

Operation Lady Justice Virtual Tribal Consultation, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Great Plains and Rocky Mountain Region, August 25, 2020

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Good afternoon, everybody. And welcome to the Presidential Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives Virtual Consultation for the BIA Great Plains and Rocky Mountain Region. We appreciate that you have joined the call early, and we will start the consultation shortly, at approximately 1:35. This will allow the individuals that have registered to offer oral testimony--will give them the opportunity to join the call. We will be silent until that time. Thank you so much.

Thank you, everybody, for joining the call early. We appreciate that. I just wanted to let you know, we are going to give those that registered to offer oral testimony a little more time to join, so we will begin in about three or so minutes. Thank you for your patience.

Good afternoon and welcome to the Presidential Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives Virtual Tribal Consultation. I am with Leidos, the contract support for this Task Force meeting, and we are very pleased that you are joining us today. Before we begin, there are a few things that I would like to go over so that you know how to participate in today's event.

All attendees are muted upon entry, and we will unmute you at the appropriate time if you--if you are going to offer oral testimony. If you plan to offer testimony, please be sure that you have logged in using the following steps. You are accessing the meeting via WebEx. You will need to do this from a computer or a mobile device. When--after you do that, and when you are prompted, please enter your name, identical to the way that it was used when registering. And when you join the audio portion, you may do so either by having WebEx call you, or you can use a telephone and dial in. If you choose to use the option of having--using a telephone, you will need to enter your attendee ID number, which will appear on the screen once you log into WebEx.

When it is time to offer testimony, you will be called upon, and we will unmute your line. We will ask that you state your name as well as your Tribal affiliation. Additionally, there are--oh. Oral testimony will be limited for speakers that are not Tribal Leaders to seven minutes. There are some additional features that I want to point out using Webex. If you hover over the center bottom part of your screen, you are going to see a series of radio buttons appear. There is one that looks like a conversation bubble, and that is considered the chat box. And then there is another one that has three dots, and if you click on that, you will see another menu pop up. Today's event is being live-captioned for those that are deaf or hard of hearing, and if you need to use this feature, you would click on the Media Viewer to log in.

If you are calling into this call using a tele--computer, excuse me, and you are having a difficult time hearing, we ask that you please click on the top left of your computer screen, and click on Communicate and then Audio Connection, and this will adjust your speakers. If you are still having a difficult time hearing through your computer, we suggest that you use a telephone to log in or call in, and you can find that information in your meeting invite.

If you have any technical issues during today's call, please use the chat box to submit that problem to the host of today's event, who is Michelle Gorham. Again, as a reminder, all the lines will be muted, and we will unmute you when it is time for you to offer your testimony. At this time, I am going to turn the consultation over to Katie Sullivan, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, who is one of the Co-Chairs for the Task Force, and she will begin today's consultation.

KATIE SULLIVAN: Thank you so much, and good afternoon, everyone. Again, my name is Katie Sullivan. I am the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General at the Department of Justice. I run the Office of Justice Programs. More importantly for today, I am Attorney General Bill Barr's designee, as a Co-Chair of the Task Force. Secretary Bernhardt from the Department of Interior and Attorney General Barr were tasked by the President to Co-Chair this Task Force known as Operation Lady Justice, and being Attorney General Barr's designee is one of the greatest privileges I have had since working for him. I believe that sentiment is shared by Secretary Bernhardt's designee, Assistant Secretary Tara Sweeney, who is also on the line and listening.

Before we begin today's consultation, I would like to take a moment for silent prayer so that we can reflect on the importance of this mission, those who have gone missing, those that have been murdered, both Native Americans and Alaska Natives, and hope that our work here--and pray that our work here will come to some good and help those that are suffering. Thank you all.

We have representation on the consultation call today from all of the agencies who make up the Task Force, including the Department of the Interior, the Office of Justice Programs, the FBI, the Office on Violence Against Women, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Office of Justice Services, and the Attorney General's Native American Issues Subcommittee. As well as the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Native Americans. We also are very fortunate to have representation from The White House through the Domestic Policy Council and the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. I want to introduce Jennie Lichter from White House Domestic Policy Council. Jennie, would you like to say a few words? I know that we have different...

JENNIE LICHTER: Hi, everyone.

KATIE SULLIVAN: Oh, there you are, good. Excellent. Thank you.

JENNIE LICHTER: I am sorry Katie, I was on mute.

KATIE SULLIVAN: Excellent. Thank you, Jennie.

JENNIE LICHTER: Happens to the best of us. I apologize, everyone. This is Jennie Lichter from The White House on behalf of President Trump, welcome and thank you all for devoting your--some time this afternoon to being with us. And thank you for bearing with our various technical difficulties. Mine in particular. We appreciate it. For most of this session, as you know, the floor will be open, and it will be yours. Our job is to be in listening mode today and to learn from all of you as you speak on behalf of your communities. We intend to take your experiences and your suggestions into account as we continue to build out the Federal Government's efforts to address this issue of missing and murdered Native Americans, especially women and girls. But before we get started and turn the floor over to you all, I am going to take just another moment to offer some context, a little bit of background for how we got--how we got here, essentially.

In May of last year, so May of 2019, President Trump was proud to proclaim Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives Awareness Day, becoming the first president ever to do so and saying that ending the violence that disproportionately affects the American Indian and Alaska Native communities is imperative. So that proclamation gave us, the President's Team, and the White House, and agencies gave us our marching orders, so to speak, and we then spent several months thinking through and talking with Tribal communities about how to put some action behind those words. And last fall, just before Thanksgiving, the President hosted an Oval Office signing ceremony for his Executive Order establishing Operation Lady Justice, the interagency Task Force charged with developing an aggressive government-wide strategy to address this crisis in Native American communities.

Operation Lady Justice, of course, is the banner under which we are convened today. So this session today is part of the implementation program for that order. The President and this whole team are committed to following up on the order with additional and consistent action. But in the intervening months since the EO was signed in November, of course, the world has changed quite a lot. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting public health concerns and travel restrictions, our plans have had to shift, and we have been, obviously, severely limited in the types of activities we have been able to engage in.

We so wish that we could be with you to discuss this topic in person, and that had been our intention until circumstances changed.

We are really grateful, though, that our partners at the Department of Justice and the Department of Interior have worked really hard to keep the lines of communication open during this time, and keep moving forward despite the unexpected turns this year has taken. So we are, again, we are grateful to them, and really grateful to everyone here who has joined us on this call, and grateful that you are willing to share your perspective with us. You have our commitment, the commitment of the White House, and of our agency partners that we will continue to drive forward to make a difference on this issue, informed especially by what we hear from all of you today. I am looking forward to hearing from you, and again, thank you. Katie, back over to you.

KATIE SULLIVAN: Oh, thank you so much, Jennie, and we just so appreciate the White House and everything that you have done to support these efforts. Thank you so much. The Task Force, as all of you listening know, must consult with Tribes on the scope and nature of the issues regarding missing or murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives. We had a series of in-person listening sessions set between February and July, starting with listening sessions and then, while we created the framing papers, going into a robust consultation session. We were able to host five in-person listening sessions in February, in the early months, before the current health crisis hit, and we had to stop. We have been able to have an additional four virtual listening sessions at the end of May through the beginning of June, and decided ultimately to hold 12 Virtual Tribal Consultations over the next month.

Each consultation is organized by BIA Region, so that is how it--that was chosen or that is how it was logistically set up. The Dear Tribal Leader Letter and Framing Paper were distributed on July 17 and again on July [August] 11. This series of virtual consultations have been widely publicized across the country. And we are organized--the consultation questions are organized--across four areas that--we are trying to encourage discussion about issues in your--in your communities. What are the scope of the two problems of missing or murdered, the challenges your communities face? What solutions or resources do you have or are needed? And what specific recommendations do you have to address or curtail the incidences of missing persons or murdered cases with American Indian and Alaska Native communities? So we want to get--and we are asking that people register to speak, and I believe we have seven registered to speak today. So I am going to turn it over to Leidos, our wonderful contractor who has been handling all of our logistics, to start calling on our registered speakers. Thank you so much.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Thank you, Katie. As Katie mentioned, we do have several individuals registered that have asked to offer oral testimony. There are a few that we are unable to identify. They are not logged in where I can see their name. So what we are going to do is we are going to systematically go through and unmute the individuals that have listed--are showing up just as a caller. And we are going to say your name, and if you can hear us and respond, then you can begin your testimony. This is going to take a little time. There are a lot of people that have to be unmuted, so please be patient.

The first individual that has requested to offer testimony is Lee Spoonhunter. So Lee, if you are on the call, you can begin offering your testimony. Lee Spoonhunter. If you would like to begin offering testimony, please state your name and your Tribal affiliation.

All right, I am going to move to the next person. We have Lee Spotted Elk--or excuse me, Lane Spotted Elk. Lane, if you are on the call, you may begin to offer your testimony. Please state your name and your Tribal affiliation. Lane Spotted Elk?

All right. Our next individual is on the call, and it is Letara Lebeau. Letara Lebeau, you may—we are going to unmute you. Give us a second to do that, and then you can go ahead and offer your testimony. Letara, we are going to unmute you. I apologize for the--for the delay, Letara. We are trying to unmute you. Go ahead, Letara. You are unmuted.

LETARA LEBEAU: Okay. My name is Letara Lebeau. I am with the Northern Arapaho Tribe in Wyoming on the Wind River Reservation. And I am with the MMIP Task Force as a community advocate and volunteer. I am also a Program Manager for the Not Our Native Daughters Program as well as an assistant in helping with the local research department here in Wyoming.

I guess to begin with my testimony is to bring to light that there have been great coordination efforts made within the state of Wyoming thus far, starting back in May of 2000--is it '19? Well, we had a community gathering in March that had taken place last year in the University of Wyoming area in Laramie, Wyoming. And that is when an Executive Order was initiated by one of my colleagues that I was working with at the time who we invited as a speaker--a guest speaker, and she was able to present an Executive Order for us to go forth that was presented to Governor Gordon and Senator Affie Ellis to initiate a Task Force. And that was also in ties with the proclamation for the Governor that was also made out for the MMIW [INDISTINCT] in Wyoming as well. And so the executive action was to really create a Task Force to address, you know, the increasing rate of homicide and human trafficking and sexual violence being perpetrated upon American Indian women and children in the state of Wyoming. And within that Executive Order is categorized as a murder and missing indigenous women, which really went into detail as

far as the initiative on that Executive Order. And so from there, we kind of have set up a lot of different meetings to get together with different departments in Wyoming to create a better coordination effort and a collaboration effort within the departments. And we have done a few briefings from May up until now, but with COVID kind of coming into place, it has really delayed a lot of our meeting sessions that are necessary to continue. So locally here on my reservation, I have been taking a lot of the initiative to take--create a lot of the coordination between different departments as well as our WYSAC Department, which is the Wyoming Statistic [Survey] & Analysis Center here in Wyoming, to help create more research and data intake that is being made and being processed currently.

So I guess a great concern in my testimony is really creating better efforts within our different departments to bring more information and ideas to the table that could really help--have better efforts towards what we are needing on the reservation, towards investigation process, department involvement, and helping to create more of a protocol standard on the investigation side or the policing side of the efforts that are needing to be put forth. And so I am still new in this as well, and learning along the way as far as just getting involved with my local alliances and advocacy programs, as well as being involved with the different police departments that have stepped up and stepped forward to help organize the Task Force here in Wyoming. So yeah, I mean, as far as really getting in touch with our local councils as well and coordinating some direction for them with the Northern Arapaho and the Eastern Shoshone Tribe is another goal that I have been putting forth as far as creating better efforts to bring more information to the table for them as far as what protocols or procedures would be put in place once we--once we start compiling more data and information on our initiatives for the MMIP Task Force. So I think the concerns are--is just having more individuals at the table and having a voice to help narrow down what directions we need to really take as far as processing data and information, and better coordination and collaboration efforts within the different departments that have been involved so far.

And so I think it is all new to all of us as far as what direction we really need to go in to help narrow down a protocol of what we are needing to initiate an operation off of--with our Task Force. So I mean, yeah, like I said, it is all new to me as well as far as this compiling the questions and the information I am getting as a Community Coordinator to better identify what the needs are and what the concerns are. So I myself and different advocacy programs can help with in creating a better direction that we need to go in for the MMIP Task Force here in Wyoming.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Thank you. Is that the end of your testimony?

LETARA LEBEAU: Yes.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Thank you very much for that. We appreciate it. Our next speaker is going to be Stacey Schinko. Stacey, we will unmute your line, and you can begin. Please state your name and your Tribal affiliation.

STACEY SCHREIBER SCHINKO: Can you hear me?

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Yes, we can. Go right ahead.

STACEY SCHREIBER SCHINKO: Okay. All right. Thank you. Good afternoon. First off, I want to thank you for the opportunity to share with you the story of my beautiful relative Kozee. My testimony is probably going to be different in what you have been hearing because my family has--has been a victim of MMIW. Although I am not here for myself, I feel like I should introduce who I am so you know a bit about why I am providing this testimony today. My name is Stacey Schreiber Schinko. I am an enrolled member of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians out of Bowler, Wisconsin. I am the daughter of Ellen Mohawk and the late Duane Schreiber. I am the granddaughter of Malford Mohawk Sr., Elizabeth Welch, Mary Schrader, and George Schreiber. I am married to Henry Schinko, and together we have five children. I am also a member of the Wolf Clan.

I am the founder of a nonprofit organization called Justice For Kozee, which was created after our beautiful relative was murdered. On May 15, 2020, the beautiful Kozee Featherstone Montana H. Medicinetop Decorah celebrated her three-month sobriety anniversary and was working hard to move back to Wisconsin in the coming months. The very next day, she was murdered in Winnebago, Nebraska, by her so-called fiancé, Jonathan Daniel Rooney.

This monster did horrible, unthinkable things to our Kozee. His inhumane actions were so severe in nature it took 14 days for our Kozee to make it back home to Wittenberg, Wisconsin. Her body was burned beyond recognition, resulting in official identity confirmation being made through forensic dentistry. If that was not horrendous enough, he did all of this with Kozee's infant son present. I refuse to call Jonathan Daniel Rooney the father of Kozee's beautiful children because a real father, a real man, would never take a mother from her children. We are Kozee's voice and will not be silenced.

Our mission is justice for Kozee. We are changing the narrative that Jonathan Daniel Rooney provided in his police statement. His life will not be how our Kozee is remembered. When her name is said, people will know and remember as we do. Kozee was a daughter, a sister, a nani, which is a mom, a chewy, which is an auntie, and a friend

to many. Although she was 10 pounds, 13 ounces when she was born, she grew into a beautiful petite woman. She was small, but she was strong. She loved running, playing basketball, and spending time with her huge family. Kozee was the youngest of seven siblings. She lost her father, her hero, on her 18th birthday. His death impacted Kozee in a way she was never able to fully heal. She was a member of the Native American Church and grew up going to meetings, devotions, and prayer services.

She moved to Winnebago, Nebraska, in 2017, and started to attend sweat meetings and was beyond proud her oldest daughter Mila attended her first sweat on April 17, 2020. Her baby girl asked if she could sit in the sweat with her, and I am so thankful Kozee was able to experience this with her. Knowing her children were on the right path made her heart happy. Kozee was a kind-hearted soul with a contagious laugh. Kozee was only 22 years old and a mother to three precious children who in her own words saved her life. Mila, Tyson, and Titus know that no matter what, their mother Kozee wanted them to know they were wished for, longed for, prayed for, and that they are forever loved.

Kozee's faith in God was strong, and she recently acknowledged it was time to let God run her life. The only sense we can make of this is God has a higher purpose for Kozee. Her death will save others. Her death will reform laws. Her death will not be in vain. Her death will bring awareness to murdered and missing indigenous people around the world. Her death will change lives. Her death will never kill her spirit.

The deadline for motions in her upcoming--in the upcoming hearing is September 4, 2020. We do not know if the hearing scheduled for September 9, 2020, will happen, or if we will continue to wait in putting our Kozee's remains to rest. She is still considered evidence, and her remains are resting at the funeral home down the street from my home. I know her spirit has passed on to the happy hunting grounds, but it is difficult being in limbo. Our family is very active in this investigation because we feel if we are not, justice will not be served. Contact is kept with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Omaha, Nebraska. Our last update was they are still waiting on pathologist's final autopsy report, as well as the site she lost her life was being further analyzed.

We understand that there is a process which takes time, but we feel we are the lucky ones. I know that may sound crazy to you, but we know where our Kozee is, and we know who murdered her. And that is not the case for too many families across Indian Country. And our prayer is the creation of the Presidential Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians in the last years, as well as the MMIW cold case offices will put this epidemic in the public light. And your help will assist organizations throughout Indian Countries who have been looking for our relative and trying to solve these crimes alone.

We welcome your assistance and commitment in this epidemic [SPEAKING IN NATIVE LANGUAGE]

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Thank you very much for your testimony. Our next speaker will be Carmen Oleary. Carmen, we will unmute you, and then you can begin your testimony. Please state your name as well as your Tribal affiliation.

CARMEN OLEARY: Hi, can you hear me?

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Yes, we can. You may begin.

CARMEN OLEARY: Hi. I am Carmen Oleary. I am a citizen of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, spent most of my life here up until I went to college. My adult life I have worked as a Child Protection Service Worker. I worked for 17 years in the local domestic violence program. And for the last seven years or so, I have been the Director for the Native Women's Society of the Great Plains, which is a Tribal coalition.

There is just so much to say on the whole problem of murdered and missing Indian women as well as men. My first week on this job, I went to a walk for a woman who had been murdered the year before. It was on one of our reservations here in South Dakota. And this young Dakota woman had children and a mom who were all missing her. The year before, she went missing and did not return home to her children. Her mom said she had never missed having breakfast with them. About 30 days later, her mom could not get anybody to go looking for her, take a report. People were saying the usual things. Things like "Well she must be drunk," or "She is going to show up. Maybe she is partying." And, of course, here are her kids and her mom all these days. Finally, the family, which we will hear very often in our stories, are the ones who initiated a search, and her body was found, and she was murdered. You know, that is just one case, you know. And you can hear about one case over and over again, and if that was the story, and it was just one person, we all would not be here today. I see very few protocols in place. Coordination and information sharing, I do not even know where to begin in talking about the lack of that.

Again, I am to the age now where I am usually hearing from grandmas who have missing children or grandchildren. And a young woman had been taken from her apartment, and it was in one of the border towns. They would not take a report. And this was two years ago. We worked with the local program in helping the grandma making reports. And we called up to the police department in that city. They said that they had done a BOLO. I had never heard of that before. I guess it means be on the lookout. Even though this young woman's window had been smashed in her apartment, her cell phone and her purse was still there.

And the report was not made until a week later because that is when her grandma, who was living back in her homeland, had missed her. So when we want to talk about challenges and protocols in place, it is like there is almost a will not to investigate. So I do not know how we change that will, you know, to pay attention to the plight of Native women. That young woman had actually been abducted by her partner and had been held in across state lines in Wyoming. And to this day, I do not know whether or not he has been held accountable.

How do we reduce vulnerability? You know, again, that is the overwhelming question. We have so many factors going against people in our area. We have the poverty. We have the generational trauma, not just the genocide that has been performed, the lack of will to provide any kind of services, the years of boarding schools, and now foster care. I think we have had more kids in foster care than we ever had in boarding schools. And the ongoing racism that--that is happening. Those are all the kinds of things that make the population I serve, and that I am a member of, vulnerable to becoming a missing person. So we have a lot of things to work on.

And my specific recommendations is that somehow we heighten the response to murdered and missing Indian women and girls because our databases, our stories show that there has been a lack of response. So how do we heighten that? How do we bring that to the attention of those responding to make sure that these are not things that become BOLOs or no report is even taken? And there are times when these reports really need to be given a more responsive action. You know, like, when we have below-zero days, them are really scary times. I have helped out on a couple of those situations.

But federal resources? I do not know, what would be given to this? It is going to be more than advocates on the ground. It is more than a hotline. We are doing all of those kinds of things, maybe more feet on the ground. Maybe--and of course awareness. You know, we have a lot of young people doing that. But also to build into all of these responses, that is the sexual assaults that are not prosecuted or investigated. It is domestic violence that is let to be ongoing. It is the lack of any kind of resources to deal with our offenders. Those are all things that have contributed to having murdered and missing Native people in our community. So that is a few things. And I think I am just touching on the surface of all that needs to be said. But I am here to help out and be a worker bee in any way that I can be and really do want to see an increase in the response. Thank you for your time.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Carmen, thank you for your testimony. Our next speaker will be Brenda Golden. Brenda, we will unmute your line. Please state your name and your Tribal affiliation.

BRENDA GOLDEN: My name is Brenda Golden. I am Muscogee (Creek) from Oklahoma. I hope I am in the right consultation. I thought this was the BIA Eastern Southern Plains Region. I wanted to share with you all as an attorney and a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation who just had a major Supreme Court ruling stating that the reservation of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation has not been de-established for purposes of the Major Crimes Act. What that has caused in Oklahoma has been a panic among the Attorney General of the state of Oklahoma, other members of Congress, and also, you know, just State Attorney Generals in different counties. And the reason why that has become such an issue is because the Major Crimes Act includes rape and murder, which is what we are talking about today. And I appreciate you giving me some time to speak about this.

Even before the McGirt Ruling, we had issues with jurisdiction in Oklahoma. In Oklahoma, we have a checkerboard system of trust land, restricted land, and fee land. And so a lot of times, the crimes that occur in Indian Country here in Oklahoma would fall through the cracks because no one wanted to assume jurisdiction. And those that occurred on fee are treated differently than those that are on the restricted and trust land. And the history of this has been that the Attorney General, the U.S. Attorney's Office has not prosecuted the perpetrators of violent crimes against women at a very high rate, even before the McGirt Ruling. And now we throw in the Major Crimes Act, as the Creek Nation has not been de-established, and it has really caused a lot of issues. So, I think that my testimony today goes on that regard, towards jurisdiction, that we ask for some leadership to help the Tribe and the people here in Oklahoma to understand what jurisdiction, what that means to our Native people and how this Operation Lady Justice can take the lead in protecting our Native women both on fee, restricted, and trust property.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has started entering into memorandums of understanding and cross-deputization and that is a start, but it comes down to training, the lack of empathy among law enforcement agencies that are not Tribal. We had asked in the Oklahoma State Legislator for some training in the CLEET, the Council on Law Enforcement and Education Training, on just an hour a year on MMIW. And we were met with such resistance on that, but law enforcement agencies that do not take this issue seriously, and will not investigate when a Native woman goes missing, it is part of the bigger problem.

I wanted to relay to you that 15 years ago, my daughter was trafficked. And this was before the--this issue of MMIW was making national news or any news at all. And one day, she did not come home, and I did not worry too much because she had a habit of--she was 15, and had a habit of--I had been chasing her down because she was running away all the time. And then she did not come back for a week, and the weeks turned into months, and about nine months after she went missing, I got a collect phone call, and it

was her. She was being held in a hotel room in Amarillo, Texas, which is right down I-40. I live in Oklahoma. Someone had taken her across state lines. She was being pimped out in a hotel room. She did not have any clothes, and I thought--she said that the gentleman or the guy who had her--often took the phone, but this time he had forgotten to take the phone, and so she was able to call me collect. And I told her to get out of the room immediately. I did not care what she had to do, I would buy her a bus ticket home, and I did. And my daughter arrived home with some men's clothing on. She did not have any clothing of her own. She had no underwear on, and she smelled horrible, and later tested positive for gonorrhea, syphilis, and chlamydia. My daughter is barren now. She cannot have children, and I believe it is because of those STDs.

So I am asking today for help with human trafficking. We--in Oklahoma, are right on the crossroads of some major interstate, I-40, I-35, both are international or--I am sorry, both are national highways. And we had proposed in the state legislature--legislation called Establishing a Red Alert, such as that is what is used with the AMBER Alert when a child is abducted and believed to be taken under suspicious circumstances. Or we have a Silver Alert, also for elderly people who have wandered away or may have gone missing for whatever reason. And we believe, many of us, that if we had some sort of alert system like a Red Alert, we call it Red because of the movement MMIW, could help alleviate the human trafficking that goes on, not only among indigenous people, because we are not asking for anyone to say that it is a Native person and prove it. If there is a suspicion that it is a Native American person that is kidnapped or taken under suspicious circumstances, or has gone missing after being threatened, a Red Alert could be issued to all the law enforcement agencies just like they do with the--with the AMBER Alert and the Silver Alert. So we need some help getting human trafficking stopped in that regard. One of the things that we ran up against when we asked for those types of legislation, the AMBER Alert and the training, was that people were saying--by people, I mean, some of the people in the state legislature that I lobbied, "Why do we want to treat you all special? This is special treatment for special--getting special treatment."

And again, this goes back to education. We need to educate our elected officials and also the law enforcement agencies about this epidemic and what it means to our Native people. Here in Oklahoma, we are, and in many parts of Indian Country, there--if we do not have someone directly impacted by this issue, someone we know was. And we feel it when someone in our community goes missing or is murdered. We feel it because we are all connected. And so I am asking today for not only resources and funding for prosecuting and helping to solve crimes, I am asking for training to be done for law enforcement, that they understand what MMIW means and have empathy for us as Native people.

And then the last thing is the possibility of a nationwide Red Alert System, for instance, because again, it could help stop human trafficking as well as this epidemic of MMIW. We further need more education here in Oklahoma on the jurisdictional issues and assistance in getting those problems, prosecuting perpetrators, we need to get those worked out amongst our communities. And our Tribal nations are viewed as adversaries right now because of the McGirt Ruling. And we need assistance in coming into an agreement on how we can work together to stop not only this in human trafficking but all types of cases. So I hope I have made some sense. I appreciate your time, again, I--this is my second time trying to come on and talk about Oklahoma issues, and I hope I was in the right place this time, and I appreciate it so very much, thank you.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Thank you Brenda, I appreciate that. At this time, the other individuals that have registered to offer testimony either have not logged into the call or are logged in as just a caller and I do not--I am unable to identify them by name. So we are going to quickly go through the same process again, where we are going to unmute the lines, and we will call on the individuals that we have been unable to identify.

So the first person is Lee Spoonhunter. Lee, if you are on the call, you are unmuted, and you will be able to start offering your testimony. Lee Spoonhunter? All right. Our next caller is going to be Lane Spotted Elk. Lane, we have unmuted lines. If you would like to offer testimony, and you are on the call, you may begin doing so. All right. Vernita Thunder. Vernita, if you are on the call, you may begin offering your testimony. And the last individual that had registered to offer testimony is Nicole Wagon. Nicole, if you are on the call, we have unmuted the lines, and you may offer testimony. All right. It appears that the individuals that have registered are not on the call, that would be the--that is--we do not have anybody else that is--Oh, I am sorry, Grace Bulltail. Grace, if you are on the call, you may offer your testimony.

All right. At this time, it appears that everybody that has registered to offer testimony and that is on the call has done so. That would end--this would be the end of the individuals that are available to offer testimony.

KATIE SULLIVAN: All right. Thank you so much. I really appreciate everything, and I appreciate all of the testimony that we did here today. You all see there on the--on your screen, Operation Lady Justice has a website and an email address. Both are listed on the slide. If you wish to receive updates from Operation Lady Justice, please subscribe to the website and please, for everyone on the call, know that we are receiving written comments through September 30, 2020, and they can be sent to the Operation Lady Justice website. The address is up there on your screen. Thank you all very, very much for joining us today. This has been very enlightening, and we appreciate your time and

dedication to this issue, this government-to-government consultation, thank you very much.