you can actually communicate directly with the Agent that it is assigned to, so it is a very good tool for folks to be able provide tips and help law enforcement start being better informed and respond to these crimes in a much quicker manner.

Tara Sweeney: So, Charlie, how can they find the link or the URL for the app?

Charles Addington: Yes, you just go to the App Store on your smart phone, and type in "BIA Tips" into the search, and it will bring up an icon that has a round BIA Office of Justice Services seal, and you just download the app. And once you download that on your phone, you can just go directly to it, open the app and provide tips to Law Enforcement.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you. Operator, are there additional speakers in the queue?

Operator: Yes, next we have Hollie Mackey. Hollie, you are on the line.

Hollie Mackey: Hi, I do not know if you all can hear me. Hollie Mackey from the Raven Project, and North Dakota State University, an enrolled member of the Northern Cheyenne. And, first of all, I just want to thank you all for the work that you are doing. I think that it is really important, and we have had the opportunity over the last two years to work with a number of FBI analysts and agents in our region who have done a phenomenal job.

But it kind of gets back into the grassroots question in some ways, right, and I feel that the Task Forces in the states with all of the legislation coming out to

identify the scope of problem and to think about all of these issues. But, it seems as if everything is still very much top down, where if law enforcement is a perceived problem from Indian Country, law enforcement has now been tasked to fix the problem, and I do not see where the advocates for MMIP have any authority, right?

So we have given them access, but we have not given them any authority to work on behalf of victims which does a disservice, really, to the people who are trying to effect change in those areas. And similarly, I have talked to a few people at DOJ about this. You know, we have become increasingly concerned about data, and the way that data is both unavailable, or marginally available or, you know, if you are a victim or a family member, you can access more information through NamUs, but NamUs is really shortsighted in the ways that it provides any sort of data that would help scholars, such as myself, working on this end think about prevention or intervention efforts.

So I am curious what it is the Task Force is going to do to address more of the prevention side of things, because by the time we get to the law enforcement side of it, we have already lost people, where we are not talking about juvenile justice, we are not talking about child protective services, we are not talking about social conditions. And often framing it as trafficking makes it an issue of otherness, where we know that a lot of these things are happening in our communities, just our communities simply do not have the officers or the support, the social service support, the housing, any of the things that really get bound up in the federal shackles due to reservation systems and the IRA governance.

So, I am curious how people are thinking about these issues, in particular, having worked for a number of years now and still finding that despite the work that everybody is doing, like those of us who are doing the work from around the outside when we have Task Forces like this constructed.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you for your questions. You raise some extremely important points and when the discussions began about how the federal government was going to respond to missing and murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives, it became apparent to so many stakeholders within the Administration, and

those that are on this call, that data and data deficiency was something that really needed to be addressed.

And so, I would like to turn the floor over to Charles Addington and to Trent Shores to address some of the questions regarding data deficiency and the recognition that the Task Force has for why this is important. Charlie?

Charles Addington: Yes, well thank you, Tara. Yes, you know, the data, we have been looking at how [we can] get a system to put it in place to get the accurate data. How can we find out exactly what the problem is in each one of our communities? And, prior to utilizing the NamUs system, which is a great system to input all of our data into and be able to track those and find folks at NamUs worked hand in hand with those to develop some Tribal affiliation specific dropdown categories, so we could actually track what – missing persons, whether they lived on the reservation, whether they were missing from the reservation, or if they were off the reservation.

So that way we could actually track the numbers better. And we have been working with them to try to get that system up and running where all of our Tribal law enforcement programs are entering all of their missing person and murdered cases into the system. So we have been working very hand in hand with our Tribal law enforcement departments to try to get them to do that, since it is a voluntary reporting system.

But we think once we are able to get all of our cases that we have identified through law enforcement and through the community – we do hear from community members that tell us, you know, "Hey, I have got a loved one that has come up missing, and we do not know if it has been reported to law enforcement or not."

And that is one of the things that we are going to do as we develop and stand up these cold case Task Forces to address missing persons, and cold cases of investigations is looking at how do we get all of that data from the community members and from law enforcement and get it all into a system, so you know exactly what the problem is.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you. Mr. Shores, did you have anything to add?

OK, I appreciate the question also about preventative measures. When you look at the Executive Order in Section Four, there is a subsection, I believe it is C or D, where it calls for the Task Force to develop and to execute an education and outreach campaign for those communities that are most affected. And it calls for the Task Force to identify how we can reduce those types of crimes. And so, your suggestions on prevention and data capture are certainly well noted. So, thank you for that.

Operator, next speaker please.

Operator: OK, next I have Rachel Carr. Rachel, go ahead, you are on the line.

Rachel Carr: Hello, can you hear me?

Operator: Yes, we can. Go ahead.

Rachel Carr: Hello. Oh, yes.

Operator: Yes, go ahead.

Rachel Carr: Rachel Carr. Hi everyone. My name is Rachel Carr. I am with the Uniting Three Fires Against Violence. We are Michigan's Tribal Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition. And I just had a question following up from Jami Moran's earlier question regarding the Task Force intention to include all law enforcement partners, including the federal partners for MMIW cases that occur off trust land, because we know that a good majority of American Indian, Alaska Natives live off trust land.

Tara Sweeney: Could you reframe your question?

Rachel Carr: I mean, when you are – so for the Federal – for the – you know, all law enforcement to collaborate when an MMIW happens, you know, and to involve federal partners, is it a requirement, or is it the Task Force belief that the – you know, that the person that has gone missing has to be missing from

Indian Country specifically, or reservation or trust land, or that these are not a requirement?

Tara Sweeney: Yep.

Tara Sweeney: So, I will turn it over to Shannon Cozzoni to provide some background.

Shannon Cozzoni: Yes. And I would say "not necessarily," and that is something we – certainly, we want the federal partners involved. All partners: Tribal, state, federal. Because as you just mentioned, one of the issues we have is this crossing of lines. But sometimes those crossing of lines give us federal jurisdiction, even when they are not on Indian Country.

So, in events of domestic violence, for instance, we have the VAWA statutes that may kick in. If there is trafficking or drug – even drug trafficking to some degree, we might be able to get a federal hook to be able to focus on that. Having said that, there is still going to be options. For instance, the FBI, and then they can probably answer to that – their response teams, BIA's response teams, through certain – either cross commissioning or through their abilities to be involved in their searches.

So I do not think it is – I mean, what we want to do is expand people's thinking on that, and being able to think outside of the box in what ways can we encourage all involvement.

Jay Greenberg: Yes, hi, this is Jay Greenberg again.

Tara Sweeney: Sure.

Jay Greenberg: Hello. Hey, and Charlie, you may want to come in here after me as well. But great question. And, as you know, the jurisdiction for the FBI, in particular when it comes to missing people, is different in each state, and the jurisdiction is just incredibly complex. So there are some states where we have no jurisdiction on Tribal lands, off Tribal lands.

There are some states where it is mixed or where we have secondary jurisdiction. But in the case of missing people, when we focus on what we can

do and where we have jurisdiction, we will move forward with all available resources to try and bring somebody home who is reported missing. And that is consistent with how we have operated in the past and how we will operate today and we will continue to operate in the future.

Charles Addington: Yes, thanks so much, Jay. Hey, this is Charlie as well. Just to add onto that. We have just seen a perfect example of this. You know, in the past we have had – you know, there have been issues with the coordination of missing person responses from law enforcement agencies, you know, even that border each other. You know, say, the off reservation law enforcement and the Tribal law enforcement that border each other, because there has been some areas of just lack of coordination in the beginning.

And a very good example of this, is we just had an unfortunate case months back in Montana and the local Sheriff's Office actually contacted the BIA, Office of Justice Services and the FBI to come in immediately to help them with the search of a missing Native female up there. And I can tell you, immediately, the BIA and the FBI responded in force up there and worked hand-in-hand with those Tribal and county officers to bring that to a resolution, and do the searches and everything to find that missing female.

So, it is getting better. We hear what you are saying. And I think everyone recognizes there has been a gap there, but we are doing a lot to really close those gaps up.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you. Operator, next speaker.

Operator: Next, I have Elizabeth Carr. Elizabeth, your line is open, go ahead.

Elizabeth Carr: Hi, good afternoon, this is Elizabeth Carr with NIWRC. I just have a few questions to follow up from the conversations that have taken place earlier this afternoon.

So the first is, thinking about the function of the MMIP Coordinators, how are communities being made aware of their existence when they are finally on board, and then how do community members engage with them? Is there

going to be a website, a phone number, an instructional guide for folks to be able to access? Just thinking about, you know, the onboarding process and what that looks like in terms of folks being able to access those Coordinators.

And then, in terms of the app that Mr. Addington mentioned, how is that tool being promoted across Indian country, and is there a coordinated outreach plan to promote that tool in any way? Thank you.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you. We will start with Department of Justice regarding the MMIP Coordinators, and then over to Charlie Addington to talk about the BIA OJS apps. Department of Justice, either Jay or Shannon, or Jessica.

Jessica Hart: Yes, this is Jessica. I think communication is obviously going to be a key piece of this, and every U.S. Attorney's Office is obviously going to operate in a different way, depending on their relationships. Shannon, I know – I think you guys have said you were just getting someone on board, the Coordinator, or just about to. Can you all talk about maybe your plans, how to communicate that.

Shannon Cozzoni: Yes, ours starts Monday. I think, Trent, at the last meeting had given out her email address even, and I apologize, I do not know that I have it yet. So I will see what I can find. But yes, you should be able to call the office and get a hold of them.

You know, again, it is going to be different for each U.S. Attorney's Office, but our intention at least in our office in Oklahoma is that our MMIP coordinator, who is Patti Buhl, will actually start reaching out and, again, I said "going out", but that again will depend on, kind of, the comfort level of Tribes, and reaching out to those individuals. We have tried to identify the people in our state that have groups in place to start with, and that has been where we will reach out first.

And then just showing up at – showing up and being part of the community and talking to people there, you will naturally find the groups you need to find. But certainly, they can call our office and ask for Patti Buhl.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you.

Charles Addington: Yes.

Tara Sweeney: And to Director Addington.

Charles Addington: Yes, just to follow up on the app, what we did is we actually developed this initially for our Division of Drug Enforcement. So, we have developed it a couple of years ago, and now we are in the process of expanding that tip line, and we have actually put it out on social media. We have it up on our Facebook pages, and out on social media, and then we have also put flyers up out in the communities.

And the platform is through tip411. So tip411 has actually helped us develop all those tools and push those out to the communities as well. And then we will be developing additional tip lines and those type of things as we move down the road on our cold case Task Forces. So we will be putting our tip lines for those cases as well as the reward lines and different things as we stand up our cold case Task Forces.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you. Operator, next speaker?

Operator: On the line now we have Renee. Renee, your line is open.

Renee: Yes, I have a quick question. When it was mentioned that people will be able to access an app, here in Southern California we have numerous places that pop up within the community, and just for the general public that qualify as low income, would phones also be provided to those in need on reservations, so they have the opportunity to have access to the app?

Charles Addington: Well, there is – this is Charlie. There is not any type of phones that come with the app, but there [are] some services out there now. As a matter of fact, I just spoke with one yesterday with Tracfone where they are actually putting – there are federal programs out there to assist Tribal members if they cannot afford any phone to either report crimes or those type of things.

And it is a really low, low cost if you go through some of these programs that they have out there. So, that is something that we are looking into to see if we can – some of those programs that are available, so we can get the word out to Tribal communities, to where folks that cannot afford a full phone [plan]– these really reduced rates so they have a phone with so many minutes and so many gigabytes of data on them.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you. Any further questions?

Operator: I have Kristin Welch. Kristin, your line is open. Go ahead.

Kristin Welch: Hello, again. So, I just had some questions about what are you doing to examine like the root causes of MMIW, like the federal imposed policies that diminish Tribal rights to self-determine? So Tribes have the right to create their own codes, you know, against human trafficking, against resource extraction, but often times like through decisions like the Oliphant decision, there is very limited sovereignty and the ability to enact and uphold those rights to self-determine and even in VAWA, there are some protections but not enough.

So what are you doing to examine those issues of like preventative measures and looking at federal policy as causative of MMIW? And also, are you examining the issue of resource extraction, like the KXL Pipeline, like Line 3, like Line 5, No Back 40 here in Wisconsin, where cases of violence against Indigenous women are increased by 70 percent because of man camps and how are you going to support Tribes and their rights to self-determine through that?

Tara Sweeney: Thank you for your question. You have raised some very compelling points. I want to point you to the Executive Order that, in Section 4, it clearly defines what the mission and the topics that the Task Force must report on to the President.

Operator, next speaker?

Operator: OK, next we have Hollie Mackey. Hollie, go ahead, your line is open.

Hollie Mackey: Hi, thank you, again. I have got two questions: first is, you know, it has occurred as somebody else was speaking, I was wondering if or to what level perhaps FBI or the BIA or DOJ has considered their ability to increase the number of officers who are available in Indian Country?

Because somebody had spoken about having a very positive response but we also know that, for example, juvenile offenders in North Central Montana are often not apprehended or taken in because there is not a facility close enough that they can actually do that within the legal framework of the federal government. Or – you know, I know somebody was – said there were in charge of crimes against children because you know we have FBI agents, right, in Indian Country who have, you know, 75 to 100 different cases that they are working on at any given point in time and they are working so hard, right, to help us but they are just stretched so thin that I am curious about that.

And then – I understand what the purpose of the Task Force is, right, and facilitating out the Executive Order but just speaking to the last speaker's comments – for those of us who are really doing this every day, it is problematic when we have issues like pipelines that contribute to trafficking, that contribute to MMIP when we have an Executive Order from a President who then has an Executive Order permit to allow the KXL Pipeline to get built as timely as possible through COVID, as deeming oil workers like essential workers, so we can get the pipeline in the ground before the court hearing prevents it or – you know, similarly, just the extractive resources in general where we have, you know, the state of Montana current Attorney General trying to advocate on behalf of putting pipelines in when we have data from the FBI linking man camps to trafficking from Bakken.

So I am really curious (a) like are we going to have more law enforcement, right? That is the basic question. But then, (b) how are we going to reconcile this because it seems very disingenuous to have on one hand a Task Force to address these issues but then everything else is then the federal government working against and trying to really facilitate all these conditions that lead to the crisis in the first place?

Tara Sweeney: Thank you for your questions, Ms. Mackey. In terms of reconciling, one of the comments that I had at the beginning of the session, the start of the session, was that these sessions are being recorded and will become part of the transcript so as we go through the comments that are provided, as we look at the transcripts of our listening sessions and consultations, the comments that are made here help guide those discussions and recommendations.

So in terms of the Task Force and its capabilities, raising those types of concerns through these fora is an appropriate way to do that one, and one that is included in the record, so I appreciate the comments that you are making. I want to turn it over to Jay Greenberg to talk about the FBI hiring issues and then over to Charles Addington to add some additional background on BIA OJS hiring. Jay?

Jay Greenberg: Hi, Ms. Mackey. Thank you for your question and your comments. Certainly, we take all the investigative responsibilities that are entrusted to us to heart, nothing more so than Indian Country matters. We have escalated the amount of staffing that we have in different Indian Country areas and offices and that is a – the balancing of the resources across offices and across the violations that we cover within those offices and between our offices – is something that is a constant source of analysis and it is really kind of a constantly moving target about where we are putting our people, so I do appreciate that are regularly re-evaluating how to staff our people, where to staff our people, and where to assign them to and certainly, this remains a priority for the organization to continue to staff.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you. Charlie?

Charles Addington: This is Charlie, just to add on to what Jay said – same thing with the BIA Office of Justice Services. We just continue to make sure we are filling vacant positions out there because that is one of things, exactly what you say, you know, if you do not have boots on the ground out there, it is hard to make a difference and actually do proactive things to actually address these issues before they can occur and that is what we are doing right now. We have been aggressively filling vacant law enforcement positions throughout the country.

We have also reallocated some of our resources to the higher crime areas where we have previously had different programs. We consolidated some of those and honed our skills in on making sure that we have got the boots on the ground to answer these calls for service. And then we did add additional Special Agents for Division of Drug Enforcement who also work in border crimes/human trafficking and some of the specialty investigations. We were able to add 20 new Agents to our Division of Drug Enforcement over the last year and a half.

And also adding these new cold case Task Force Special Agents throughout Indian Country. There is going to be 10 of those, so it is going to be new, that is coming on board as well to help us work on these specific issues. So now you do not have your police officers on the ground, who should be there responding to calls for service and doing the preventative patrols and those kind of things, trying to address all of these other issues. We are going to have people -- new folks on the ground to help us.

Tara Sweeney: And then Jessica Hart for DOJ.

Jessica Hart: Yes, thanks, Tara. I want to say, too, Attorney General Barr visited kind of remote areas of Alaska about this time last year and I think, you know, saw a lot of what you are talking about. One of the remote villages we went to did not have any law enforcement officers and he really saw this as a law enforcement emergency and after returning from that trip, like I said, about this time last year, reallocated resources – through our Office of Justice Programs and our Community Oriented Policing Service programs – to hire Village Public Safety Officers and Village Police Officers and so I think the Department of Justice and Attorney General Barr really see this as an area that he would like to invest and have invested more resources. So thank you for bringing this up and I think it is an area that we will continue to work in.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you. Are there any additional questions?

Roger Smith: Hello.

Operator: Hello, everybody, we have Roger Smith here.

Tara Sweeney: Pardon?

Roger Smith: Hello, this is representative, Roger Smith, from Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.

Tara Sweeney: OK, go ahead.

Roger Smith: I have nearly 20 years in law enforcement and also a Tribal Council representative and I also sit on Minnesota Governor's Task Force on MMIW and through this process of COVID, it really – I look at Fond du Lac as being, I thought, as good relationships with the different state agencies, but through COVID, it really shines the light on that we still need some work to do. And then looking at how that is with like Department of Health and things of that nature but it is on the data, to look at the data and how is that recorded and how is that given back to the Tribal law enforcement?

And how that relationship, these Tribal law enforcement agencies, have with counties? There are some counties in Minnesota that do not, I guess, cooperate with Tribal law enforcement and makes policing difficult and – but of sharing that data with one another, how is the position for the Minnesota office going to improve those relationships. Also, looking at – like I said, on the other hand, with the different agencies, look at like the Department of Corrections, when they release people from their prisons and we look at sex offenders, they can be released in any county and some of those places that they are released, their listed addresses are within the confines of the reservations of – I will just speak for Minnesota.

We have had one that actually gave the address to our Tribal casino as his place of residence and – but to look at – they are releasing some of their sex offenders into our Tribal communities and without notifying the reservation or the Tribal council or the Tribal law enforcement that this is going to be done and I believe that the Tribes should have a say in it, of who are they going to allow within their communities.

Tara Sweeney: OK, thank you. Jay Greenberg, would you like to talk about the protocols the Task Force is charged with developing?

Jay Greenberg: Sure, [Tara], I would be happy to. So everyone knows, as part of the Executive Order on MMIP, one of the outcomes that is expected is a set of protocols as it relates to how to jointly respond to and best serve allegations of missing or murdered individuals. So we are currently in the process with – we have been meeting with Ernie and with other members of the Task Force from Marshals and BIA and I – if I start to list them, I will miss them, so I will not list everybody individually but just a number of federal partners, everybody looking at how we can expand what we bring to the search for missing or murdered people and enhance what we already do today.

So there is a plan in place. We have been working diligently as a Task Force with Ernie and with all the other members of MMIP to document what we do today and make sure that those are protocols that we can publish and then actively train all of our state, local, and other federal partners on so that we have a unified response going forward, much better than we have in the past.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you. I also want to go back to Commissioner Hovland. The questions in the comments box as well as the questions raised on the phone by several members regarding the extractive industry – Commissioner Hovland, can you talk about the Office on Trafficking in Persons and what they have developed?

Jeannie Hovland: Sure. And thank you. The Office on Trafficking in Persons is an agency within the Administration for Children and Families and ANA, who are an Administration for Native Americans, I apologize for the alphabet soup here. So we have partnered with the Office on Trafficking in Persons to really try to train on prevention, intervention, and healing of human trafficking victims in their communities and they have learned lessons from the [extractive] industry and have talked about how we can partner in communities where there could be any high risk of human trafficking.

I mean, we hear it at Super Bowls, we hear it at large events, so I mean, business will continue and there will be ways that people are going to find large events and susceptible populations to perpetrate on. So learning lessons specific to certain industries – the extraction industry is one of them – that the Office on Trafficking in Persons has said that they would be willing to go and

train communities on prevention. How do we keep our people safe from falling victim to human trafficking? And that is where if you want to follow up with myself, I can put you in touch with the Office on Trafficking in Persons and we can talk about training communities that have that concern. I hope that is helpful.

Tara Sweeney: Thank you. It looks like we are now on 3:30. I just want to close the listening session with just a couple of comments about recognizing that many of us have family members who are victims of domestic violence, some are still missing and others have been murdered – a reminder that these tensions across the country escalated due to the riots. It is important that we all remember that violence is not the answer.

I am hearing reports of our men and women who are being called up to defend our communities and that there are Native organizations who have been impacted by this violence. I appreciate your willingness to work with this Task Force and to keep our work moving forward by engaging on this issue and for being the community support for those who may be suffering. The only way I strongly feel to progress is by working together and so I appreciate the partnership and the information that has been shared today.

Be safe and be well. Thank you.

END