

MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN TASK FORCE MEETING

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9:10 a.m.
4201 12th Street, Northwest
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87104

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A P P E A R A N C E S

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Samantha Wauls - Facilitator
Stephanie Salazar - Indian Affairs Department
MMIW Task Force
Linda Son-Stone
Kathy Howkumi, Department of Interior
Lynn Trujillo, Secretary - Indian Affairs Department
Captain Troy Velasquez, Department of Public Safety
Beata Johnson, Pueblo of Santa Clara
Shernen Velarde, Jicarilla Apache Nation
Elizabeth Gonzales, Office of the Medical Examiner
First Lady Phefelia Nez, Navajo Nation
Matthew Strand, NM Legal Services
Becky Jo Johnson, Navajo Nation

1 MS. TRUJILLO: My name is Lynn Trujillo. I'm the
2 secretary for the Indian Affairs Department. I want to
3 welcome all of you here for our fourth gathering of the
4 task force. We just finished a -- with the legislation
5 session yesterday at noon, and our department was really
6 busy, but one of the things I want to report is, from
7 the session, we were able to secure -- thanks to the
8 support of the legislature and our governor -- the bill
9 still has yet to be signed -- but in the bill that's
10 going up to the governor on the budget, we were able to
11 secure another appropriation of \$75,000 to continue the
12 work of the task force.

13 So I hope that that demonstrates at least the
14 financial commitment from this administration and the
15 state to provide some much needed resources into the
16 work that the task force and many of our allies are
17 engaged in. And I feel that, you know, we have
18 partnered with the -- Dr. Gabe Sanchez and Dr. Kimberly
19 Huyser, who's here with the Center for Social Policy.
20 But I think that to be able to gather some -- you know,
21 also the quantitative data to move things along, it's
22 going to be really important.

23 So I just wanted to announce that. And I just
24 want to thank everybody for their continued support and
25 dedication, especially those of you who travel. You

1 know, the task force members I think receive a per diem
2 and mileage, and I know many of them -- Misty and others
3 -- who spend your own money to travel to these meetings
4 and to participate. So I just want to say (Navajo
5 spoken) a real heartfelt thanks to all of you for
6 continuing to show up, to continue to participate,
7 because I know that you're not being compensated for
8 this. But I think this speaks volumes to all of us
9 coming together. And every time we come together and
10 volunteer, that we are honoring those who are still out
11 there missing, who have been murdered. And so it's a
12 remembrance, I think, every time we do that of them. So
13 I want to welcome you.

14 Also, before we start, I want to call Elder Kathy
15 Sanchez of San Alfonso Pueblo, Vedith Tafoya from San
16 Alfonso, and Kewa. These women are from Tewa Woman
17 United -- Tewa Circle of Grandmothers who are going to
18 provide a blessing for us as we begin our work today to
19 held guide us and --

20 (Phone rings.)

21 MS. TRUJILLO: I'm sure that's happened to all of
22 us at some point in time. I hope everybody's awake now.
23 At least, we can have a little bit of levity and some
24 laughter, so it's really good.

25 All stand.

1 (Whereupon, a blessing was spoken.)

2 MR. TRUJILLO: So with that, I will turn it over
3 to -- oh, sorry. Go ahead.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So this morning, they have
5 asked us to provide a comfort room. It's off to your
6 right. So -- and I will be sitting in the audience, so
7 if there's any need for a comfort or a space or if you
8 want the assistance of the grandmothers to be with you,
9 just tap us on the shoulder, we'll sit in here for a
10 while, but then we'll go into the room. But direct
11 people there as well. We offer that so that -- the
12 releasing of that information, the stories are very
13 hard. So we want to make sure that we support our
14 families that have come forward to share with us today.

15 With that, thank you.

16 MS. TRUJILLO: Thank you for that. I appreciate
17 that. And I think that's a good reminder for all of us
18 as we engage in what we're engaging in, to really engage
19 in self-care and take care of yourself so we can take
20 care of others. Oftentimes, I, myself forget about when
21 you're hearing people and working with people, and just
22 the impact that it takes and can take on you, that maybe
23 you don't realize at the moment.

24 So please, make sure that if you need to, that
25 you do seek the assistance from the grandmothers.

1 And with that, I will turn it over to Samantha
2 Wauls.

3 MS. WAULS: Good morning. Welcome, everybody.
4 We really appreciate you for taking the time out of your
5 day to be with us. We feel like there's something
6 valuable to learn from each and every one of you. So we
7 want to provide the space and opportunity to receive
8 that information. So thank you. And I also want to
9 recognize those who want to be here but can't for
10 whatever reason; and, you know, we just keep them in our
11 spirits and know that their presence are with us.

12 And speaking of self-care, I want to allow
13 everybody to take care of themselves throughout this
14 meeting, so please feel free to relieve yourselves to
15 the restroom, or answer phone calls, and just check on
16 family. Whatever you need today, feel free to just exit
17 at your will.

18 So before we start, I do want to introduce our
19 task force members so those of you in attendance are
20 aware of who's all here. Start at the end. So we have
21 Linda Son-Stone from First Nations. If you can kind of
22 just let everybody know who you are.

23 And then we have Kathy Howkumi from the
24 Department of Interior.

25 And, everybody, you've have already been

1 introduced to Secretary Trujillo with Indian Affairs.

2 She's also the chair of the task force.

3 Then we have Captain Troy Velasquez from the
4 Department of Public Safety.

5 Next to him is Beata Tsosie from Pueblo of Santa
6 Clara.

7 Right next to her, we have Shernen Velarde from
8 Jicarilla Apache Nation.

9 Elizabeth Gonzales from the Office of Medical
10 Examiner present.

11 And last, but not least, we have First Lady
12 Phefelia Nez from the Navajo Nation.

13 So to get started, we have a lot in store today.
14 This particular meeting was really an opportunity for
15 the task force to invite law enforcement to share some
16 really important information that's needed to understand
17 how they are responding to MMIW cases.

18 So later today, we will definitely get into -- we
19 will allow law enforcement that is present the
20 opportunity to speak about their policies and
21 procedures, and also answer questions from the task
22 force, and the public as well.

23 But before that, I will give an update on what
24 the task force has been working on since we last had our
25 public meeting in December in Gallup. So we'll talk

1 about what we've been doing. After the update
2 presentation, we will have the New Mexico Human
3 Trafficking task force, Jana Pfeiffer will come and give
4 an update on their most recent findings -- law
5 enforcement findings. We'll also have somebody from the
6 Department of Public Safety to come and talk about the
7 missing and endangered persons investigation, alerts,
8 and advisory policies right before we hear from law
9 enforcement.

10 After the law enforcement panel, there will be a
11 lunch. We want that to be an opportunity for you-all
12 to, one, get fed, fill your bellies up, but also to
13 interact and network with each other. So hopefully, law
14 enforcement community members can collaborate and have
15 conversation while we're here.

16 After lunch, we will open it up to the public
17 discussion. We do have a sign-in sheet over at the
18 entrance, so please sign in. It helps us because this
19 meeting is being transcribed. We have a podium that you
20 will be invited to come up to and talk and share your
21 thoughts and ask questions.

22 Let's go ahead and get started on what the task
23 force has been up to. In case we forgot, the task force
24 was created through the House Bill 278, which mandates
25 us to recommend how the state can increase resources to

1 identify MMIW cases and collaborate with tribal law
2 enforcement agencies to determine the scope of the
3 problem, identify barriers to address the problem, and
4 create partnerships to improve reporting and
5 investigation.

6 We also are mandated to work with tribal
7 government and communities in a collaborative effort and
8 then to collaborate with DOJ to improve information
9 sharing processes and coordination of resources for
10 recording and investigating cases of MMIW.

11 So in January, the task force felt it was very
12 needed for us to have a closed working session to just
13 hash out some of the logistical coordination of our
14 efforts, and also really to began thinking about our
15 data gathering. So out of that meeting, we left with
16 very clear goals and objectives for our report. We also
17 finalized the scope in what will be reflected in that
18 report. We formalized a data gathering plan and
19 established subcommittees that will focus on building
20 partnerships and gathering data with stakeholders.

21 So here are some photos from that meeting. It
22 was held up in Santa Clara, and it was -- Santa Ana,
23 sorry. And, yeah, it was a very busy day for us. We
24 also had to cut it short a little bit because of the
25 weather that day. But nonetheless, we got a lot done.

1 So here's what we were able to come up with. The
2 task force's mission is to work in partnership with
3 survivors and family members to create a final report
4 that supports our leadership across all levels of
5 government, to understand and address the crisis of
6 missing and murdered indigenous relatives.

7 Our plan is to understand this ongoing crisis by
8 bringing together indigenous community members, tribal
9 government, service providers, advocates, law
10 enforcement, and state agencies to identify the scope,
11 identify barriers and create recommendations to protect
12 and heal our indigenous women and girls.

13 The vision for this report, which is our final
14 product, is to create the foundations needed for
15 addressing the ongoing crisis of missing and murdered
16 indigenous relatives by fostering collaboration and
17 developing recommendations through the lens of healing,
18 prevention, culture, safety, restorative justice,
19 advocacy, and liberation.

20 These vision terms, healing, safety, prevention,
21 culture, restorative justice, advocacy, and liberation
22 are really important to the task force. And we're
23 hoping that today you-all will have the opportunity to
24 provide us feedback on how we are defining these terms.

25 So if you can look on this side of the room,

1 we've posted up the definitions for each vision term,
2 and we would like for you to read them and provide
3 feedback. We do have Post-it notes available for you to
4 comment, make suggested edits to these terms, but we
5 want to define these vision terms with the community in
6 mind. So please feel free at some point today to look
7 at those terms and give us your feedback. And, again,
8 these terms -- it's the lens we want to utilize to
9 create the recommendations that will be reflected in the
10 final report. So it's important that we hear your
11 input.

12 So let's talk about the report goals. The task
13 force has narrowed down two goals that they want to see
14 from the report. The first one is to understand the
15 scope of MMIW crisis within our state. There are six
16 objectives that we hope -- that we are working towards
17 in order to achieve that goal. The first one is to
18 develop a shared vision and vocabulary for describing
19 and addressing the issue of MMIW. Identify how justice
20 systems are coordinating investigations, prosecutions,
21 and reporting of MMIW cases. Identify the number of
22 open/closed pending MMIW cases across law enforcement
23 agencies, news and media outlets, community and family
24 member accounts. Identify where MMIW cases are
25 occurring through mapping software. Identify barriers

1 through testimony of survivors, family members, and
2 professionals, including law enforcement. And then also
3 identifying the existing support services and resources
4 for families impacted by MMIW, both justice-based and
5 healing-based.

6 Our second report objective, our goal is to
7 create the foundations and partnerships to further
8 address the issue. And our objectives that are going to
9 help us achieve this goal is to identify and build trust
10 with key stakeholders to ensure inclusive and
11 comprehensive input is being collected. Convene and
12 gathered stakeholders through community hearings and
13 surveys, and then outline recommendations from all
14 stakeholders. This report, we see it as a collaborative
15 effort. We can't complete this work without the work of
16 our community members, our stakeholders.

17 So how are we going to meet these objectives?
18 How we are going to get this work done? Well, the first
19 thing that we are working on is, we are in negotiations
20 with establishing a contract with the Native American
21 budget and policy institute. And they will assist with
22 us developing our methodology, designing data
23 collection, instruments, and doing some data analysis,
24 what Secretary Trujillo talked about earlier.

25 Secondly, we will be hiring the additional

1 project staffs to assist with research gathering
2 efforts. And then we will also be utilizing our monthly
3 public task force meetings to convene and gather from
4 our stakeholders regarding the research goals and
5 objectives, identify relevant information to be
6 reflected in the final report.

7 Something that we have been working on this past
8 month is submitting information of Public Records
9 Request and a Freedom of Information Request to the law
10 enforcement records bureau here in the state, the Bureau
11 of Indian Affairs, tribal law enforcement, and all law
12 enforcement agencies with the significant population of
13 American Indian Alaskan Natives based on census data or
14 recommended through preliminary consultation with
15 stakeholders and community members. Those requests
16 include -- we are requesting all MMIW case data,
17 protocol, and guidelines for reporting and investigating
18 cases of missing persons and murders, copies of their
19 reporting tools, such as intake forms, complaint forms
20 and policies related to training officers.

21 So we want to be able to evaluate that
22 information in order to help us reflect on the final
23 report and make recommendations on how to improve some
24 of those policies and systems.

25 We will also be -- we will also try to coordinate

1 community hearings throughout the state. And it will
2 gather testimony from survivors, family members, and
3 victims of survivors, as well as service organizations,
4 advocates and experts just to help us identify
5 unreported MMIW cases and identify barriers to seeking
6 justice and healing and develop recommendations.

7 Right now, the hearings will be held in Espanola,
8 Santa Clara, Albuquerque, Shiprock, and/or Farmington,
9 and Dulce, New Mexico. The task force members will
10 coordinate with local tribal organizations to plan and
11 host hearings. So we are in the beginning stages of
12 those community hearings.

13 We will -- the last data activity we are working
14 on is developing surveys. And these will go out to law
15 enforcement agencies, survivors, and family members and
16 service providers that service Native victims and
17 survivors of crime and abuse. And these surveys will
18 help us to identify barriers to seeking justice and
19 healing and develop recommendations.

20 So aside from our January working session where
21 we were able to, you know, put all of this together, our
22 support staff at the Indian Affairs Department has
23 really been active doing outreach activities. This is
24 just an overview of the outreach we conducted since
25 December to currently. So, as you can see, we've been

1 sharing updates across the state, and we've been
2 collaborating and reaching out to the existing efforts
3 to learn from and build partnerships to do this work.

4 So we really want to recognize the Missing and
5 Murdered in a Relative Team, who is also here today, and
6 also the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native
7 Women, who've been key partners in just guiding us and
8 working with us on this effort.

9 So what's next for the task force? Like I said,
10 we will be submitting these IPRA and FOIA requests
11 before the end of this month. That is our plan. And
12 then we also are still designing and planning surveys
13 and community hearings and consultation with the Native
14 American budget policy institution and also
15 stakeholders. And we will be planning our next public
16 meeting for March, and then at that meeting, we hope to
17 convene with service organizations and advocates to
18 learn from them.

19 Any questions?

20 Thank you all. If you have questions or would
21 like to connect with the task force, please reach out to
22 us. I'm Samantha. I'm the project assistant. So I do
23 a lot of the planning of the meetings and just kind of
24 our project planning, and then Stephanie is really
25 helping with the logistics. So reach out to either of

1 us if you would like to connect with the task force.

2 All right. So next up, I want to introduce Jana
3 Pfeiffer from the New Mexico Human Trafficking Task
4 Force. And she will be presenting their law enforcement
5 findings from 2019.

6 So we have two additional task force members that
7 just joined us. We have Matthew Strand from the DNA
8 People's Legal Service, and then we have Becky Jo
9 Johnson from the Navajo Nation.

10 MS. PFEIFFER: Good morning. My name is Jana
11 Pfeiffer. I'm with the Attorney General's office. I
12 work in the Special Investigations Division, the human
13 trafficking unit. I'm originally from the northern part
14 of the Navajo Nation. My grandparents are Irene and
15 Alan Benz from Cajon Mesa, which is near Aneth and
16 Montezuma Creek. I've resided in Albuquerque since
17 2009. I have two kids. My husband and myself live
18 here. So it's been quite an interesting ride in terms
19 of my work and passion, in terms of violence against
20 Native women, and my journey and so forth.

21 So what I'm going to share with you today is just
22 pretty much the first time I presented on the New Mexico
23 State Human Trafficking task force. I'm fairly new when
24 it comes to the Attorney General's office. I was
25 employed the last week of December of 2019. So pretty

1 much going on two months with the attorney general's
2 office. And really all of this information is just
3 building on top of my knowledge and understanding when
4 it comes to the exploitation of our Native women and our
5 sisters and relatives.

6 My previous experience was actually with
7 Dr. Linda Son-Stone. I oversaw the trafficking
8 department at First Nations Community Health Source,
9 provided direct service assistance to victims of sex and
10 human trafficking, coordinated efforts with many of our
11 agencies, whether it was Life Link or the Attorney's
12 General's office. So that experience really gave me a
13 wealth of understanding in overseeing how the service
14 provider site has really assisted with our agencies in
15 collaborating with one another.

16 In terms of First Nations, my experience there --
17 I tend to go back and talk about that, and then
18 currently in my role at the Attorney General's office
19 kind of just builds more on to that where we still
20 continue to assist with sting operations,
21 investigations, and criminal -- the criminal justice
22 system when our cases come to our office as well.

23 So I've always been a part of the New Mexico
24 State Human Trafficking Task Force for the past three
25 years. And so now, I oversee the task force and the

1 collaboration and coordinating the efforts when it comes
2 to our task force.

3 When we talk about sex and human trafficking, I
4 get a lot of questions on what exactly it is. So when
5 we say the umbrella term human trafficking, we're really
6 talking about two components, which is sex trafficking
7 and labor trafficking.

8 Sex traffic, commercial sex act induced by force,
9 fraud, or coercion in which a person performing the act
10 is under the age of 18. Victims can be found working in
11 massage parlors, froth halls, strip clubs, and escort
12 services.

13 Labor trafficking using force, fraud or coercion
14 to recruit, harbor, transport, obtain or employ a person
15 for labor services, involuntarily servitude, bondage
16 and/or slavery. Victims can be found in domestic
17 situations as nannies, or maids, sweat shops, factors,
18 janitorial jobs, construction sites, farm work,
19 restaurants, and panhandling.

20 When we look at the state of New Mexico in terms
21 of, you know, these definitions, my understanding that
22 sex and human trafficking is not a new concept. It
23 actually has been around since colonization. We know
24 this by the different tribes that have come forward,
25 especially the Genízaros, how they are descendents of

1 the Native American slavery here in the southwest as
2 well.

3 When we look at other nations in terms of what
4 they've experienced, in terms of their Natives going
5 missing and murdered, some of the few examples would
6 be -- even the Osage Nation tells their stories of how
7 when their tribe was -- when they struck it rich finding
8 oil under their ground, many of the women become very
9 wealthy, and through that process there was men that
10 came into their nations and societies and married the
11 women, and from there, a lot of Osage women were
12 murdered and the husband took over the land rights and
13 so forth, those social contracts. So if we not only
14 look at the southwest but nationally, these types of
15 stories have always been here since times of
16 colonization.

17 So my commander, Special Agent Anthony Maze,
18 wasn't able to be here. We actually were providing for
19 the past week training and assistance to law
20 enforcement, to Hobbs and Artesia with Homeland Security
21 for the past week. So he wasn't able to make it in
22 today to talk about his efforts since 2015 when it comes
23 to the grant overseeing the task force. And really, it
24 was his idea in terms of how the IPAC and the human
25 trafficking come in to play with each other.

1 The grant copartnered with the Attorney General's
2 office, Life Link, the FBI, Homeland Security, and the
3 U.S. Attorney's Office. And we have other agencies that
4 we work with. It is a collaborative effort between law
5 enforcement and service providers to combat human
6 trafficking statewide. We pretty much use prevention,
7 prosecution, and protection. Through preventions, we
8 work with task force members in terms of providing
9 educational assistance and enhancing and bringing
10 awareness to this topic.

11 I get this question all the time. Is -- some of
12 our communities, even our law enforcement simply don't
13 know even the basic human trafficking identification and
14 the red flags, and so forth.

15 Prosecution, we have a strong legislation and
16 building strong cases through proactive investigations,
17 and that's working with FBI and having Homeland Security
18 with them. And we do actually have quarterly meetings
19 -- a core team meeting with our FBI and Homeland
20 Security. And through those meetings -- we had one in
21 January -- we basically outline the coming year and how
22 we're going to carry out some of our sting operations
23 for the year in terms of how to get some of these
24 individuals who are exploiting our women and children
25 off the streets.

1 And then protection. The victim center's a
2 rescue and long-term restoration. And I think in terms
3 of the protection that is with Life Link, the
4 anti-trafficking initiative, Lynn Sanchez, who we have
5 worked with very closely, how she's able to provide that
6 aspect of our task force as well. So it was actually --
7 the task force actually began in 2015 when special agent
8 applied for it, and the Attorney General's office was
9 awarded this grant. And I have to say that it's
10 actually quite interesting the amount of partnership
11 with law enforcement. And I think that's something that
12 a lot of individuals don't understand, that the attorney
13 general's office is -- all of our agents are law
14 enforcement. And they have years of experience.

15 At some point, they may have even found
16 themselves working with -- FBI or Homeland Security or
17 military have found themselves in this position where
18 they have a really strong background in terms of
19 investigating these types of special cases. And some of
20 the comments that I've heard, even from themselves as
21 well as some law enforcement find it very difficult to
22 investigate these cases because of the certain tenets
23 that they're overlooking or things that they're not
24 documenting in terms of evidence. And so the AG's
25 office tends to be the go-to office in terms of handling

1 and turning some of the cases off to.

2 So I would just like to mention the mission and
3 the vision. The mission of the New Mexico Human
4 Trafficking Task Force is to combat human trafficking
5 through the seamless collaboration between law
6 enforcement and service providers with the use of
7 victim-centered approaches and proactively investigating
8 and prosecuting human trafficking cases and providing a
9 comprehensive, high-quality service to all victims in
10 the State of New Mexico.

11 The New Mexico task force envisions a swift and
12 coordinated criminal justice response to human
13 trafficking in which perpetrators are held accountable,
14 and in which the rights of the victims of trafficking
15 under the New Mexico State and federal laws are
16 protected. The task force aims to provide a
17 comprehensive network of high-quality services for
18 victims of trafficking in a systemic collaboration
19 between service providers and law enforcement towards
20 the common goal of combatting human trafficking in the
21 State of New Mexico.

22 So these are just our partners, the current MOUs
23 that we have with law enforcement agencies that we
24 currently work with in our task force. So if we get a
25 case that comes to the Attorney General's office, and

1 I'll just use an example. If it comes from like
2 Farmington region and they need the assistance of the
3 Attorney General's office, they will reach out to one of
4 our agents. Our agents will be able to assist with that
5 case, and oversee some of their investigative procedures
6 and policies that they go by as well.

7 And, of course, you can see some of our
8 nongovernmental agencies that we work with such as
9 Spoken For, is another example. And lately, our agents
10 have been working very closely with First Nations
11 Community Health Source in terms of some of the cases,
12 the tips and notification that have come to our office
13 as well.

14 So in terms of the task force, we provide -- I
15 think one of our most important components is the
16 educational training, or organizations that come in
17 contact with the victims. We do have sudden
18 organizations that pop up and they're providing some
19 type of funds or grants in terms of working with
20 victims, and want to make sure that they are assisting
21 with them in the right way, connect them with Life Link
22 or Spoken For for educational training.

23 And with victim services, working with identified
24 victims, providing legal and social services, and that's
25 with Life Link, and Spoken For, and First Nations. The

1 law enforcement collaborates with agencies on current
2 and future investigations, provides officer training,
3 and prevention tactics, and then also community
4 awareness is important for us as well, partnering with
5 community events and members to provide some outreach
6 and education on sex and human trafficking.

7 And then protocol, creating and evaluating
8 protocols for task force and the procedures for handling
9 human traffic situations. I think some of the -- some
10 of the efforts since I began with the Attorney General's
11 office is, I'm noticing some of the slow and lack of
12 MOUs that we have with our tribal communities and
13 working with some of those service providers as well.
14 So I think that my supervisor Special Agent Anthony Maze
15 would like to continue those efforts to reach out to our
16 tribal communities in how we can partner with law
17 enforcement for educational training as well. And I
18 think one example to note is the Pueblo of Tesuque had
19 reached out to our office a couple of weeks ago for a
20 letter of support, and that they are taking a very
21 proactive approach, even though trafficking has not
22 happened in that community. But not to be reactive, but
23 to have something -- a system in place where they are
24 being proactive when these instances of trafficking
25 occur because of their casino.

1 So I think it's a really -- overreading the grant
2 and providing the letter of support, I think that's a
3 really interesting way of addressing trafficking to our
4 tribal communities, especially if you have a casino.
5 You know, when you have a casino, you definitely have
6 activity that's going to be coming from outside of your
7 community that's going to be coming onto Indian land.

8 So this is just to give you an idea of the human
9 trafficking unit and an ICAC unit. They work
10 hand-in-hand with each other. And we're under the
11 umbrella of the Special Investigations Division. So
12 when you get -- when you get a tip from the Internet
13 Crimes Against Children, it has some type of component
14 with human trafficking. So that's why both of our units
15 work hand-in-hand with a lot of these cases.

16 We have Special Agent Anthony Maze, who's the
17 commander of both the units. We have three special
18 agents in the Internet Crimes Against Children. We have
19 three special agents for human trafficking, one criminal
20 analysis, two forensic examiners, two administrative
21 specialists, and coordinators, one mental health
22 professional, and one electronic detection dog. That's
23 the picture I put right there. He's kind of like a
24 celebrity, and you can actually follow him on Instagram.
25 It's sajoey@theattorneygeneraloffice. And it's funny

1 his office is right next to mine. I see him every
2 morning, and I think he smells my dog on me.

3 But I think it's -- and then the mobile forensic
4 lab is actually within the past year and a half. And
5 that allows us to -- when these cases occur, it allow us
6 to really go to the location and provide a very thorough
7 investigation as well.

8 I think one thing is like when I got hired, I
9 just -- for some reason, my assumption was that the
10 attorney general's office only prosecutes criminal
11 justice cases, but it's not. We have many departments
12 and we have a main office in Santa Fe, and then our main
13 office is downtown at the U.S. Eagle. But we also have
14 -- other examples like Medicaid or Consumer Affairs
15 Department. We have a lot of assistant attorneys and
16 workers in those departments, as well.

17 But the Special Investigations Division is pretty
18 much really -- it's important in terms of protecting the
19 citizens of New Mexico, and the amount of heinous crimes
20 that we prosecute, they sometimes are the worst of the
21 worst. So I actually handle all of the notifications
22 statewide for the State of New Mexico.

23 When a human trafficking tip comes into the
24 Attorney General's office, I receive them in an e-mail
25 form. I read the notes, I document them, and we log

1 them into the Attorney General's database, the
2 management system. I printed out an example of how the
3 report comes in. And I deleted most of the information.
4 I made up Anna, Brad, and used 505 as the number.

5 So I will just pass this around to give an
6 example of how a report comes into the Attorney
7 General's office. And I think it is important when we
8 look at these reports for 2019, our unit received 234
9 reports. And so those are the numbers that our agents
10 have to go through. So when I receive them, I look
11 through it. You know, every month we have an agent who
12 is on call. I quickly forward it to them. If it has
13 some type of ICAC, Internet Crimes Against Children red
14 flags, and then I forward it also to any of the forensic
15 analysis agents as well.

16 So most of our reports actually do come from the
17 Children's Youth and Family Center. When I go through
18 those reports -- I probably would say about 90 percent
19 of them come from CYFD. So our office works very
20 closely with Brice, who is the director of behavioral
21 health there at CYFD. And my understanding is they are
22 starting to develop a youth shelter because that is one
23 of the most highest needs that we're not addressing in
24 the State of New Mexico.

25 In the past, what my understanding was, if a

1 youth was identified through DSMT, Domestic Sex Minor
2 Trafficking, they sometimes are taken to Texas or
3 Colorado where they have very extensive youth shelters
4 and wraparound services there as well.

5 So the other tips and notification we receive is
6 also from the National Human Traffic Resource Center.
7 As well, if somebody calls that number and they're here
8 in Albuquerque, that report and the case number and all
9 the information that is needed will be sent to our
10 officer. And same thing, again, it comes to our office,
11 I read it, I see what agent is on call. We send it to
12 them. Sometimes I tend to ask if they've followed up.

13 A few examples, if I read the report and I
14 noticed that it is a person of color, especially a
15 Native American victim, I personally tend to go and talk
16 to the agent and make mention that, you know, did you
17 follow-up? Did you investigate? Did you call the
18 reporter? Did you, you know, find any leads? So I do
19 like to pay special attention when it comes to those
20 type of reports that come into our office talking with
21 both of our agents, and I did invite them today, but
22 because we are out of the office most of the week, they
23 weren't able to come. And they are law enforcement as
24 well.

25 And then we also get case tips and notification

1 from the National Center For Missing and Exploited
2 Children. Same thing, they come in, I read through them
3 and give them to the correct agent. And then also
4 through Life Link, the antitrafficking initiative that
5 is located up in Santa Fe.

6 The other ways that I log this "All tips and
7 notification" is even word of mouth. Some individuals
8 may actually just call the task force and I log those in
9 to our system as well. And sometimes they even will
10 text special agent Anthony Maze. We log everything and
11 document everything that is given to our office. The
12 Internet Crimes Against Children, we have 1,318 tips.

13 And then with Life Link, with our grant that we
14 submitted, our six-month reporting, their documents
15 stated that a total of 41 trafficking victims were saved
16 during this reporting period; of those, 40 were victims
17 of labor trafficking, 30 victims of sex trafficking, six
18 victims of both sex and labor. One remains unknown.

19 I have to say that I -- I think my previous
20 experience working at First Nations seemed that we only
21 work mostly -- a few victims of youth, but mostly worked
22 with adults, and they were your clients [sic] that came
23 in off of the streets, off of Central, and some cases
24 out of state and in state. I didn't realize the scope
25 and severity of violence against our children. I think

1 that the ICAC unit -- the Internet Crimes Against
2 Children, the types of tips and notification that they
3 receive, is -- that number is really high. And when I
4 see some of those reports, they are reports of what's
5 happening here in New Mexico. Our children are being
6 targeted and exploited because they are vulnerable. And
7 they need protection here in the State of New Mexico.
8 And that number is a perfect example to show you the
9 amount of tips and notifications we receive from the
10 Internet Crimes Against Children. That is probably the
11 most easiest avenue for perpetrators that perpetrate
12 these types of violence, how they have access to our
13 children is the Internet and online social media. And I
14 can definitely attest to those numbers. And I just want
15 to make note and emphasize that -- that our children are
16 targeted and are the most vulnerable when it comes to
17 being exploited in New Mexico.

18 And this is just a perfect example. When I first
19 got hired on, they were telling me, you do have to do a
20 -- attend our search warrants, as well. I didn't think
21 it was going to happen for some time. And this was the
22 first operation I actually participated in. So I was
23 able to see from the minute we got the tip and the
24 notification when it came to our office, and when we
25 received that notification, to when it was being

1 investigated by our agents, how our office handled it,
2 to the point of arresting him and him showing up to
3 court.

4 So the New Mexico Attorney General's office
5 conducted a search warrant on Padilla's tablets, and
6 established child pornography containing video and
7 images of a young girl between the ages of 4 and 12.
8 Investigators say that they recovered three homemade
9 videos, including one where Padilla sexually assaults a
10 young girl approximately between 2 and 5 years old.
11 Authorities said Padilla's bedroom, which can be seen in
12 his video game tutorials on YouTube is the same room
13 where some of the child porn videos were created.
14 Investigators said that one video dates back to 2016.
15 It allegedly shows Padilla raping a young girl who is
16 wearing a pink Hello Kitty shirt. It is unclear how
17 many of the child victims may exist, but the Attorney
18 General's office is still investigating this case.

19 I have to admit, the minute we got this tip and
20 notification, most of the agents from the human
21 trafficking were on it. And quickly, the forensic
22 analysis agents also came on the case and were able to
23 identify how the source that was given this information
24 obtained some of the electronic devices that came to our
25 office. We have an ICAC room where it's kept at very

1 cool temperatures because of the fact of the amount of
2 data and with investigating the devices that come in.
3 And they're really quick and swift in terms of obtaining
4 just a simple USB. Even Special Agent Joey, the dog,
5 can actually go into a house and detect a USB if it's
6 hidden in the wall -- with some of these perpetrators,
7 they tend to hide some of their devices in the attic and
8 in the walls, and so forth.

9 So, you know, it's a perfect example of how our
10 children are being exploited. And this is a perfect
11 example of this case. And I have to admit, I was really
12 kind of scared, you know, having to wear a bulletproof
13 vest. The procedures of the search warrant. What team
14 I was on. The duties of going in and collecting the
15 evidence and documenting all of that, being in this
16 individual's house, you know, it does something to you.
17 It makes you realize that not only are we protecting our
18 children, but we're also at the front lines of getting
19 these types of individuals off the streets because, you
20 know, these children in these videos are still not
21 identified.

22 And our agents are trying to share one of the
23 child's photographs in the area of where this crime
24 might have been committed, and hopefully she can be
25 identified in these videos. And the wife actually did

1 not know of this, did not know of her husband doing
2 this. And it was an ex-girlfriend that he was meeting
3 up with, she came in contact with one of his devices
4 that he left in her care. So even under the wife's
5 nose, she didn't even know.

6 Foster parent caught in child sex sting sentenced
7 to eight years in prison. And this is just recent as
8 well. Today Attorney General Hector Balderas announced
9 that Joshua Saavedra, a long-term foster parent from
10 Albuquerque who agreed to trade drugs and money for sex
11 with who he believed to be a 13-year-old girl, was
12 sentenced to eight years in prison by Second Judicial
13 Court Judge Brett Loveless following a guilty plea to
14 the crime of sexual exploitation of children by
15 prostitution.

16 Here's the statement from the AG's office:

17 In March 2019, agents with the Attorney General's
18 Internet Crimes Against Children Human Trafficking Unit
19 spearheaded this undercover sting operation by posing as
20 a mother selling sexual access to her 13-year-old
21 daughter online.

22 And I think those operations that we'll be
23 carrying out this year, we picked strategically
24 different locations here in the city -- in the state
25 where we're going to do the exact same thing where they

1 pose undercover. I'm hopefully trying to figure out how
2 we can maybe do one closer to Gallup and see how those
3 operations will be carried out as well. We tend to have
4 a lot of cases on the southern border in Las Cruces, as
5 well, along the Mexico and Texas border. And one of the
6 main things that the trafficking task force has been
7 entrusted with in addressing is also how there is a
8 correlation with the oil and the rigs out there in the
9 southern part of New Mexico. We are getting information
10 from law enforcement that there are spikes of human
11 trafficking cases amongst women in that location as
12 well.

13 So if you look at the law enforcement data
14 snapshot, we do work with a consulting firm that helps
15 with these numbers in terms of the 2019 cases that were
16 reported. If you look at just the first on top, we have
17 26 new cases. For sex trafficking, we have 21, labor
18 trafficking, 1, both sex and labor traffic, we have 4.

19 The types of investigation. Reactive is
20 basically kind of like the notification and tip when
21 they come into our office. There is some type of active
22 investigation on those cases that could potentially lead
23 to trafficking. Proactive is basically the actual cases
24 in some type of operation that was carried out from our
25 office because it was a human trafficking ICAC case.

1 Number of confirmed victims 12; 6 trafficking
2 victims, 8 labor trafficking victims, 1 sex and labor
3 trafficking victim. The gender female is 9, and the
4 male is 3.

5 And then if you go back to the quarterly reports,
6 October -- the back page actually starts in January
7 through March. So we started off with 11. And then
8 April through June, it went up to 3. And then in July
9 through September, it went up to 7. And then in October
10 to December, we had 13. And then for January -- for the
11 entire year, 26. So I think this is something that when
12 I spoke to Samantha Wauls a couple of weeks ago, that
13 she had mentioned she was really interested in how do we
14 partner with our law enforcement.

15 Well, with the AG's office already being law
16 enforcement, we already have that trust relationship
17 with them and how we have established a good partnership
18 with them. When we work with law enforcement, we ask
19 them to turn in a quarterly report. And this is just an
20 example of how it looks. And I tend to send these out
21 before the quarterly report is due. And I remind all
22 law enforcement agencies that their quarterly report for
23 human trafficking cases need to be turned in. And I'll
24 pass that out.

25 Sometimes I try to think about how do we better

1 work with one another. I think that we can have
2 agencies come to the task force -- the human state task
3 force, they show up and then they leave back to their
4 region or district and so forth. But that continuous
5 communication with them is very important and vital. As
6 an established task force in 2015, we still have
7 difficulties with that, with our law enforcement. I'm
8 not quite sure if that's something of a suggestion of
9 mandating collaboration and coordination. And as the
10 Attorney General's office, we still have some
11 difficulties with that.

12 And we are a law enforcement prosecution office
13 that's, you know, spearheading these efforts on human
14 trafficking task force. And we ourselves are still
15 having difficulty working with our state law enforcement
16 partners and agencies. I think what I'm recognizing is
17 if in the past, we did work with them on a human
18 trafficking case -- and there are a couple of cases from
19 that district, in that region -- they do turn in their
20 quarterly reports. If there's one that's in a very
21 rural community and they had maybe one or two, sometimes
22 they forget to turn in their reports to our office. So
23 that can be a little difficult at times. And then when
24 they complete the quarterly report as well, they also
25 tend to not understand the number of cases that come in.

1 And if it's another agency that is also working on the
2 same case sometimes, they even find themselves reporting
3 that same case. So sometimes we actually have double
4 numbers in terms to reporting.

5 And the other challenge is just providing
6 educational outreach to law enforcement and the
7 importance of training them. And being down in Hobbs
8 and Artesia the last few days, they made mention how,
9 you know, it's really hard for them to see. We had law
10 enforcement make mention how they may have actually
11 overlooked human trafficking, especially if they came to
12 a call to a house, and maybe it was for a loud noise or
13 something, they go check, knock on the house, and maybe
14 notice three or four mattress beds on the floor, but
15 never saw that as being a red flag or anything. Or
16 going to another call at a house, realizing that this
17 particular guy is in charge of all of these men, and
18 when something is needed, he called this particular guy
19 out of the house and tells him to go with this
20 individual to work on something.

21 So law enforcement, some of their stories have
22 made mentioned that in the past, they may have actually
23 been in human trafficking situations and did not
24 recognize it themselves.

25 Again, the lack of victim-centered services for

1 youth, that's a huge gap that we have in the State of
2 New Mexico, and CYFD is trying to address that. And I
3 know that Spoken For with the Dream Tree Center as well
4 is trying to work very closely with our youth that are
5 being trafficked. And then, of course, our tribal
6 communities, as well. You know, the example, Pueblo of
7 Tesuque, the lack of law enforcement, that they have
8 been wanting to take a proactive approach.

9 We recognize the importance and assistance with
10 Anthony Maze and how our agents can assist with our
11 tribal communities as well. And these are just a few
12 upcoming projects and initiatives. It's not all of
13 them. It's just a few examples. We can provide letter
14 of supports for tribal communities. Human trafficking
15 training to the Navajo Nation law enforcement. We got a
16 request from Wallace Billie from the Chinle area, but we
17 would like to establish a MOU with Navajo Nation law
18 enforcement so that we can help assist with better
19 investigations in terms of these types of special cases.

20 Project Echo, the task force, we're looking at a
21 sophisticated coordination with human trafficking core
22 service providers and law enforcement where we have a
23 very closed-confidential meeting maybe biweekly or every
24 month where when a trafficking victim is identified, we
25 have the main important core service providers in this

1 meeting in making sure services are rendered on their
2 behalf swiftly and quickly, especially housing being the
3 number one challenge today.

4 And then also working with our partners upstairs
5 in our building, the United States Attorney General's
6 office, they are looking to hire an MMIW employee for a
7 position that just opened up, and they reached out to
8 our office and how both our state and federal can
9 address these issues in missing and murdered indigenous
10 women cases as well.

11 World Day Against Trafficking, and then also with
12 CVRC, Crime Victim Reparation Commission, they spearhead
13 efforts in terms of what is the definition of having
14 victim rights; that if you're a victim of a violent
15 crime, you have rights for being compensated for being a
16 victim of that crime.

17 And then also House Bill 237 human trafficking
18 and the sex offender changes, that was actually put
19 together by our assistant attorney Mark Probasco, who
20 wrote the House Bill 237. It's basically to enhance
21 sentencing for our traffickers that come and commit
22 these types of crimes in the State of New Mexico. It
23 being currently a third-degree for the first-time
24 offense, it is pretty much a slap in the face for
25 victims, where we are not giving them justice in terms

1 of their perpetrator that commit these type of crimes.
2 And also for the youth, if they commit -- the bill also
3 mentions if they commit -- a trafficker commits a crime
4 against a youth, it will be considered a first-degree
5 offense. So those are gaps that we are recognizing
6 within our own criminal state statutes as well. And
7 then also, if you commit -- if you are a sex offender in
8 another state, and you come to New Mexico, we want those
9 perpetrators to also be held accountable, and be put on
10 the sex registry list as well.

11 So I'm really excited to continue this work
12 however our office can be of assistance with you. I
13 think one of the main things the task force is working
14 on in terms of the data collection I think that would be
15 important for us to also -- our office to review those
16 cases in terms of when a Native American woman comes in
17 our office, how are we handling and surveillancing,
18 overseeing those special cases.

19 The experience that I had working with sex and
20 human trafficking victims has been very important and
21 helpful in my current position. And I always remember
22 one particular victim that I worked with. She had made
23 mention of how as she was completing an intake and
24 talking, and she's there with her child who was
25 trafficked, and she said to me -- with tears in her

1 eyes, and said, you know, "Why is it that our Native
2 women are worth more on the streets?"

3 And to me, to this day, that quote sticks with
4 me. And I want to change that narrative. I don't want
5 us to be seen in that light or in that way; that we do
6 have these beautiful services and, you know, thinking
7 about Tewa Women United, the Coalition to Stop Violence
8 Against Native Women, you know, some of them are not
9 service providers, but the amount of these healing
10 services of being a support and an ally in this moment
11 is very much important and crucial for our community
12 members, because they are the ones that are going to be
13 the eyes and ears to see something, to speak up, and say
14 something. Either be that nosy auntie, or that nosy mom
15 or sister, and so forth.

16 So I thank you all for listening to me. If you
17 have any questions, I'll be here for the remainder of
18 the meeting.

19 MS. WAULS: Thank you so much. We really
20 appreciate the information that you shared with us. And
21 I think that quote will stick with all of us moving
22 forward. But Janet will be here today. Especially
23 those who have questions about the human trafficking
24 task force, their findings, to interact with her during
25 the lunchtime period and at any point when we have a

1 break or an opportunity to connect with one another.

2 MS. PEIFFER: Samantha, I forgot the last slide
3 has my contact information.

4 MS. WAULS: I'll leave it up there. So the next
5 presentation, our speaker is going to be from the
6 Department of Public Safety. We have Lieutenant Mark
7 Soriano, and also Regina Chacon -- I'm hoping I'm saying
8 that right. She is the supervisor for the Amber alert
9 coordinator and missing person clearinghouse, and they
10 will be talking about just their policies and procedures
11 around missing person cases and how that is reported.

12 So if we can have them come up and further
13 introduce themselves.

14 MS. CHACON: Good morning. My name is Regina
15 Chacon. I'm the bureau chief for the Law Enforcement
16 Records Bureau. I'm also the Amber alert coordinator
17 for the State of New Mexico. And Lieutenant Soriano is
18 also -- he's a co-Amber alert coordinator.

19 MR. SORIANO: I'm Lieutenant Mark Soriano, New
20 Mexico State Police. I've been employed with the State
21 Police for 14 years. Current assignment is the public
22 information office for the New Mexico State Police.
23 That's pretty much it. I work closely with all the
24 districts, you know, what's going on, any time you see
25 any messages being pushed out by the state police

1 through the media or any messages that's on our Facebook
2 pages, I supervise the social media portion of it too.
3 But I work really closely with Regina when it comes to
4 missing persons and public records.

5 MS. CHACON: I'm going to give you a little bit
6 of background on what the law enforcement records bureau
7 does because I think that in listening to the previous
8 speakers, there's a lot of the services that we can
9 probably help with in this journey with the task force.

10 One of the programs that we manage is the sex
11 offender registry. The sex offender registry is crucial
12 when we are helping law enforcement identify suspects in
13 the human trafficking arena.

14 The other one is Uniform Crime Reporting, which
15 will soon be the national incident base reporting that
16 we have to be in compliance with by January of 2021.
17 And the reason why that is going to be important is
18 because one of the messages that I'm also hearing is
19 information sharing, statistical gathering, information
20 that we can share amongst each other to help us identify
21 where the needs are really not being met or need to be
22 given more attention. So we can help with statistics
23 around the state because all law enforcement agencies
24 are required to submit their arrest data, incident data
25 to the Department of Public Safety.

1 And the next one is that we're tasked with the
2 criminal history repository, which means that every
3 single person that gets arrested in the State of New
4 Mexico is housed in our bureau. We have an automated
5 fingerprint identification system. So it's
6 biometrically matched to each person. So that will also
7 help in this endeavor to help identify the arrests
8 around the state, who's being arrested, what is the --
9 what are the crimes that are being charged, and then how
10 -- and then you can follow through through the district
11 attorney's office and through the courts.

12 And so I wanted to give you just a little bit --
13 we manage 23 criminal justice programs around the state,
14 but I wanted just to give you a few of the programs that
15 might help with this endeavor -- and the Department of
16 Public Safety, the Law Enforcement Records bureau, we're
17 also here to help.

18 The one I'm here to speak about today, along with
19 Lieutenant Soriano, is the missing persons
20 clearinghouse. We were tasked statutorily to manage the
21 Missing Persons Clearinghouse. The sole purpose is to
22 liaison with law enforcement resources for the families.
23 The families themselves -- when there is tension between
24 the families and law enforcement -- not that law
25 enforcement does anything wrong -- but sometimes the

1 families expect certain responses, and law enforcement
2 can't always give those responses. So our job is to do
3 sort of a conflict mediation to manage that
4 relationship. So we will filter the information that
5 law enforcement has to give the families -- the type of
6 information that they need to at least let them know,
7 "Look, law enforcement cares. They are working on it.
8 They're not going to be able to tell you everything, but
9 this is what we can tell you."

10 We also manage the resources that they may need
11 for therapy, for counseling, for coping mechanisms. We
12 help law enforcement with managed resources if they need
13 search and rescue. We have brought in search dogs from
14 other states when ours weren't available. We will
15 coordinate with other law enforcement agencies for the
16 use of their helicopters or any other type of vehicles,
17 or anything that they'll need. But that's really the
18 missing persons clearinghouse -- the core task of the
19 Missing Person Clearinghouse. We -- the Missing Person
20 Clearinghouse also is the statistical -- the reason why
21 it's called the clearinghouse is because it's a
22 statistical repository of all missing persons.

23 So in the statute, what the requirement is, is
24 that law enforcement is required to fill out a form and
25 send it to the Department of Public Safety as soon as a

1 person is reported missing. What the department has
2 done is created an interface with the National Crime
3 Information Center, with NCIC. So as soon as a missing
4 person is reported into NCIC, which is by federal
5 regulation, immediately -- is their term, immediately,
6 then the clearinghouse will receive it. It's put into a
7 staging table, and we're able to view every missing
8 person that is reported to law enforcement in the State
9 of New Mexico. The benefit to that is that we're able
10 to see that information and be able to reach out to law
11 enforcement. So if there's a law enforcement agency
12 that entered a missing person into NCIC, has no idea
13 what to do with it, we see some imminent danger or
14 criteria that might lead to the alerts -- which
15 Lieutenant Soriano will discuss -- then we'll reach out
16 to the law enforcement agency and say, "Hey, do you need
17 help? Do you want an alert? Do you want us to help you
18 with any resources? Let's look at your NCIC entry.
19 Could there be more information?"

20 And that is just for us to let them know that
21 we're here to support. We don't take over cases. We
22 don't tell them what to do. We just make sure they're
23 following the law, the laws that were put in place to
24 create a best practice to investigate missing persons,
25 and then we're out. And if they say, "No, we don't want

1 an alert. We don't want your help, we're good. We have
2 it under control." Then we say, "Okay, we're good."

3 And if they say, "Well, we think it's a good idea
4 to explore an Amber alert or a Silver alert," the first
5 call we make is to Lieutenant Soriano, and we start
6 having a discussion on how we can help the law
7 enforcement agency. And at this point then, you know,
8 it's really just communication and information sharing
9 point. So we -- we really are here to serve you. We
10 are really here to serve the public, and we know that,
11 and we're honored to be able to do that.

12 Missing persons is -- all missing persons, all
13 ages is just so important to really bring to the
14 forefront. And I've been working in the clearinghouse
15 -- for law enforcement records bureau actually for
16 23 years, and in that time, I seen the attention to the
17 missing persons effort really just bloom. And it's just
18 so -- it's so encouraging. And that people are really
19 taking it seriously -- really taking it seriously, that
20 you don't have to wait 24 hours to report somebody
21 missing. It doesn't have to be over the age of this, or
22 under the age of that, and really just getting that
23 message out there.

24 I think that's also something I would ask the
25 task force to really make sure that we're letting

1 everybody know, there's no waiting period. There's no
2 circumstance. There's no reason to wait. And even
3 though you're like, "Well, she's run away before."

4 No, it doesn't matter. Because what we say is it
5 leads to the human trafficking and all of the studies
6 and research that we've done with human trafficking,
7 they're running away from something or they're running
8 to something. And it's important to make sure that we
9 are on top of it. And what's the worst that can happen?
10 She comes home. He comes home. That's not the worst
11 that can happen. So law enforcement you're not wasting
12 your time, you're not wasting your resources when you
13 have a runaway who is -- a "chronic runaway," is what
14 the term is. So, please, make sure that you're paying
15 attention to those type of cases and that you are
16 listening to parents, the guardians, the friends, the
17 aunts, the uncles, the co-workers who are saying, you
18 know, "It's not like them to not come to work, it's not
19 like them to not come home and call me."

20 Just take the report, it doesn't hurt. That's my
21 message, but I'll let Lieutenant Soriano speak now.

22 MR. SORIANO: Thank you, guys, for allowing us to
23 present today. I think it's important to understand
24 that these missing persons and alerts, that the
25 clearinghouse issue and DPS and State Police, it's a

1 resource to law enforcement. And we all have the same
2 goal at the end of the day. We wear different uniforms,
3 but we're all on the same team, right?

4 So these alerts, they engage the community.
5 Whenever we issue an alert, it's to notify the community
6 that we have somebody missing. So they pay attention,
7 right? That's the role, right? A safe return home for
8 our loved ones. Okay. So we're dedicated. I want you
9 guys to know that we're dedicated at State Police and
10 DPS as an available resource to support the safe return
11 of our loved one. And every time -- every day, officers
12 out in the field -- the guys out in the field, they're
13 working -- actively working to stop human trafficking.
14 And if there is a loved one missing, they're actively
15 working to bring that -- or to have a safe return home
16 for that loved one.

17 So Amber alerts. Let's talk about Amber alerts.
18 There's three criteria for an Amber alert. The first
19 one is a child under the age of 18 has been abducted.
20 That's the first criteria. The second criteria is, the
21 child is in imminent danger of great bodily harm or
22 serious bodily harm or death. And then the third
23 criteria is the specific information available about the
24 child's -- the child or child's abductor that may assist
25 us within expediting a successful -- and the abduction.

1 Okay. Safe return. Those are the three things.

2 So Amber alerts, what we need to understand when
3 there's a missing person case in the middle of the
4 night -- they always happen in the middle of the night.
5 They never happen during the day, and when they do,
6 things work smoothly because everybody's at work, right,
7 in the middle of the day.

8 So if I walk around, can you guys hear me? Okay.

9 So they evolve, right? So the first thing is the
10 call gets dispatched to officers. So an officer
11 responds to the scene and takes that initial report.
12 Time starts -- the time starts ticking at that point.
13 So we have the information, there's things that are
14 going on simultaneously. We've got to get that child
15 entered into the system at that point -- to see if
16 they're missing endangered at that point. So -- but
17 that officer's out in the field. So we have to utilize
18 our resources. So one officer is going to be -- he or
19 she is going to be consumed with that investigation. So
20 once that information gets entered into the NCIC, the
21 missing persons clearinghouse actually gets an e-mail or
22 a notification that says, "Hey, we've got this
23 endangered child."

24 At that point, the law enforcement agency is
25 either reaching out to me or the clearinghouse is

1 reaching out to me. And the three things that we talked
2 about, right, that I said are mandatory for an Amber
3 alert, those are the three things that I ask law
4 enforcement. If it meets that criteria, we're going to
5 hit send on an Amber alert.

6 So the three things: Child is under the age of
7 18, child in imminent danger, and we have specific
8 information to end that abduction. Like I said, these
9 cases are evolving so a lot of the times -- we'll see it
10 on the news, right, we'll see that the child went
11 missing at like 6:00 a.m., the Amber alert wasn't issued
12 until 6:00 p.m. Well, there's a lot of things that
13 happen between there.

14 When the parent reports the child missing, when
15 officer arrives on scene, and when the investigation is
16 going, and what information we have to issue that Amber
17 alert. So it doesn't always happen within an hour or
18 two hours, right. So that kind of short explanation of
19 why we don't see it, it's expedited like that. We'd
20 like to see it right away. But we don't always know
21 about it right away until they report it. That's pretty
22 much about it with Amber alerts.

23 And we have Silver alerts. Silver alert is when
24 the individual is over the age of 50, and they have a
25 clear indication of irreversible deterioration, such as

1 Alzheimer's, dementia, some sort of medical condition.
2 So whenever that's issued, whenever we take a report, we
3 have that information, we enter that person into the
4 system as a missing endangered. Law enforcement will
5 either, if it's the state police, or another agency,
6 they'll reach out to us. We'll send out a missing
7 endangered advisory. You guys see them all the time,
8 unfortunately. But those alerts are just as important
9 as an Amber alert, right? Our main goal is to get that
10 person back safely to their family.

11 And then the last alert I'm going to talk about
12 is Brittany alerts. So that's somebody who's missing,
13 who has a clear developmental disability, and that
14 person's health or safety is at risk. Same thing, we're
15 going to enter -- law enforcement agency is going to
16 take the report, we're going to enter that person into
17 the system, and we're going to contact New Mexico State
18 Police, and -- or the clearinghouse if the resource is
19 needed to send out that alert for a quick return.

20 Now, New Mexico State Police is not the only
21 agency that issues out these alerts. There is other
22 agencies that issue out the alert. Albuquerque Police
23 Department does it for themselves, Bernalillo County.
24 But Amber alerts all come through the New Mexico State
25 Police. It's a one-stop shop. They have to come

1 through and talk to either me, Regina, or my two
2 officers.

3 Lastly, everything that we kind of went over
4 today is online and it's public record. You can go on a
5 search engine, whatever search engines you use on the
6 Internet and you can Google -- I'm using Google. I'm
7 not getting paid by saying Google. You can get on the
8 search engine and search NMDPS policies and procedures.
9 And when you go to our policies and procedures page,
10 you'll look at OPR 43, that's our missing persons policy
11 for the New Mexico State Police and department of public
12 safety. All the information I went over, I didn't make
13 up, I promise. It's in law, and it's on our policy and
14 procedures. Did I miss anything?

15 Thank you, guys.

16 MS. CHACON: So those are the alerts that you'll
17 see mostly on TV, Channel 7, Channel 4. Those are the
18 ones that you'll see. But we want to ensure you that
19 there are other alerts. We have one and it's called the
20 Endangered Person Advisory. And New Mexico was the
21 first to enact that into law. And the reason why we did
22 is because we felt that it was important to -- if a
23 person wasn't -- at the time there was only an Amber
24 alert. And New Mexico is also one of the only ones, top
25 ten in the country, to have a missing persons

1 clearinghouse for all persons, all ages.

2 And so there was an alert for children, but there
3 wasn't an alert for everybody else. There wasn't an
4 alert when there was imminent danger. And when we think
5 of imminent, they're going to die, and it's just -- it's
6 horrible. They are an imminent danger to themselves or
7 to others, or they have a gun or a weapon, and they're
8 going to use it somewhere else. So endangered persons
9 was created to help with all of the other missing person
10 cases that were just as important. We wanted to get the
11 word out there. It was just as important for them to be
12 brought home.

13 So that's the one that is kind of the catch-all
14 just in case, you know, if they don't meet that other
15 criteria, we don't want anybody to think -- or law
16 enforcement to think there's not another way to get that
17 information out. We'll get it out. If it's important
18 to law enforcement, if it's important to the family,
19 we'll get it out. We'll get that information out.

20 I also wanted to end with a stat. There's 437
21 missing persons currently entered into the National
22 Crime Information Center, and there are only 18
23 unidentified bodies or remains. And so -- the reason
24 why I want to bring that stat up is because a lot -- if
25 we don't know that the person is missing, if we don't

1 know if the person is entered into the National Crime
2 Information Center, then we don't know. And the
3 National Crime Information Center actually has a very
4 good search mechanism to be able to draw a bridge
5 between people that are missing and people who are
6 entered unidentified all over the country.

7 So it does an algorithm every night that says,
8 "Hey, there's a person that meets this age criteria,
9 scar marks, tattoos, last seen wearing," that
10 information. And it will do an algorithm match every
11 single night. And that's why it's so important to get
12 it entered into NCIC.

13 And the other database that we use, that I would
14 be remiss to not mention because it has been a very good
15 tool to us, which is the National Missing and
16 Unidentified Persons system. And currently, there was
17 -- last year, there was a house bill that representative
18 Joseph Sanchez sponsored, and it was passed. And we
19 took -- it took us a little bit to get all the
20 information sent to NamUs. And it was the first for
21 NamUs. NamUs had never had a state that wanted to send
22 everything to them electronically. And we said, "Here
23 you go, here's our database, have fun."

24 And we're like, "Yeah, let's get it in there."
25 They said, "Whoa, we've never done this, so let's try to

1 figure it out together."

2 And we worked with them to figure out how to get
3 our data into their system. And there were a couple of
4 fields that they wanted to make sure that we had in the
5 system and we said, "Okay, we'll get that information in
6 there." And that took a little bit, but December 3rd
7 was the first of the transfer of all of the our missing
8 persons data. And so every week -- every Wednesday, if
9 you want to know the exact day -- but every Wednesday
10 morning, we hit the send button and it sends a data
11 transfer to NamUs, and they enter all of the data into
12 another database, which is a public database for anyone
13 that can -- that wants to look at it. Family members
14 can submit DNA -- mitochondrial DNA, paternal DNA. They
15 can submit more information. If they say, "Well, law
16 enforcement is saying that she was wearing blue jeans
17 and a black top." And the family's saying, "No, she
18 wasn't. She had this jacket that she wore and it had
19 this pretty flower on it," and they can submit
20 supplemental information. And we have an agreement with
21 NamUs now that any of the supplemental information
22 that's submitted, it will come back to the missing
23 persons clearinghouse so we can make sure it's
24 documented in New Mexico as well. And we're very
25 dedicated to information sharing. We're very dedicated

1 to making sure that the quality of information on
2 missing persons is accurate.

3 So thank you all for allowing us to speak on the
4 missing person clearinghouse, and the alerts, and the
5 work that we do.

6 I think -- I was surprised Lieutenant Soriano
7 didn't tell you the story, but we actually were up at
8 2:30 this morning, and we had a possible Amber alert,
9 and so all the work that Captain Velasquez and
10 Lieutenant Soriano and New Mexico State Police and
11 Department of Public Safety do is really here to serve
12 you. And we want to thank you for inviting us because
13 this is important to us, and we know -- we can feel how
14 important it is to you guys. Thank you.

15 MS. WAULS: Thank you all so much. We actually
16 have some time for questions. So we do want to open it
17 up to the task force members and our public attendees to
18 ask questions. If you do have a question, please raise
19 your hand and I'll come by.

20 MS. YANABAH-YATSAYTE: Good morning. I have one
21 question. My name is Meskee Yatsayte with Navajo Nation
22 Missing Persons and also NMDR. You said that entering
23 all these MPs into the NCIC. Now my question is: Is
24 that mandatory for law enforcement to do that with every
25 case?

1 MS. CHACON: Yes. So it is -- that's a federal
2 regulation. So all law enforcement is required to enter
3 all missing persons into NCIC, and their language in
4 federal regulation is immediately.

5 MS. YANABAH-YATSAYTE: Does it interface with
6 NamUs?

7 MS. CHACON: Let me give you kind of how the flow
8 works. The answer is -- the short answer is yes, but
9 there is a way that it does it. So NCIC -- whatever's
10 entered into NCIC, remember if it's within the New
11 Mexico boundaries of our ORI, we'll receive it here in
12 the clearinghouse. Once we receive it in the
13 clearinghouse, it becomes part of our record. That's
14 part of the data transfer that's sent to NamUs. It's
15 through the vehicle of DPS, but yes.

16 MS. YANABAH-YATSAYTE: That includes tribal,
17 correct?

18 MS. CHACON: It does. And we worked with the
19 Navajo Nation on allowing them to have complete access
20 to our NCIC, to our criminal justice information
21 system -- because I know there's been some
22 communications or some issues in Arizona and Colorado,
23 and we just said, you know, look, just use NCIC, we'll
24 figure out everything else. We'll figure out the
25 auditing, we'll figure out how to do all of it. Here,

1 use our NCIC. I'm also the CSO for the state, so I
2 authorize every single law enforcement agency to have
3 access to NCIC.

4 MS. YANABAH-YATSAYTE: Excellent. Thank you so
5 much.

6 MS. CHACON: You're welcome.

7 MS. WAULS: Any other questions?

8 MS. KANAZBAH CNOTTY: So I'm Amber Kanazbah
9 Cnotty with the Navajo Nation Council. What I think in
10 terms of your report -- what I didn't hear was how many
11 missing Natives do you have in your system. As a task
12 force, that's what we're looking for. I, as Navajo
13 Nation leadership, I can't tell my people how many are
14 missing. So if you can provide that information.

15 The other area I was looking at, if you're the
16 program for families to interface when they're moving
17 along, trying to find their relative, are you -- where
18 are your offices located? Is it just here in
19 Albuquerque? Because this morning, it took me about
20 three-and-a-half hours to get here, and so if I'm
21 helping community members on an active missing case, I
22 need a bridge to get them what services you're
23 providing.

24 And also the last thing is, when we're talking
25 about county, cities, and then tribal, what are some of

1 the best practices that you work together doing to make
2 sure when we go back and have these conversations that
3 that's actually being implemented?

4 We're trying to start a Navajo missing persons
5 unit within the Navajo Nation, either police department
6 or PD or criminal investigators, and at times, our
7 families are not completely comfortable just working
8 with law enforcement. So we're trying to bridge that
9 and bring up trust. So if you can provide that
10 information. Thank you.

11 And I just have to kind of push back too in your
12 statement that law enforcement doesn't do anything
13 wrong. I almost was at the end of my seat in saying --
14 if we can step back and say what can we do better. What
15 are the five steps that we can do to bring our families
16 forward. That will be helpful for all of us. We're not
17 in law enforcement, and trying to crack the code on how
18 to work with people with badges when they're seeing so
19 much and trying to deal with a family and a community
20 that's just broken because they can't find their
21 grandma.

22 Thank you.

23 MS. CHACON: So the first one is the statistics
24 on Native missing persons. We are unable to track that
25 specifically because if you -- historically, if you look

1 at the reporting mechanism that for all -- for instance,
2 that it's not -- there's not a mechanism to track on the
3 -- even really the ethnicity, or if they're Native or
4 nonNative.

5 So right now, that's what we're working on.
6 We're working on a way to -- how do I get in the missing
7 clearinghouse specifically. We're trying to keep our
8 scope very small in that sense of if we see it come
9 in -- what is the best practice to reach out to law
10 enforcement, if we see it coming from a tribal ORI,
11 because that is how everything is tracked to us, is ORI.
12 Then do we reach out and ask them what the affiliation
13 is -- what the tribal affiliation is?

14 So right now we're trying to develop that,
15 because there hasn't been anything. And in law
16 enforcement, it's this or that. So if you look at the
17 documents that's required for law enforcement to submit,
18 or the databases, it's really -- you submit the race,
19 and/or the ethnicity at times because that's not a
20 mandatory field in the system, and that's really it. So
21 we're working on that. Last year, it was brought to our
22 attention that that was -- when we started hearing about
23 the task force, and that that was -- that possibly would
24 be a need. And so we promise, we're working on that.
25 So we don't really know how to identify -- make that

1 identification. And sometimes, you know, if a tribal
2 agency -- the first thing that we can think of is tribal
3 agency. So I would ask the task force to help us
4 identify maybe criteria, how would we know when to -- as
5 a clearinghouse to reach out and say is this -- what's
6 the tribal affiliation? Is this a Native or nonNative
7 missing person? And then be sensitive to the answer of,
8 "We're not going to tell you" or -- you know, because we
9 can't really make it mandatory either. So that's the
10 first one.

11 The second one is the -- you're talking about
12 best practices, and how we can help with that on the
13 bridging the liaison with the families. So our office
14 is in Santa Fe. But I can tell you that we have a staff
15 in the clearinghouse of -- there's four people all
16 together. And I'm on call 24/7. And I've traveled all
17 over the state on missing persons cases, on Amber alert
18 cases, on nonAmber alert cases. I've had multiple
19 meetings with law enforcement, with families. I will
20 sit down with the families.

21 So we dedicate that. That's all we can do. We
22 can't regionalize it. We've actually worked with State
23 Police, because they're everywhere, to help them
24 understand the resources and what they can do. But the
25 very first step is reaching out. We have a 1-800

1 number, and I'm happy to give you my cell number, which
2 is on 24/7, obviously, right? 2:30 in the morning, and
3 we're working on that.

4 But that's really the first step. And I'm happy
5 to sit with the Navajo Nation and talk about what we do
6 as the clearinghouse, because the clearinghouse is the
7 unit that you're really looking for. You're looking for
8 a repository of data to liaison with the families, to
9 liaison with law enforcement, to have one point of
10 connection to all the other resources. The National
11 Center for Missing and Exploited Children, that's -- I
12 mean, we're in constant contact with them. So I really
13 think what you're looking -- I'm not trying to impose
14 ourselves, but we are happy to give you the best
15 practices of the clearinghouse and our statute, and what
16 it allows us to do.

17 It allows us to go to the dentist's office, and
18 teachers, and schools and say, "Give me these -- give
19 them to -- give me these records. I need a photo of
20 this child. I need the dental records of this person."

21 And it's really helped us in a lot of situations.
22 So if I'm hearing correctly, I think it's the
23 clearinghouse, their practices -- their business
24 practices that might assist you. So I'm happy to meet
25 with you at any time. And Lieutenant Soriano and

1 Captain Velasquez, and Chief Johnson, Secretary Shey,
2 this is very important to all of us. So we're very
3 happy to meet with you.

4 And I want to address the comment of, you know,
5 law enforcement doesn't do anything wrong. I'm a
6 civilian. I am not commissioned. So I'll make that
7 very clear. So I understand the issues that law
8 enforcement faces. And I see both sides of it, because
9 there are times where, you know -- and I think the Amber
10 alert last night was indicative of that. We understand
11 the challenges they're facing, but we also understand
12 they're not necessarily taking the steps and performing
13 the investigative process that they need to to ensure
14 that we're getting all the information we need.

15 So we have a curriculum at the law enforcement
16 academy that we'll also share with any law enforcement
17 agency, with any entity that wants to see how to
18 investigate missing persons. We have checklists that we
19 created for law enforcement. "Hey, have you checked
20 this? Have you done this? Have you contacted this
21 person? Have you made sure this."

22 So we've tried to take those steps because we do
23 understand that. I was trying to be -- I was trying to
24 be sensitive and nice to law enforcement. But we have
25 seen that. We do see that. And we sometimes firmly but

1 -- firmly and nicely and professionally, we try to push
2 back on them and say, "No, you guys aren't doing what
3 you need to do to find this missing person."

4 But then we also hear, "Well, you know" -- just
5 like last night, the officer was like "I got called to
6 another call." "You have a missing person."

7 Then we have to realize, they have three officers
8 on one shift to handle a large area. So we need to --
9 you know, we're trying to be empathetic to that. We're
10 trying to understand that, but we're trying to, you
11 know, sometimes get the information that we need and
12 help them be the best investigators they can be on
13 missing person and on any other case. So I hope that
14 answers your question.

15 MS. KANAZBAH CNOTTY: Thank you so much for
16 offering that help.

17 MS. CHACON: You're welcome.

18 MS. WAULS: So we have time for one more
19 question, and then we'll get into our first break of the
20 day.

21 Please state your name.

22 MS. MCKENNA: Thank you. Can you hear me? Good
23 morning. My name is Brenda McKenna. I'm a field
24 representative for Congress Woman Deb Haaland here in
25 her district office. And she, in the past year, has

1 written a lot of legislation for missing and murdered
2 indigenous women and now, of course, we know it's
3 people. And so I'm here to help her learn if there's
4 any federal fixes that can help close the gaps on your
5 need and what you're doing.

6 And one thing I was not clear on when it came to
7 the question of you're unable to track Natives who are
8 missing, and I'm curious when you said it's not required
9 to submit the race ethnicity -- did I hear that
10 correctly?

11 MS. CHACON: No, ma'am. What isn't required is
12 the tribal affiliation and ethnicity. The race is a
13 required field in NCIC and with all other reports. The
14 state uniform incident reporting system is -- does
15 require race. But ethnicity is optional, and we
16 absolutely don't have a field for Native -- or tribal
17 affiliation.

18 MS. MCKENNA: So is this a software problem?

19 MS. CHACON: No, ma'am. It's a -- really just --
20 it's a business problem, and it's a requirement problem.
21 So if I can offer -- again, offer any assistance with
22 that, I think it would be to make it a requirement
23 through the National Center of Information -- the
24 National Crime Information Center, and the way to do
25 anything to change the NCIC or anybody who knows federal

1 databases, they're -- you have to do it through federal
2 regulation, and -- to make it a mandatory field.

3 MS. MCKENNA: So very good. So this is something
4 she can look into then?

5 MS. CHACON: Absolutely.

6 MS. MCKENNA: Great. Thank you very much.

7 MS. WAULS: Thank you all for your questions. I
8 think they're very helpful not only to the general
9 public, but to the task force as we think through
10 recommendations on how to really increase the support
11 and resources from the state to fix some of these gaps
12 that we're seeing in terms of data collection and
13 information sharing and reporting.

14 So this has been helpful. We're going to have a
15 15-minute break. So we want you-all to be able to
16 stretch a little, use the restroom, do what you have to
17 do, and we'll reconvene at 11:15.

18 (Recess was held from 10:58 a.m. until 11:14 a.m.)

19 MS. WAULS: Welcome back, everyone. I want to
20 start off by thanking our folks from DPS who came out
21 and just talked about those policies and procedures. We
22 really appreciate you and the bravery and courage to
23 come and speak to the public and provide some
24 clarification. We appreciate that.

25 So the task force really felt that it would be

1 important to hear from various law enforcement agencies
2 to learn more about how they're responding to MMIW
3 cases. And today's discussion specifically is going to
4 focus on response to missing persons cases. So we want
5 to learn from their lens as personnel within their
6 agency how they are, you know, implementing DPS's
7 policies, the challenges they're experiencing when
8 they're responding to missing person cases, any
9 recommendation that they can share with the task force
10 with how to really improve reporting and investigating
11 missing person cases.

12 So I'm going to pass the microphone around and
13 allow each of our panelists to introduce yourselves, and
14 if you can just state your name, your title and role,
15 and the agency that you represent.

16 MS. JOHNSON: My name is Becky Johnson. I am
17 representing Farmington Police Department from
18 Farmington, New Mexico. I am a nonsworn community
19 service officer. I work hand-in-hand with patrol. And
20 one of the big things that I handle are like the missing
21 people calls.

22 MR. SILVERSMITH: Good morning. Ron Silversmith.
23 (Navajo spoken.)

24 I am a police captain for Navajo Police
25 Department for eastern area command.

1 MS. BURGE: Hi. I'm Robbin Burge, I'm a field
2 sergeant for the Isleta Police Department.

3 CHIEF BURGE: Good morning. My name is JR Burge.
4 I'm the chief of police at Southern Pueblo agencies for
5 the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

6 MS. TOADLENA-PABLO: Good morning. My name is
7 Erin Toadlena-Pablo, and I'm with Gallup Police
8 Department. I'm a captain there, and I oversee the
9 support services, which includes evidence,
10 investigation, anything in the record that's come
11 through the PD, and I'm grateful to be here.

12 MS. BILLY: Good morning. My name is Denise
13 Billy, a criminal investigator with the Isleta Police
14 Department.

15 (Navajo spoken.)

16 MR. LESLIE: Good morning. My name is Malcolm
17 Leslie. I am the supervisor for the Crownpoint criminal
18 investigations department, and I am the captain there.
19 And I'm sitting in for my supervisor, who is Michael
20 Henderson, the CI director. And I'm sitting in the
21 right place, quick exit.

22 MS. WAULS: If we can hold that right here
23 because I'm going to pose the first question to you. So
24 we've heard -- you know, we heard earlier from the
25 Department of Public Safety, their policies and

1 guidelines around responding to missing persons.

2 Can the BIA talk a little bit about their
3 protocols around responding to missing persons, and how
4 you all are working with DPS or utilizing their
5 guidelines if there's any differentiation between how
6 your law enforcement agencies respond to missing persons
7 that might be different than from DPS policies?

8 MR. LESLIE: So we operate under the policy and
9 guidelines set out for us under the Department of
10 Interior, the OLES, Office of Law Enforcement Services,
11 which I wasn't here -- guys, you have to please excuse
12 me. I came from the dentist. I had a root canal about
13 an hour ago. So I can't feel this side of my face. And
14 if I start drooling on myself, it's not rude, just let
15 me know. So I've also got --

16 Anyways, so we work underneath those guidelines.
17 I was not here for the presentation that the State
18 Police gave on that. However, my lieutenant briefed me
19 up on that, and it's not too dissimilar. As soon as the
20 call comes in, the officer's on scene, we enter it into
21 NCIC, at which point, my agency, we are required to do
22 an SIR, and send that up through our chain of command.
23 If it's a child, we notify the FBI, and we get that
24 process rolling with the FBI. And then we go up -- once
25 we've identified that person and put it in NCIC, we take

1 all that, we set it up. Of course, at the same time,
2 we're still trying to locate that individual. And then
3 we go out and locate them with the manpower that I have
4 available to me at the time. And then from there, it
5 goes from supervisor to supervisor, and we just continue
6 shift after shift. We keep working with that. As far
7 as the DPS is concerned, we haven't had any instances in
8 the past, oh, I would say at least six or seven years
9 where we've had to reach out to DPS for any type of
10 assistance. I do know that I did work with Acoma a
11 little bit, and they were utilizing State Police for a
12 search and rescue for a woman, nonNative, but she still
13 went missing from Acoma -- she was from Los Angeles --
14 last winter.

15 We do work quite a bit with Sandoval County
16 Sheriff's office, Bernalillo County Sheriff's office,
17 and the City of Bernalillo that -- we find a lot of our
18 missing persons in the city of Bernalillo. Earlier this
19 year, Jemez Police Department, we utilized Jemez. We
20 had a missing person in the Jemez mountains. So they
21 were assisting us in that nature. But most of the
22 individuals that are reported missing, we find them
23 usually within 12 to 18 hours and -- by utilizing the
24 tips that were coming in. That's kind of why we're not
25 utilizing State Police, because we usually know the area

1 that we're in. The hard part is actually knocking on
2 enough doors, or lifting up -- going down on the Bosque
3 and literally turning over enough stumps. They might be
4 asleep down there until we find them.

5 MS. WAULS: Thank you. I want to open it up to
6 the rest of the officers or personnel on this panel to
7 really talk more about just kind of like how you did,
8 Chief, on how -- just kind of overview your process of
9 how your agency responds to missing person cases and if
10 there's any deviation from DPS polices and guidelines.
11 And if so, when will that happen.

12 MS. TOADLENA-PABLO: First of all, whenever the
13 DPS calls, what we do with Gallup Police Department,
14 what we've gone over this morning as far as the forms --
15 I actually had the forms printed out and we were
16 reviewing them as she was going through the checklist.
17 That's what we follow. I think the time -- what was
18 discussed was essential. And a lot of information that
19 I'm trying to get out there as the public media person
20 for our department is that, even if you're hesitant in
21 reporting your loved one, or maybe they have a habit of
22 going missing, it's really important to get them entered
23 in. In our area, we are right by Arizona, we are
24 surrounded by reservation, and we have a lot of people
25 that come and say the last place they were seen was not

1 within our jurisdiction.

2 However, what we're doing now is, we know that
3 time is essential so we enter them. Even if they're not
4 missing from within our jurisdiction in Gallup, we're
5 taking the paperwork and submitting to DPS. We do that
6 -- we do our part and try to look in our area. But we
7 can't go out of our jurisdiction. Like say if it was
8 maybe in Thoreau, we can't drive out there and start
9 looking, but we can definitely reach out to the agency
10 there and really correlate with them and give them the
11 information we have and make sure the information --
12 something's being done about it.

13 When somebody is missing, whether it meets any of
14 those criteria, as far as a juvenile in danger, runaway,
15 all of those, officer gets on scene, by our policy, they
16 will call an investigator, no matter what. If it was
17 this juvenile that's been running away for the tenth
18 time, we're getting called out. Our investigator will
19 actually go out to the scene and do all this paperwork,
20 make sure it's submitted. They will then go out and do
21 -- also a media contact sheet within our local media and
22 get that flyer out. We'll also work with the family,
23 follow-up with interviews. A majority of the time, like
24 Chief said, they return. But we make sure to report.
25 What's the worst thing that can happen? They come up in

1 an hour. Great. But we got them entered in, and we do
2 paperwork to release them.

3 So that's what we're doing. And we're just
4 trying to make sure that we get within our area, that
5 communication's out, that if somebody is missing -- or
6 maybe a suspicion of abduction, please report it. We're
7 trying to get on board with other agencies within our
8 area to do the same thing. As far as if it's not your
9 jurisdiction, please just enter them in because I think
10 that's the most important thing that law enforcement can
11 do right now, and if we can work in a relationship with
12 other agencies where the missing actually happened.

13 MS. WAULS: Keep going down the row and talk
14 about how you-all are responding to missing person cases
15 in your jurisdiction.

16 Please, if you can state your name again, and
17 your agency just for our reporter as they are
18 transcribing this meeting.

19 MS. BILLY: My name is Denise Billy, Isleta
20 Police Department criminal investigator. So with our
21 department, we really haven't had any missing persons,
22 but we do have in our policy and procedures, the
23 protocol of how to respond to a missing person case,
24 whether it be a child or an adult. You know, just
25 basically, we go off BIA's protocols, and we pretty much

1 go out onto the field -- once the initial officer gets
2 the call and then we, investigators, go out on the
3 field. We do interviews with the individual caller.
4 You know, just for practices, we go out to the home just
5 to make sure that the child is not playing hide and
6 seek, or anything like that. We check the phones. We
7 interview the neighbors, friends to the child or to the
8 individual that is missing. Then we also include social
9 services. We then also notify BIA. We contract with
10 them. We notify them as soon as possible, as well as
11 the FBI if it is a child.

12 We did have a case several years ago, before I
13 arrived in Isleta that I think Sergeant Burge would be
14 able to tell you about how they actually did the whole
15 process.

16 MS. BURGE: So a couple of years ago, we had a
17 family, bio grandparents come onto the reservation to
18 visit two grandkids that they hadn't seen in a long
19 time. The grandparents really didn't think anything
20 about it. They thought it was kind of suspicious, but
21 they went ahead and let the kids go without gathering a
22 lot of information. They leave, and they go to Walmart
23 and they fed the kids, and -- the Walmart in Los Lunas.
24 So they come back, they drop the one kid off close to
25 the house, they drive away, and they stopped and -- so

1 the little kid thought his brother was going to get out,
2 but he didn't. So the grandparent, who's the mom, the
3 grandmother, so she takes off. I was -- just happened
4 to be walking in the office hallway by court, and
5 there's a social services lady, and she's telling me
6 about this. And I'm like, "Holy, cow, when did this
7 happen?"

8 So now, we're already a couple of hours behind
9 because they really didn't notice that -- they didn't
10 see the need and the urgency about that because they
11 thought it was grandparents and they're going to bring
12 this child back, but the two boys had never been
13 separated, so that's one thing the youngest kid was
14 like, "How come my brother didn't get out of the car?"

15 So first thing I did was notify my chain of
16 command, which got the FBI and everybody involved. The
17 little kid got a great description of the vehicle. It
18 turned out to be their vehicle. The grandparents
19 actually kind of got some good information when they
20 initially met. They didn't get any phone numbers or
21 anything, but they knew what city in California they
22 were from. They knew their names. So some good
23 information that they got. But they definitely took
24 advantage of being nice and being old school. Let's let
25 the parents come and take these kids.

1 So we got them back. The FBI went out to
2 California, they flew right around midnight. So we got
3 the kid back relatively quick. But it was a hard lesson
4 learned for Isleta. And things turned out good this
5 time. It was a lot of fast action, a lot of team work.
6 Nobody asking to go home. Nobody asking that they were
7 tired, thank goodness. So it worked out good.

8 So things like that worked. But everybody's
9 talking about all this training and what the police
10 officers do. So one thing I don't think anybody
11 realizes is that we all have the same training. So
12 you're state certified from DPS or State Police, we all
13 -- we all get the same training. We generally all have
14 the same policies and procedures. So everybody's -- law
15 enforcement, our goal is to get that person found and
16 get them entered into NCIC right away. If we all have
17 the same goal, we all have the same training. I guess
18 that's the most thing I want to say is, we always see
19 the exact same training. There's not different training
20 for different agencies or different forums. We all have
21 -- everybody's uniform.

22 MS. JOHNSON: I'll go over how Farmington Police
23 Department -- there's a -- like I said, I'm a community
24 service officer so I handle a lot of the non -- like
25 nonpriority calls. Not saying missing people are

1 nonpriority, but they are time consuming, so I'm a good
2 person to take that on because I can take as long as I
3 need to do an investigation versus an officer who is
4 more needed for the active calls, like the DVs, and
5 whatnot.

6 So for our agency we have two hours from the
7 point of the initial phone call into dispatch. Our
8 dispatchers are good at monitoring the time for us. So
9 they'll keep us updated. As soon as I'm dispatched, I
10 go to the house or I start my phone conversation,
11 however. It's going to go. We do get a lot of calls
12 from people on a Navajo reservation, because we are on
13 the boundary lines to Shiprock and Crownpoint, and
14 sometimes they say they can't get into their departments
15 to file a report, so they want to file it with us. Our
16 agency will just take the report. We'll do an agency
17 assist just to help get them into NCIC. We take the
18 report. We don't turn anyone away. When we start the
19 process, we go through asking the questions and
20 sometimes the person that's calling in is a friend or a
21 family member, or a neighbor, or a co-worker. It
22 doesn't matter to us. If somebody's saying that they
23 have somebody missing, and it's not like them to be
24 gone, we just start taking the report. Sometimes they
25 have a lot of information, and sometimes they have the

1 bare minimum. Depending on what we have, if I have to
2 do more looking to get more pertinent information than
3 what I was given, I start going through our databases
4 and hoping I can find the information I need to get the
5 NCIC entered.

6 Sometimes the person reporting in is distraught,
7 so we have to talk them through it because they get
8 upset we're not moving fast enough, and they get
9 frustrated with the questions we have to ask. And we do
10 have to ask a lot of questions, and sometimes it's just
11 to the person reporting, it frustrates them. So what I
12 always do is slow it down and explain to them why these
13 questions are important. Sometimes they get offended
14 when they ask, how is their mental state, are they
15 upset, are they -- you know, just asking really personal
16 questions. And they get upset and they're like, "No,
17 they're not crazy."

18 And I have to explain to them the reason why I
19 have to ask these personal questions, because that means
20 those answers will determine if I'm going to checkmark
21 "endangered" or if they're just out there, and it's not
22 a serious matter. So that's why I take the time to ask
23 these questions. Dispatch will always be on our tail.
24 You got 20 minutes. You're getting down to it. And so
25 at that point, when it starts to hit 30 minutes, I'll

1 just tell them, "Go ahead and start me a ghost entry."

2 A ghost entry means it's the bare minimum and
3 getting them into NCIC as missing persons, that way we
4 don't exceed that two-hour limit. Once I get all of
5 that information, I'll update the NCIC if I need to, or
6 I'll go ahead and get my paperwork sent over. If I have
7 information on where they might be, or where they could
8 be, I'll send an officer out to go to these places and
9 ask. If it involves a child, right away, my supervisor
10 is notified and we start -- everything stops for -- for
11 our town and everybody is dedicated to trying to find a
12 missing child. The same thing if it's an endangered
13 person, a suicidal person, or maybe somebody with
14 dementia that walked away from a nursing home. All
15 these things play into it. But if it seems serious, we
16 stop and we just go 100 percent dedicated until we could
17 get something going.

18 Little kids, small kids, you know, my agency is
19 pretty good at trying to locate them really fast. And,
20 thankfully, we've never had to do an Amber alert in the
21 years I've been there. We've been able to locate the
22 kids within, you know, 30 minutes to 4 hours, I think.
23 We're always pretty good at finding them.

24 But that's kind of how our process goes. Once we
25 get them entered into NCIC and we've exhausted all our

1 time to try to locate them, my supervisor will usually
2 already be on the phone with the detectives division and
3 letting the supervisor there know, "Hey, we got this
4 missing person," and then I brief them on what we have.
5 And they determine if it's something we have to get a
6 detective out and start actively working on it, or if
7 it's going to wait until the next business day if it's
8 after hours. Those are things that go outside of my
9 parameter. I just update my supervisor on it. Once I
10 get all of that done, I'm usually notifying our PIO so
11 they can get it out on the Internet, on our Facebook
12 page. That has been helpful, especially with our
13 runaways, or if it's one of the local businesses,
14 they're able to have people contact us and say, "Oh, we
15 saw them here," and we can go and make contact with them
16 and make sure they're okay.

17 One of the things I know that people don't like
18 when they're reporting a lost loved one that's missing
19 that's an adult, is when we have to tell them, "They're
20 over 18, so if they don't want you to know where they're
21 at, or they don't want to be found, we are not obligated
22 to tell you."

23 And that really upsets them. But one thing our
24 agency does is, whenever somebody's reported missing,
25 the only way we take them out of NCIC is if we

1 physically see them. And we'll tell them, you know,
2 "Your family members' are looking for you, you should
3 contact them."

4 And a lot of times they'll say, "I don't want to
5 talk to them."

6 And we just tell them, "At least give them a
7 call. Let them know you're okay."

8 And they just say, "I don't want to talk to
9 them."

10 And that's just how it goes. And that's what we
11 see a lot of. And I know family members get upset with
12 it. I know personally if that was me, I would be upset
13 also. So I always try to keep that in the back of my
14 mind when I'm talking with the people I deal with. One
15 thing in my job is, I try not to take things personal,
16 but I try and help the people as best I can. It is a
17 long process.

18 When it goes on to the detective side, I know
19 they do their investigations, but I'm not too sure how
20 they handle it. So I can't really speak for that part,
21 but I can speak for the initial contact that I have and
22 the guidelines I have. I have the checklist. I have to
23 check like the hospitals, the local places that they
24 frequent, utilizing my system to see if they're in our
25 system, and seeing if there's reports on them. And

1 knowing where those places are that they frequent, and
2 being able to go out there and try to look for them in
3 those areas, usually those places will get a successful
4 location but that's -- I think that's pretty much how
5 our agency works. And we have our policy and guidelines
6 we have to follow.

7 MS. WAULS: Just a check, did we hear from the
8 Navajo?

9 MS. JOHNSON: Malcolm?

10 MR. LESLIE: I'll follow up. Our police
11 department is very unique, Navajo Nation, because we're
12 surrounded -- we're within three states, New Mexico,
13 Arizona, and Utah. And a lot of officers like us older
14 officers, we carry the Utah state permission, so we're
15 able to float around here and there as Navajo police
16 officers. But we kind of conduct business the same way
17 as BIA does because we use their handbook on certain
18 situations, on how we respond to some incidents and some
19 calls, because we are contracted through BIA. So we
20 kind of have to comply with some of their standards as
21 far as police operations goes. Some of us are
22 cross-commission with New Mexico State. But the most
23 challenging part of being a Navajo police officer on
24 Navajo Nation is when you enter New Mexico because you
25 have a lot of free lands, private lands, especially the

1 checkerboard area on eastern Navajo as far as trying to
2 determine jurisdiction, who the victim is, nonIndian,
3 Navajo, or somebody coming in from the pueblo side onto
4 Navajo. So we have a lot of pueblos married into
5 Navajo, or Apaches married into Navajo, or Navajos
6 married into Apache, or Pima, the reservation down
7 towards Phoenix area.

8 So a situation over the weekend while I was
9 watching the Daytona 500, we have a Navajo female that's
10 having issues as far as getting her restraining order
11 recognized down in the valley somewhere. So we end up
12 calling mom to see what's going on. Evidently, she had
13 a relationship with a Pima member, and baby was enrolled
14 in Pima, so they had this shared custody agreement
15 between them. But mom decides to come back to Navajo,
16 get a restraining order filed. She takes him back down
17 to Pima. Of course, Monday was a holiday, so the courts
18 were all closed. So instead of her contacting Gila
19 River, or the agencies down there, she calls Navajo PD
20 saying, "Hey, I'm having trouble getting this recognize
21 by the Pima tribe."

22 So those are some of the things that we deal
23 with. But as being Navajo, you care for one another no
24 matter where you're at. So we kind of took a little
25 lead for ourselves, which is, we have that state

1 commission, and it plays a vital role. We kind of have
2 that authority to call out Chandler PD or Gila River PD
3 and try to, you know, get some of their standards on how
4 their courts work. Of course, I think with any agency,
5 recognizing another ones restraining order, you know,
6 you have to go through their court system to get it
7 recognized, and all that stuff.

8 So the female mom understood that, and eventually
9 it was the grandmother that was kind of pressuring her
10 to get baby back from the father. He had the weekend
11 with baby, and all mom wanted to do was hear baby's
12 voice to see if she was okay. But this restraining
13 order was prohibiting her from making contact with the
14 father.

15 So we contacted Pima. Pima says "Okay, we'll
16 look into it." I think this is where the physical part
17 of actually checking -- "We did make contact with that
18 dad, and dad says, "Yeah, baby's right here. Doing
19 good."

20 We talked to her. She's doing well. He was
21 willing to go take baby to Gila River PD, go talk to
22 mom, visit with grandmother.

23 So Gila River ended up doing the physical part of
24 actually going outside of their boundaries. Going to
25 Chandler PD to go check on baby. Baby was doing just

1 fine. They usually check. Okay, baby's doing fine.

2 So two days went by, I get a call back from
3 Chandler chief of police and Pima chief of police to
4 say, you know, we followed up on it. Thank you for
5 letting us know. Because it kind of came in as a
6 potential kidnapping. But that was mom that was
7 pressuring daughter. If we say kidnapping, then
8 everybody will run and react to it.

9 So we did kind of caution mom as far as, you
10 know, some of the things -- possible outcomes of false
11 reporting and all that stuff. She kind of understood,
12 apologized to us for it, and that's how that case was
13 resolved.

14 So with a lot of our missing elders and children,
15 especially the winter months, it's cold on Navajo land.
16 Temperatures drop, especially in the desert region.
17 Now, we're dealing with a lot of missing persons calls
18 coming in. But, you know, Navajo is experiencing
19 economic issues, we also have alcoholism. So our tribal
20 members kind of tend to wander off into the woods or
21 somewhere to, you know, go drink. They end up passing
22 out in the elements. They end up dying of natural or
23 exposure cases. So that's one of the things that our
24 command notification is getting a lot of -- is a lot of
25 exposure cases as far as being related to passing out

1 under the influence. And another thing that our
2 sergeants -- when our initial call comes in, our
3 sergeants kind of scan the missing persons or runaways
4 to determine, you know, whether -- where on the chain
5 it's going to be as far as priority goes.

6 With the recent Shiprock abduction, with the
7 young girl, those are some of the things that kind of
8 gave us a lesson learned. We learn from that. So we
9 kind of enhance on how our sergeants deal with missing
10 persons calls to kind of evaluate it, see where on the
11 tier it falls as priority goes. I think a lot of my
12 colleagues here talked about some people leave the
13 reservation, either for purposes of -- you know, alcohol
14 is legal off the reservation. I can drink all I want
15 over there. Again, this comes back to economics.

16 There's some repeat offenders that we have as far
17 as mom or grandfather or uncles that kind of get tired
18 of repeated calls to their homes and they're kind of
19 ashamed by, you know, other family members within the
20 community so they kind of say, "Hey, you're causing too
21 much trouble here, go hang out somewhere else."

22 So really they have nowhere else to go, so they
23 end up in Gallup train station, Farmington, Flagstaff,
24 and they'll be out there. And as some of my colleagues
25 said, when they get in contact with them, once they're

1 entered into the NCIC system, then their comments are
2 always like "Well -- just like my colleague from
3 Farmington said, "I'm doing okay, but I don't want my
4 family to know where I'm at or what I'm doing." Or even
5 females will say the same thing as far as I don't want
6 my family to know where I'm at. And it is hard and it's
7 tough because it's a reflection back on law enforcement
8 as far as well, why can't you guys go beyond your duty."
9 Again, it's all jurisdiction. We do have some cases
10 that are originated in Holbrook, Winslow, Farmington,
11 Page. They do provide notes to us so we also check our
12 ATL files, or whatever reports we generated.

13 So the other thing is the NCIC system. When we
14 talk about ORI numbers -- our ORI number for the entire
15 Navajo Police Department, even those that work in New
16 Mexico, we work off the Utah system. Before we were on
17 New Mexico -- or not New Mexico. Arizona. So Arizona,
18 kind of -- we were entering some things. As a result,
19 they kind of terminated our connection, so we ended up
20 going with Utah. Now Arizona's saying, "Hey come back.
21 Let's hook back up," and stuff like that. But it's kind
22 of like a big change when you have to leave Utah and go
23 back to a different reporting format.

24 So I think that's where our dispatchers are kind
25 of confused as far as what -- everybody knows about the

1 number system, right, how you code different calls that
2 come in. So sometimes there's that confusion between
3 our dispatcher and our patrol officer when the patrol
4 officer does the report. So if a missing person becomes
5 an abduction or homicide case, we hand it over to
6 criminal investigations. So somewhere the code changes,
7 or the code remains as a runaway but, yet, the case is
8 closed as a homicide, or kidnapping, or sexual assault.
9 I think that's where we are working close with criminal
10 investigations and our information management system as
11 far as reeducating our dispatchers and our patrol
12 personnel as far as using the correct codes. But it's
13 always, you know -- plus New Mexico officers, you've got
14 to use that Utah system. Why can't we use the New
15 Mexico system as far as the ORI entry goes?

16 So that's one of the things we're really working
17 on. And I think interagency cooperation is basically
18 what you guys are advocating for. And New Mexico State
19 Police -- you know, I just got to know Captain
20 Velasquez, and there's some things that are going to be
21 kind of changing with the Navajo Police Department. So
22 being a 35-year veteran of Navajo law enforcement,
23 missing murdered indigenous women, there's nothing like
24 that talked about on Navajo. So as with other Indian
25 agency law enforcement agencies, this is something new.

1 Of course, some of our senior officers will say, "Well,
2 you know, these things aren't happening. Those only
3 happen in the big cities."

4 But one of my senior captains or CI director that
5 -- we converse in Navajo. We understand the Navajo
6 culture of caring for one another, you know. We always
7 say kids say things for a reason, because kids always
8 tell the truth. Kids never lie. As parents, our kids
9 say something to family members that we know we're
10 doing, we try to say "Shhh, don't say that."

11 Again, we kind of apply the same concept as far
12 as what we're dealing with now, and what's come to light
13 as far as missing murdered indigenous women goes.

14 So criminal investigations, Navajo Police
15 Department chief got together, including us command
16 staff to try to figure out a way to -- how we can
17 establish an investigation unit. So we're kind of going
18 with the missing persons unit. But the NCIC director
19 would like to call it the cold case investigation unit
20 because we're not just dealing with current situations.
21 We're actually going to go back and check the history of
22 other files that we had to determine -- to try to gather
23 the correct data that we can report to you guys next
24 time we come before you guys because I think it's one of
25 the things I've been seeing is statistical data that is

1 being generated. And I think thus far -- I don't think
2 Navajo Police Department or Navajo Division of Public
3 Safety as a whole has really developed any numbers yet,
4 because this is, like I said, something new.

5 So we're in the process. So I know a lot of my
6 Navajo constituents are going to have questions about
7 it. We're letting them know we're working on it. And
8 we'll identify it. So in Navajo (Navajo spoken).

9 That's what my son, the CI director -- (Navajo spoken.)

10 Let's deal with this, identify what they're
11 talking about, what's this new situation that is going
12 to be plaguing Navajo.

13 So this is like a step that we're going towards
14 as far as developing our own policies, our own rules,
15 because we all know if you're from Navajo, they're
16 really sensitive about using outside agencies,
17 protocols, or standards because of one word,
18 sovereignty.

19 So that's always kind of the barrier that we're
20 challenged with from our justice department. But in
21 real-life situations, those are kind of put to the side.

22 We work state, county, or other tribal agencies
23 just like the scenario I talked about a while ago with a
24 baby down in the valley. So we kind of have to push all
25 of those things aside sometimes because that's kind of a

1 vital situation because, you know, a child, you know,
2 needs to know where he or she is at at that moment in
3 time. And we're also dealing with a bigger city, such
4 as Phoenix, where a child or female can disappear just
5 like that because they have more cartels down there.
6 They have more gang members down there. They have more
7 of these exotic clubs that are located in these bigger
8 cities. So we're kind of challenged with the time. Not
9 just time but, you know, my division director kept
10 calling me, kept calling me, "What's going on? How far
11 are you at?".

12 So sometimes we as chiefs or commanders have to
13 play that role and not push it down to our patrol
14 officers, because they have other things they're
15 attending to. So we, ourselves, as leaders within the
16 executive level of management, we take our part because
17 we still consider ourselves police officers. We took
18 that public oath to do what we require our staff to do.
19 So we're required to do the same thing. I think that's
20 where Navajo Nation is going as far as the Navajo Police
21 Department is concerned.

22 Our criminal investigations director actually
23 already met with the Arizona -- AUSA and the FBI, so
24 they're already talking about formulating the task force
25 as far as involving the federal unit and the criminal

1 investigations department as part of establishing the
2 missing persons unit consisting of that task force. And
3 of course, there's one patrol officer from our unit
4 that's going to be participating in that section, as
5 well. So it all depends on the -- which state you're in
6 as far as getting the collaboration, as far as setting
7 up these units, as far as -- if we do establish this
8 missing persons unit, of course, you know, Navajo being
9 in New Mexico and Utah, they're going to be covering the
10 entire Navajo Nation as a whole. So don't worry about
11 jurisdiction when it comes down to it because we're
12 working with -- just because we're working Arizona,
13 AUSA, and the FBI, it has that ability to pass along
14 information.

15 So with that, that's basically where we're at and
16 how we conduct and patrol aspect. If you want to hear
17 criminal investigation aspect, I'll leave it up to you.

18 MS. WAULS: Just for time -- because we have
19 about 15, 16 minutes left for this panel discussion, and
20 the task force does have a couple more questions that we
21 would like to hear your response. And one of them, I
22 think you highlighted, Mr. Silversmith -- correct?

23 MR. SILVERSMITH: Yes.

24 MS. WAULS: -- in your overview kind of the
25 jurisdictional challenges that you may face in

1 responding to these type of cases. We heard in past
2 task force meetings public testimony where, you know,
3 loved one had gone missing, but they weren't -- and they
4 reported it to their local agency, but the person either
5 went missing in another state or city. And so we're
6 curious to know how you-all collaborate across
7 jurisdiction, or how do you respond when you get a
8 missing persons complaint for a missing person that
9 lives outside of your jurisdiction?

10 MR. SILVERSMITH: So regardless of where the
11 person went missing, if somebody comes to us, SPA, and
12 they come to us, and say, "Our family member is
13 missing," we take it in like if it happened on the
14 pueblo itself, because -- usually what we'll hear is
15 "Our family member went missing in Santa Fe." Okay.
16 That doesn't matter to us. We take all that
17 information, like we just talked about. We do our
18 procedures that are set forth before us, and then we'll
19 get on the phone and we'll make contact. My lieutenants
20 have contacts with their sergeants, their lieutenant
21 command staff up there. I'm good friends with the
22 sheriff, so if it's out in the county, we give them a
23 call, and then we ask them for assistance.

24 This is the tricky part, and I think this is -- I
25 can't force my will upon any other jurisdiction, and

1 that includes 638 programs, or self-governance programs.
2 We just can't do that. However, I will say that I have
3 yet to have an agency where we call them because we
4 believe that the person went missing outside of our
5 jurisdiction, that they haven't been 100 percent willing
6 to assist us with finding that person.

7 Now, I'm able -- as a federal agent, as a federal
8 entity, we can go into other jurisdictions and look for
9 that person if I have time, if I have manpower available
10 to help me do that. The only problem is, if there was a
11 crime -- because going missing isn't a crime. If we go
12 to, say, Santa Fe and we find this person because we
13 know there's a bar that they frequent and, let's say
14 that my lieutenant had to go to Santa Fe Indian School
15 to talk to -- he was on a panel with something up there,
16 and he says, you know, on the way back, I'll check the
17 dude, drop in for Bob to see if he's there. If he goes
18 there, and he discovers there was a crime that was
19 committed, we can't do anything about it because that
20 crime did not happen in our jurisdiction, at which
21 point, we would report it to whoever, the county or the
22 state.

23 So that's where it gets complicated. But like I
24 said, I can't speak for everybody up there, but I want
25 to reassure everybody that I am yet to have an agency,

1 even in another state, tell me, "Well, we're not going
2 to help you because that's just the way it is."

3 MS. WAULS: Is that the case across the panel?
4 Have you all experienced that same openness to
5 collaboration or, if not, can you give a specific
6 example to the challenges you've seen and just
7 cross-jurisdiction collaboration?

8 MR. LESLIE: I just want to say -- my name's
9 Malcolm Leslie. He took my flame over there. No, I'm
10 kidding.

11 We do -- as the criminal investigation
12 department, we handle all major cases -- major cases on
13 the reservation, patrol handles misdemeanors, high
14 misdemeanors, and we'll also assist them if they ask us
15 for our assistance.

16 Now, the hurdles that we're talking about --
17 there's numerous hurdles that we have to go through as
18 far as working with other jurisdictions. It's
19 jurisdictions. It's language barriers. It's the family
20 members themselves. Those are all things. But the main
21 things that I practice, and I tell my guys, we need to
22 have empathy. We have to have empathy. Put yourself in
23 their shoes. Although, we have to ask these questions,
24 you know, we have to listen. And the other thing is, we
25 have to explain the jurisdictional issues, state,

1 tribal, federal.

2 So we're all comp commission, the majority of us
3 that work on the Navajo Nation, either Arizona, New
4 Mexico, or Utah. What people don't understand is, the
5 land mass that we have to cover going from point A to
6 point B to Z, and it's time consuming.

7 Just for example, this weekend -- or a couple of
8 weeks back, I got a call from missing persons in my
9 office from Gallup PD. It was a sergeant there, he
10 calls me and says, "Look, I got a missing person that
11 we're working on and we have a family member that, you
12 know, disclosed to us that something happened, and it's
13 leading toward a homicide."

14 I just happen to be lucky and have my guy that
15 was on call there -- we have agents that are on call
16 daily. We use to go weekly, but now we're going daily.
17 It did turn into a homicide. So working with them -- I
18 mean, it's great working with people that are willing to
19 work with you. I've never had problems. Just like BIA
20 captain said, we work together. We put our differences
21 aside, and we look at solving crimes and finding these
22 people. GPD sent some bodies out, and we had to go to
23 the reservation, the house where they were pinging a
24 phone off. We don't have that capability. Thank God
25 they have it.

1 So it did turn into a homicide. I got together
2 with -- the DA tried to get them together. DA and New
3 Mexico attorney, they work well together. As law
4 enforcements, we get together, higher-ups, we get
5 together and we support whoever's jurisdiction. And
6 what I love to hear, "Let's start working these cases
7 until we find out whose jurisdiction it is, and then
8 we'll turn everything over to the jurisdiction." And
9 that will help support them. That's what I love to hear
10 and that's what I'm all about. And hopefully, we're
11 breaking down that wall.

12 That was one of my main concerns when I was
13 working out in the field as one of the trench workers.
14 We need to stop saying, "Hey, it belongs to so and so."
15 Let's get out there, get this thing done. We're public
16 servants. Then we can figure out whose jurisdiction it
17 belongs to. So that's how we work, and that's what I
18 see, and that's what I tell my guys, "Get out there.
19 Work it until we figure out whose it is."

20 Thank God, because just for one person -- and
21 that's just that missing person call-out -- only one
22 person worked 30 hours in two days. People don't see
23 that. But he was out there. I mean, it was windy,
24 raining, the weather, everything. Had to go on our
25 knees. We had to go in a trash pile, you know, burned

1 tires and everything. By the time they got out of the
2 arroyo there, it was like they were coal miners. So,
3 you know, we work through all that. People don't see
4 that. They point fingers, and say, "Law enforcement
5 this, law enforcement that." I tell my guys, thick
6 skin. "We've got to have alligator skin." And we have
7 to keep treading forward. And that's where the empathy
8 comes in.

9 And the jurisdictions, we get the DA, the tribal
10 prostitutes, and the United States attorneys together,
11 let them figure out that part. We'll go out and we'll
12 solve crimes. That's what my office is all about.

13 And as far as major crimes, we handle everything,
14 like I said. We are all coroners. We have to work
15 every death case on the Navajo Nation, even hospice,
16 homicide, natural deaths, unattended deaths. Doctor's
17 not present, so we have to go to all of them and
18 determine how this person deceased. And if we can't
19 determine that, if there's a homicide or anybody being
20 charged, then we'll send them in for an autopsy.

21 So those are the things that we'll start with as
22 far as criminal investigations. And the jurisdiction
23 system has hurdles that we jump. I always tease the
24 guys from McKinley County, the State Police, when we go
25 out to a call, the State tells us this guy's on state

1 land. And I'll walk over there, "Hey, there's drag
2 marks over here. You got to drag them over to our
3 side."

4 So humor's one thing that we strive. That helps
5 us stay sane. But I hope I answered the questions.

6 MS. WAULS: I want to ask another question. And
7 anybody can answer this. And if you have specific
8 examples, that will be really helpful to our task force.
9 Can you talk about how you interact with reporting a
10 person or the family members of the individual that is
11 missing? Because we hear a lot in our public meeting
12 that family members are frustrated, and they feel like
13 they're not being, you know, interacted with properly.
14 If you can just talk about that. And also are there any
15 partnerships that your agency has with support services
16 to direct the family or refer them to any type of
17 support that they may need during that time?

18 UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Okay. So about a year ago,
19 we had this case where this man was reported missing out
20 of Navajo, and he was found on the Pueblo. We
21 responded, and how that turned out was that the family
22 had went to -- he was reported missing with Navajo like
23 on a Wednesday or something. Then we had a found him on
24 a Sunday and -- the family had reported him missing, and
25 they had tracked him through a GPS through his vehicle,

1 and they found -- or we found the vehicle on the Pueblo.
2 And so, you know, the family, they came up upon the
3 scene and, you know, they were devastated. And so we
4 had to -- BIA was called, and so we had to kind of get
5 the family away from the scene.

6 So we have our victim services who were notified,
7 and they're very helpful in situations like this,
8 because they're able to -- while we're investigating the
9 scene, victim services was able to provide assistance to
10 the families as, you know, they were able to call other
11 family members or -- you know, just have like a little
12 counsel session, and they were able to help the family
13 that way.

14 CHIEF BURGE: So I have an example, but it's
15 actually kind of in reverse. Before I get there, a
16 couple of things that I'd like to say and hopefully that
17 all of you good folks will help me pass along, is that
18 whenever we get these missing persons information, we're
19 going to be asking a lot of questions that you may not
20 be comfortable answering. But one thing that you got to
21 remember is, you got to put your personal feelings aside
22 about this individual and what you believe they may or
23 may not be doing because you loved them.

24 So if you had people come up to you in the past
25 month and say, "Well, she's been hanging out with this

1 guy, and they've been doing this."

2 "I don't believe that. My daughter wouldn't do
3 that."

4 When we come and ask you these questions, those
5 aren't things that you can keep to yourself because they
6 may very well be doing that, but your love for that
7 individual is clouding your judgment on the issue. So
8 when we ask these questions, you need to be brutally
9 honest with us. There isn't anything that you guys can
10 tell us that the people up here on this panel, we
11 haven't heard or we haven't seen, I promise you.
12 Because those types of things help us. If we know that
13 they've been doing heroin for the last month, and you
14 don't believe it, and you don't tell us, we don't know
15 to go look at the heroin den over on the other side of
16 the hill where we know all the people that are high on
17 heroin are sleeping. We can't go find them. We may not
18 find them before that overdose kills them if you don't
19 tell us. So we run into that a lot.

20 This is where I'm getting to. I mentioned
21 earlier about last summer, monsoon season, we had a
22 young man, he was an active runaway. He was reported
23 missing, and then once we started working it, we
24 discovered he was an active runaway, which changes
25 things. We reached out to State Police. State Police

1 said he's an active runaway. He was trying to actively
2 evade us. So they couldn't, by protocol, send everybody
3 out to help us. So it was just left up to us. The
4 family that was reporting to us, they weren't being very
5 honest with us, because the young man had run away for
6 cultural reasons, and he was hiding in this certain
7 place. He was hiding in this certain place for cultural
8 reasons. And as you guys can tell, I'm not from the
9 Pueblo. I'm from Oklahoma. The family wasn't honest
10 with me.

11 My lieutenant, who is from the Pueblo, was able
12 to get some information out of them. And we were up
13 there on that mountain and we were looking everywhere.
14 But the family kept staying in this one spot and this
15 one spot, and the light bulb had already gone off.
16 There's something they're not telling us. There's
17 something they're not telling us, because I walked seven
18 miles that day, up on top of those mountains -- up and
19 down, in those mountains. My feet hurt. It was rough.
20 I had all my gear on, my gun belt, my bulletproof vest,
21 Camelbak, water. I was carrying 30 pounds up and down
22 those mountains, my lieutenant, and one my other
23 officers, all day, but the family kept staying in one
24 spot.

25 Now, we found the young man. He was safe. It

1 was monsoon season. There was water up there
2 everywhere, and at night, it wasn't deathly cold. It
3 was cold. So we kept telling them, "He's going to show
4 up. He's going to show up." Sure enough, Jemez PD
5 found him curled up on the steps of the convenience
6 store because he was starving to death early in the
7 morning. He came out of the mountains. He wanted food.

8 But we're here to help you. So you have to be
9 brutally honest with us. You may not want me to know
10 something because I'm not from your pueblo, I'm not part
11 of your tribe, I'm not part of your society, but if I
12 don't know, I can't help you. And if you don't tell us
13 that information, they may die, and there's nothing I
14 could do about that, but I could have helped you because
15 I knew that.

16 I spent six years on the border patrol. I spent
17 six years on the border tracking people for miles and
18 miles and miles. I know how to track people. But they
19 wouldn't tell me where he was at, so I couldn't follow
20 his footsteps. These are the type of things -- I have
21 skills, my lieutenant has skills. All these officers,
22 we all have a different set of skills, but you've got to
23 be honest with us, no matter how much that hurts you
24 guys. You've got to tell us these things because we
25 can't really fully investigate a missing person unless

1 we know these things.

2 MS. WAULS: Can we get somebody on the panel to
3 talk about how you-all may refer or provide services
4 within your agency to family members who are dealing
5 with a missing person, or even a homicide -- a murdered
6 loved one in their family?

7 MS. TOADLENA-PABLO: So as far as victim services
8 within McKinley County and Gallup, we did have victim
9 advocates that would come out from the DAs office, also
10 private entities that are establishing. It did go away
11 for a little bit, but they are rebuilding back up. So
12 we do have those outreach programs for somebody who
13 might need it.

14 Also, I think a really big thing is education. I
15 think that's what's establishing -- knowing that hey,
16 there are victims out there, and people who are in need
17 of assistance aren't getting that support from an
18 outside entity. So I think that's really important, and
19 I think that's what our -- that information is getting
20 out to them. And I think a lot of people are feeling
21 more comfortable as far as what we can provide for them.

22 I know we do have -- within our police
23 department, we have a chaplain. We also have -- if
24 there's somebody who maybe needs a little bit more
25 assistance, we can also call in a psychologist to come

1 into the PD for people who might have been affected from
2 this situation. It doesn't just affect the family.
3 Even officers who might have a child about that age and
4 taking this information. So we have that also that we
5 provide for our department. But I do think that there
6 needs to be a lot more resources for us to -- as far as
7 law enforcement -- to have our victims and people who
8 come to us as reporting, provide that for them. But I
9 do know that we are -- we do have some, but there's not
10 too many within our area. But we did try to reach out.
11 And I did appreciate earlier, you know, from the -- from
12 Santa Fe, how they gave about -- she gave us a cell
13 phone number, a 1-800 number for victims that are
14 actively missing, or a family member. So that's another
15 resource that I did not know about, but now I do. I'm
16 educated on that.

17 MS. WAULS: Any other comments before we open it
18 up to questions from the public?

19 Before we do open it up to public questions, I
20 do want to say that we hope as a task force to maintain
21 communication and collaboration with you-all and your
22 agencies so we can continue to really understand what
23 are some of the barriers your agencies are facing and
24 any recommendations that we need to highlight within
25 this report that we're putting out that could be helpful

1 and further better reporting and investigating these
2 MMIW cases that we are seeing and experiencing in our
3 indigenous communities. So I do want to bring that up.

4 At this time, we are going to extend the panel
5 discussion to 15 more minutes of a Q and A from the
6 public. So that means lunch is going to start a little
7 later, but hopefully, we can make that up by providing
8 you with a really good buffet lunch. If you have a
9 question you would like to ask, can you please raise
10 your hand? Yes, task force included, and make sure you
11 state your name, and if the question is directed at a
12 particular agency, just make that clear.

13 I also want to ask you not to ask questions that
14 involve any pending cases that are currently being
15 investigated just so you don't compromise those
16 situations.

17 MS. TSOSIE: Thank you, everybody. My name is
18 Beata Tsosie. I have a couple of questions I wonder if
19 anyone on the panel can address. One is -- well, three
20 questions. One is if you can talk more around how
21 sovereignty of tribes was kind of used against tribal
22 people like from the federal agencies. I got the sense
23 that that kind of could be -- I don't know if
24 "weaponized" is the right word. So I wasn't clear on
25 how that kind of impacts being used against tribal

1 people from the DOJ.

2 Another question was, I haven't heard very much
3 on kind of rescue response to human trafficking. And,
4 like, I see billboards, like if you need somebody who
5 needs help, call this 1-800 number. But is there ways
6 for people to kind of reach out to law enforcement if
7 they're in a situation that's kind of like undercover or
8 safe or like isn't going to be a car with flashing
9 lights rolling up? If you have any experience on that.

10 And then the other question was just on the
11 uniform training of officers, is there any
12 antioppression training on history of colonial state and
13 federal land to the Native people that could maybe help
14 with that communication and that distrust that you were
15 just talking about that maybe you can -- I know your
16 people have experienced this, but -- this is why you
17 need to be honest. Just something that can make it
18 clear on why there might be that distrust, like
19 antioppression training for officers. Those are my
20 three questions. Thank you.

21 CHIEF BURGE: So the first part of that question,
22 I don't think I really understood. What did you mean
23 about sovereignty weaponized against? I don't
24 understand that.

25 MS. TSOSIE: Well, when the Department of Justice

1 was hesitant to respond because of not wanting to
2 infringe on tribal sovereignty.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Like it being used as an
4 excuse, you know, to not then take on -- further an
5 investigation, I guess.

6 CHIEF BURGE: No. And I've never had that in my
7 experience. The main reason being is DOJ is separate
8 from BIA. We're Department of Interior, and we're
9 Office of Law Enforcement Services.

10 The DOJ is a big, giant seven-headed monster. I
11 mean, there's so many different branches in the DOJ.

12 But, no, I have never in my almost 20 years in
13 federal law enforcement ever seen that happen. As a
14 matter of fact, in my experience, it's always without
15 question, without exception been the opposite. DOJ has
16 always bent over backwards to help Indian country.
17 That's been my experience.

18 The second part of your question was about, I'm
19 sorry?

20 MS. TSOSIE: Human trafficking response -- rescue
21 response.

22 CHIEF BURGE: Human trafficking response. So
23 there's two answers to this question. And my answer to
24 yours about is there any other way, no.

25 If I get a call that somebody believes somebody's

1 being trafficked at the truck stop, or somebody's being
2 trafficked at a rest area, I'm not going to wait. I'm
3 going. I know that may seem callous. I know that seems
4 a little indifferent to what the victim is going to need
5 at that time, but quite frankly, my only desire is to
6 remove that person from the situation. Then I can call
7 my victim specialist. We can get in touch with who we
8 need to to help that victim later, but my only response
9 is to get them out of there, and to get them. If I
10 delay that response, they're in a vehicle, it's highly
11 mobile. I don't know where it's going to go. All it
12 takes is for them to put it in drive and they're
13 somewhere else. So I'm not going to take the time to
14 call agents to try and do a surreptitious approach to
15 that vehicle. I'm just going to get on it, and I'm
16 going to handle that situation. So I took care of both
17 of those answers.

18 Now, I don't know -- I got to look at my boss
19 real quick to see what her face looks like.

20 I no longer have control over my agents at my
21 agency anymore. So I don't know what the agents are
22 putting together as far as operation plans to target sex
23 trafficking within our jurisdiction, which is San
24 Felipe, Santo Domingo, and Cochiti, and this property.
25 I don't know what they're doing to that, because my

1 officers aren't long-term investigators. So I don't
2 know what their plan is. But I mean, I certainly hope
3 they have one. I'm training. Every single employee I
4 have is Native. We're all -- most of them are from the
5 pueblos. A couple are from Navajo. I've got one from
6 Zuni. We're all Native. And so we're all fully aware
7 of the historical trauma that Natives have received over
8 the years.

9 And I give the credit to my officers. I give
10 them -- I can't heap enough praise upon them, how they
11 can go into a situation that -- the amount of
12 professionalism that Indian officers have, and that goes
13 for Navajo, it goes for Isleta, it goes for those
14 officers that are working for Gallup PD but are Native.
15 You kind of have to see it in action, but the amount of
16 knowledge and the empathy and the way that these
17 officers -- because they know, you know.

18 I may work for a government, but I'm an Indian
19 too. After the civil war, they took our reservations.
20 I don't have one anymore. I don't have a home anymore.
21 My home was Mississippi. They kicked us out of that in
22 the early 1800s. I have no place to go. I know what
23 that's like. We all know what that's like. We all know
24 what it's like to have someone who's drunk. We all know
25 what it's like to be hungry. We all know what that's

1 like.

2 I can't even begin to tell you how professional
3 and how well that our officers can relate to those
4 people -- to the people that we come into contact with
5 because we've been -- because we grew up there. And
6 when I hear that, it kind of -- it breaks my heart to
7 hear that we're not doing it well enough so that you all
8 see us with that empathy and that understanding. I know
9 that we wear a grim face most of the time, and it looks
10 like we only -- we just get there, and we get it done,
11 and we have no sympathy, and we have no emotions for
12 anyone, that's not true, because that's my lieutenant's
13 family. That's their family. Literally that is their
14 family. I think that's something we need to focus on
15 and do better because we care. We do care because these
16 are our communities as well. So I think what we need to
17 do is sit down and we need to figure out how to do that
18 better because if you're not seeing that, then that's
19 our problem, and we need to do better.

20 MS. JOHNSON: So I'm on the task force as well.
21 My question is to the Navajo police. Your officers or
22 your agency, I kind of want to know if you guys are NCIC
23 certified, and if you guys use the NCIC database to
24 enter these people as missing. And if you are, is it
25 all your officers or dispatchers that are NCIC

1 certified, or is it only specific people that are
2 allowed to? Because I hear different things as far as
3 how NCIC -- how it works on the Navajo reservation. And
4 I kind of -- it would be nice to have a little bit of
5 clarification on that.

6 My family member, I have one that is missing.
7 She's been missing since the early '90s -- in the 90s.
8 She was 16 years old, and she is not entered into NCIC
9 as missing. She is under NamUs. She is in the missing
10 and exploited, but she is not entered into NCIC. When
11 I've asked questions, all I was told was that people
12 were purged at one point and they thought they entered
13 them back in. But me and my family kind of wonder if
14 she was ever entered into NCIC as a missing person.

15 So I kind of just would like to get clarification
16 as far as your agency works with the NCIC system. I did
17 hear from an officer once that told me only specific
18 people are NCIC certified. And if those people are not
19 on shift, then the report just sits on their desk, and
20 once they are available, they get -- they're able to
21 finally get them entered into NCIC. It doesn't sound
22 like there's a protocol. I don't know if your agency
23 has a policy and procedure in place, or if that's
24 something you guys are working on? Because I heard you
25 guys are working on your policies and procedures. I did

1 finally get in contact with somebody with the criminal
2 investigations in Shiprock, and I was pleased to learn
3 that they are volunteering to step up and try to solve
4 the cold cases, which will include the missing persons.
5 He's willing to listen to me and take information I have
6 but he didn't share too much of where it goes on the
7 NCIC level. That's my question.

8 MR. SILVERSMITH: Okay. Just to further clarify
9 your question on sovereignty, on how we deal with our
10 Navajo DOJ. Our general orders and our policies --
11 captain can agree to this as well -- are backdated from
12 1979, which is what we're still working with. And
13 that's law enforcement from 1979, that -- those policies
14 that we're still working with.

15 And us being a 638 contracted law enforcement
16 from BIA -- that's where I know the chief from -- and we
17 approach our DOJ to say that because, you know, we're a
18 federally funded program, we should be in compliance
19 with BIA standards and we should be doing the same thing
20 that they're doing because they give us their special
21 law enforcement commission. I think that's one of the
22 hurdles we ran into with the sovereignty issue. No, we
23 are Navajo. You guys cannot operate under any other
24 federal or state standards other than what we give you,
25 which means, you know, we have to work with our Navajo

1 Nation personnel policies, which doesn't really give you
2 any guide as far as how us Navajo police officers are
3 going to do our duties and responsibilities, especially
4 with the current changes and legal laws, case laws, even
5 this new monster is what they're calling it of missing
6 murdered indigenous women.

7 You know there's some things we'd like to adopt
8 from the federal perspective, state perspective. But it
9 seems like we always have to go before our DOJ before we
10 really implement some of these standards, and to make
11 sure it's to their liking, rather than to what we want
12 to adopt and implement.

13 So there's a lot of challenges that Navajo law
14 enforcement faces on a daily basis, and with some of
15 these new standards, new programs, new policies, we have
16 to develop a plan of operation. Then we also have to go
17 through the committee over there, the Navajo tribal
18 council, go through all these different legislative
19 steps to finally get it approved.

20 So those are all the challenges that we were
21 constantly challenged with. Of course, you know, we can
22 see, okay, investigator so and so, you're going to be on
23 the task force team for missing persons cases, but one
24 thing that's always required is they have a plan of
25 operation established for that, get a position

1 established for that. That has to be approved. Then
2 DOJ has to lay a process just to get those programs up
3 and running. So I think that's where implementing from
4 outside, you know, what -- we've got to try to face the
5 challenges with our DOJ as far as, you know, accepting
6 because a lot of times they'll say, we're sovereign
7 nation, we do our own. So we do what we got, but's it's
8 not really according to how New Mexico State handles
9 their missing person cases.

10 So with that, then your question about NCIC, and
11 -- our former BIA affiliates, they give us a T number --
12 a BIA T number is what they call it. So each and every
13 Navajo police officer has a BIA T number which kind of
14 gives them -- when they do their reports, it kind of
15 indicates what they're investigating, what they
16 responded to, and where the confusion comes up is when
17 our telecommunication operators entered an initial call
18 as something else.

19 So that kind of sticks to that report all the way
20 through. And I think when it gets to CI, there's a
21 potential that coding might change again, but the
22 initial one is actually being counted, which it probably
23 won't end up on any statistical data, which is why we're
24 having a lot of issues with getting correct statistical
25 data out to even some of our government leaders when

1 they ask for accurate numbers.

2 So that's where the confusion is. And we are
3 reeducating our telecommunication operators. We do have
4 a consultant or firm that's actually working with our
5 telecommunication operators. If you're from Navajo, we
6 all know how IHS responds to you with their
7 receptionist. We get complaints about some of the
8 behaviors of our dispatchers when they first get the
9 call. So we're making a lot of those changes on how
10 they interact with our people. That's one of the
11 paramount things that our chief is working on is getting
12 that public trust back from first call. He's really
13 getting our dispatchers trained to enter the right
14 information and our police officers to do as well, the
15 same thing.

16 And I think one of the things I'm going to
17 probably ask from the committee here is, you know,
18 something that's new, we want the training to come to us
19 on Navajo so we can provide better responses to you as
20 the board or the committee, and so that we can provide
21 better responses to our government leaders when they ask
22 us questions on what we're working on. It kind of gives
23 us the direction as to where to go.

24 If you have a model, policy, or procedure that
25 you have that you can share with us, that we can build

1 off of, you know, that's one thing I ask of you, more
2 training, give us guidance, as far as -- because this is
3 a new thing. Even NamUs. I went to Fox Valley College
4 Training and they talk about NamUs, took it back to the
5 agency head, they were like, well, we don't really have
6 a need for it right now. But now, this is the time
7 where it's very -- it's been mentioned so many times
8 that now we need that.

9 So it's a matter of training. If you can provide
10 us more training as far as coming on to Navajo. We do
11 have a Navajo police academy, and we do have classroom
12 facilities that we can offer you guys to bring in some
13 of your training affiliates to train. So that's the
14 question I have for NCIC and their sovereignty issue.

15 And as my fellow chief here says, of course, you
16 know, Navajo culture, (Navajo spoken) Don't look back
17 into the past. Move forward. Basically, that's how
18 we're taught, and that's what we're teaching our Navajo
19 officers, you know, don't stop thinking about what
20 happened to our people. And I think that's how one of
21 our fathers on the Navajo police is actually changing
22 the perspective of how Navajo officers conduct
23 themselves out there. We don't talk about what happened
24 a long time ago. We just talk about how Navajo police
25 was created and how they should be conducting themselves

1 out in the field.

2 MS. WAULS: Thank you, Mr. Silversmith, and thank
3 you to all of our panelist for your commentary today.
4 Thank you, everybody, for your commentary today.

5 We do want to encourage -- we are at a time where
6 we want to get you-all fed, but we made this lunch -- we
7 provided lunch so it would be a networking opportunity
8 for our public attendees to interact and have
9 conversation with our law enforcement. If you have
10 questions or would like to have dialogue with our
11 presenters, please do so during lunch. We want to
12 encourage that. And there will still be a public
13 discussion forum where you can ask questions and also
14 give comments about what you've learned today, so that's
15 another opportunity as well.

16 But we're going to break for lunch, and then we
17 will convene at 1:15 for the public discussion. Thank
18 you.

19 (Recess was held from 12:34 p.m. until 1:20 p.m.)

20 MS. WAULS: So far we have six people. We do
21 want to enforce that people sign up to speak because it
22 just helps us with our transcription, and being able to
23 do followup, if needed. So after we get through this
24 first six people, if anybody else wants to sign up, they
25 will have the ability to do so. You will have three

1 minutes to, you know, come up and give your comments.
2 I'm a softy, so it might turn into five, but don't go
3 over five. We are asking folks to come up to the podium
4 here to ask your question. When you do, state your
5 name, and after you finish making your comment or asking
6 your question, state your name again. And I will remind
7 you. If you need assistance -- if you do need us to
8 bring over the microphone, we will.

9 So all right. Now, I have the task of reading
10 these names. The first speaker we have is Songlree.

11 The first name is S-o-n-g-l-r-e-e. Are they
12 present?

13 Yes. Thank you. The comfort room is available
14 in Chaco 3. And our women from -- our grandmothers from
15 Tewa Women United are also in the back of the room, if
16 you want to just tap them and take them aside, if you
17 need any support or comfort.

18 One last call for Songlree. If you can come up
19 to speak. Okay. We'll come back around. They might be
20 in the restroom.

21 So the next speaker is Trenton. If you can come
22 up to the podium and please give your comments or
23 questions. Please state your full name before you
24 speak.

25 MR. DEVORE: (Navajo spoken.) I come from the

1 Pueblo of Jemez. I'm here on behalf of Pueblo Action
2 Alliance in connection with the Southwest Organizing
3 Project. But I'd like to share a personal experience in
4 my life, and I'd like to acknowledge this is a real-life
5 situation and it may be triggering, but -- although, it
6 comes along with a question as well.

7 So over two years ago my family had decided to
8 stay at a hotel for my nephew's cross-country was the
9 next day. While my sister was away, we decided to go
10 down to the pool, and while we were at the pool, we had
11 come across an older white male and two older Asian
12 women. And you could just tell initially that something
13 was off. So we -- I told my nephew, and I stressed this
14 very well, to stay away and not to speak to this
15 gentleman. So we had decided to stay at the pool
16 because there was already a lot of parents and a lot of
17 children there as well. So I figured, you know,
18 friendly eyes, people are there to watch over as well.

19 So going through the event, as they left, they
20 migrated from the pool to the hot tub. I had noticed
21 that the younger female, she had began to cry. It was a
22 soft cry like she was hiding it from the rest of the
23 group. As she began to cry, I questioned why nobody
24 else was looking around and asking questions as to why
25 she was crying. So I knew nobody else was going to

1 speak on the situation, so I decided to speak on the
2 situation itself. So as I spoke to the man, I had asked
3 -- I had looked in the younger female's eyes and I had
4 asked her if she was okay. And she initially said that
5 "I'm okay," you know, "that I'm going to be great," but
6 it wasn't her that said that. It was the older man. He
7 told me -- well, essentially what he told me was -- he
8 told me that it was his daughter, and to literally fuck
9 off. So that's when I kind of got irate and I started
10 speaking to her, and I just totally disregarded the
11 male. And I started speaking to her in a more sensual
12 way, like "Are you okay?" Being caring. I was trying
13 to understand why she was crying, but her mother was
14 insisting for me to back up off. But she wasn't
15 speaking at all. But beforehand, it was -- there were
16 some acts that were a little sexual, and it made me
17 question is that really his daughter. Is that really
18 the mother.

19 So while in doing so, I was trying to figure out
20 why she wasn't able to speak, and the question along
21 that is, how do we create an avenue for our women to
22 feel safe because of the trauma and fear that these men
23 hold against them. Because they're in a state -- in a
24 place where she might go home being beaten, sexually
25 assaulted. Like if I were to have called the police,

1 she wouldn't have said anything, and I would have been
2 in trouble because I instigated the whole situation.

3 So how do I go about even helping somebody when I
4 can't do nothing. And to this day, I haven't spoke on
5 this situation honestly to anybody, and it's been held
6 in my heart, and I honestly don't really know what to
7 say. Thank you.

8 MS. WAULS: Thank you, Trenton, for your story
9 and that experience, and also the question of, you know,
10 how do we give space and provide safety for women and
11 girls to feel comfortable enough to share and disclose
12 what is happening to them. I think this is a great
13 question that the task force is -- you know, I'm
14 definitely writing down and documenting and could be
15 helpful as we kind of develop our survey instruments to
16 really figure out -- provide recommendations to that
17 question that you posed. Because I think safety is
18 important. It's one of our vision terms that we want to
19 ground our recommendations in. So we appreciate that.

20 Okay. So I do want to reiterate that we have a
21 comfort room in Chaco 3, so please feel free to visit
22 our grandmothers who are available to provide comfort
23 and support because things that are brought up can be
24 triggering and will be triggering in different ways to
25 all of us. So please take care of yourselves.

1 The next speaker we have signed up is Kwani.

2 And please start off by introducing your full
3 name.

4 MS. CORTES: (Navajo spoken.) My name is Kwani
5 Cortes. I'm from the Pueblo of Acoma. So I recently
6 graduated from high school last year. And I'm in high
7 school -- I mean, college, my freshman year, and so for
8 my senior year, we had to create a capsule project, so
9 like a senior project on a topic that we chose. And I
10 chose a difficult topic to talk about. I -- my focus
11 was sex trafficking and how it affects the Native
12 communities. And it was a very difficult topic just to
13 read about and learn about, and try to explain to other
14 people who are unaware like how much this is happening.
15 This is my final product. It's a sticker, and it says
16 "Save the daughters of tomorrow from sex trafficking,"
17 and at the bottom it has the hot line for sex
18 trafficking.

19 So like the reason I'm here is, I want to know
20 how we can involve more youth, because this affects us I
21 think more than anything. And looking around this room,
22 there's not many youth here. And I think that it's
23 important that we understand and we learn how to protect
24 ourselves as well as our sisters and our brothers and
25 just focus on bringing our communities together.

1 Thank you.

2 MS. WAULS: Thank you, Kwani. I think your
3 question proposes an important aspect to the task force
4 that we do a better job at bringing our youth into this
5 conversation. And Stephanie and I, who are really in
6 charge with coordinating these meetings and the task
7 force meetings, really talk about this, and so it's
8 important. It is something we want to try to address.
9 And we are very open and encourage collaboration with
10 youth who are doing great things, like yourself. I
11 definitely would want to follow-up with you personally
12 to try to come up with some ideas on how we can do that.

13 Our next speaker is Reyes DeVore.

14 Please state your full name.

15 MS. DEVORE: (Navajo spoken.) Hello, everybody.
16 My name is Reyes Devore. I'm from the Pueblo of Jemez,
17 and I stand before you as a mother and a daughter. And
18 I'm really happy that you guys are hosting these task
19 force meetings for the public. And it's very meaningful
20 because you know that community outreach is super
21 important. You have to listen to the public and listen
22 to what our needs are in order to really truly uplift
23 and bring liberation and healing to our people. And
24 with that being said, I'm the community programing
25 director for Pueblo Action Alliance, and one of our

1 annual events that we host is a healing circle.

2 And this healing circle, the first one that ever
3 happened was one when of our water protectors are coming
4 back and they had these really traumatic experiences,
5 and we wanted to provide a space that offered healing,
6 that offered resilience, you know, for them to
7 revitalize and recharge their spirits and their bodies.
8 And since then, it's transitioned to a different theme.
9 And last year, we held our third one, and the focus was
10 MMIW, to bring awareness, to bring resources. And the
11 way that this also happens is that we also offer detox.
12 We offer community workshops. We offer food to the
13 community, music, and art.

14 And as I was beginning to plan about what the
15 fourth one would be, I just couldn't drift away from
16 what we had for the third year because it's just -- I
17 feel like it's been really heavy again this year, and
18 obviously, it's not going to go anywhere. And so, I was
19 thinking well, what can -- what is a tangible action
20 that I can take but also what is a tangible piece that
21 the community could take with Pueblo Action Alliance to
22 make sure that we're not just bringing awareness, but
23 we're always bringing services to the families that are
24 being protected.

25 I'm really happy to see -- the restorative and

1 healing pieces under this work that you guys have been
2 developing, because that's super important, because the
3 work that we do as indigenous people, it's work, you
4 know, it's taxing on our bodies. We need to make sure
5 that we're doing the work, but we're also uplifting.

6 So I'm in this strategic planning process of how
7 can I create some services or ways to offer the families
8 that have been affected locally. What can I do to
9 connect with organizations, or services -- program
10 services that are already in existence that work with
11 the families to maybe create some -- either doing a
12 fundraiser of some sort, or I was talking with some of
13 my community members here, like maybe even creating
14 baskets to give to the families, and what that can look
15 like.

16 We're thinking of like offering seeds, like
17 traditional foods and poems, and resources, and
18 journals, and art, but my -- and I'm here kind of asking
19 -- posing this question to everybody is, what are the --
20 who are those organizations and services that I can
21 reach out to so that way when we do begin to make those
22 baskets, or if it's not baskets, we create some kind of
23 offer, like who can I work with to make sure that we get
24 those to those families that are trying to heal from
25 this epidemic that we're facing.

1 MS. WAULS: Thank you, Kwani, [sic] for your
2 comments, and also the work that you are doing with the
3 Pueblo Action Alliance. I think you're -- what you-all
4 are doing in terms to the healing circle is important
5 and necessary. We hear it a lot at our public forums,
6 the need for healing and support. And so I want to echo
7 her and ask of local organizations to collaborate and
8 partner. I know we have a couple of our task force
9 members that represent some of those organizations that
10 I can definitely connect you with. And I think we can
11 also do our due diligence to connect you with any other
12 partners that you aren't already connected to. So I can
13 follow up with you on that.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She's Reyes DeVore.

15 MS. WAULS: I apologize. But I'll follow up,
16 Reyes, with you.

17 So our next speaker is Eileen. And please state
18 your full name before you speak.

19 MS. SHENDO: Eileen Shendo. Pleasure to be with
20 all of you. (Navajo spoken) to my Jemez sisters in the
21 corner and my brother.

22 It's very, I should say humbling, especially as a
23 young indigenous woman, to see this amount of support,
24 and a lot of the momentum of moving forward to protect
25 our women. Something I just would hope to really

1 reiterate to our task force that's kind of ending with a
2 very large and very historical lineage of treatment of
3 Native women in particular is to be very cognizant of
4 the questions that have been asked, and some of the
5 messaging that's coming out in these questions.

6 It's very difficult, especially I feel as a young
7 pueblo woman, to speak about violence in our
8 communities, one, for the very fact that our tribal
9 nations are independent nations from the state. They
10 are independent nations of this federal body, but yet
11 they have to work with the next mechanism.

12 So that leaves a very large gray area of
13 something that was mentioned before in holding up the
14 sovereignty card to say, in which I'll just put quite
15 frankly, to protect some of these perpetrators that live
16 with our community. Some of them being leaders, some of
17 them being active people in a position where it's an
18 authority power. And I bring a personal history and a
19 story to this of a direct family member, not myself, but
20 it's 20 years deep.

21 And so for the pueblo agency, you know, I just
22 ask for the empathy and more consideration when people
23 do ask questions about sovereignty because when we first
24 took this case and I was fresh out of college, really in
25 a gung-ho way to be an attorney, so there was really

1 motivation to do a lot of the ground research myself.
2 Simple intricacies of bringing in tribal leaders when
3 victims are coming brought into the space as being told,
4 this is a traditional person, you will speak nothing of
5 the act in front of them, was one tactic used.

6 Something that's overly oppressed is we don't
7 have the law -- even if it's some federal law, or state
8 policies, we don't have the written law. We can't
9 prosecute. This young lady is near 20 and, yet, the
10 victim, and their families have just had to sweep it
11 under the rug.

12 So as a task force, as you saw one gentleman
13 representing truly 19 tribal nations, three in
14 particular he names. But the reality is, when you deal
15 with pueblo country, every one of our governmental
16 structures are different. Every one of our judicial
17 systems are different, some more advanced, some chose to
18 be traditional and use the means that I mentioned. It
19 still happens to this day, and so I praise every pueblo
20 woman that got up and spoke because it's a new day.

21 I thank Indian Affairs Department and where they
22 are at in this, because one of our only points to get
23 this voice out will be to use this as a bridge. And I
24 ask that you go into tribal communities with the
25 knowledge that when the people ask for help, the first

1 responders are tribal officials, some tribal officials
2 are a cousin, a brother, or some way in an authoritative
3 position to undermine what the woman's story or the
4 male's story could be from the get-go.

5 And in a personal-personal situation, which I do
6 give great strength to Native and pueblo men and women
7 that are on this task force that could read through this
8 and find the most possible way to still see that law
9 takes its course can sometimes be the only help. And if
10 the IAD don't respond, these are where your women become
11 murdered, or they go missing.

12 And in our work, we come out and we see our
13 pueblo women in the community, in Albuquerque, we give
14 them lunch. We make whole meals. And our stories --
15 when you say "I don't want to go home," please don't
16 think of that as they just don't want to go home. There
17 might be a grandpa or a father, or a traditional leader
18 that is victimizing them over and over again and they
19 don't have the help.

20 So, officers, ask the next question. Why? Where
21 can we get you a safe place? And let's do due diligence
22 as tribal programs and centers to figure out how these
23 women can stop living in fear and in silence. And that
24 would be the bridge to really support them because there
25 are a lot of injustices still taking place in our pueblo

1 nations. We're not all the same. And we're not all
2 advanced, especially, like Navajo Nation.

3 And in ending, I want to read something that a
4 good mentor put into law. And I think it's a motto for
5 other public officials, for any kind of state
6 representatives that are available or in the room or
7 anyone that wants to run for a political position and
8 make our world better.

9 So late Senator Pinto made this his last piece of
10 legislation. A memorial requesting that the United
11 States and the Navajo Nation take proactive steps to
12 protect children who are victims of violent crimes and
13 to hold the perpetrators accountable.

14 Whereas, the sexual violence against children is
15 horrendous and also common in Navajo Nation, and whereas
16 the Navajo Nation Council has created -- I'm so sorry, I
17 don't know how to pronounce that name. But there is a
18 sexual assault prevent subcommittee to address the
19 issue. And when the subcommittee found that Navajo
20 police receive an average of six reports of rape per
21 week, and whereas 22 percent of Navajo children
22 receiving house care services were seen for sexual abuse
23 or assault; and whereas, it's estimated that 1 in 4
24 Navajo children have experienced some form of sexual
25 abuse; whereas, many of these crimes go uninvestigated

1 and when they are investigated, they're often referred
2 to federal court for prosecution where conviction rates
3 are extremely low; and, whereas, the crime and trauma
4 from the abuse lives on in the victims to these terrible
5 crimes; and, whereas, first childhood experiences have
6 been shown to have long-lasting effects in many aspects
7 of a person's life; and whereas, the cause of these
8 effects is not only felt by the victims, but also by
9 their families and entire communities; whereas, there is
10 also an economic cost that can be attributed to these
11 crimes; whereas, these crimes lack the accountability
12 for them to contribute to a public health and safety
13 epidemic in the Navajo Nation; and whereas, these crimes
14 persist, 1 of 4 Navajo youth consider suicide; and
15 whereas, there are few resources on the Navajo Nation
16 that are dedicated to addressing sexual violence against
17 children; and whereas, the frequency of these crimes and
18 the low conviction rates create ongoing trauma for the
19 victims who often continue to live in the same
20 communities as the perpetrators; or whereas, despite the
21 work of the sexual assault prevention subcommittee much
22 work remains to be the done to address the epidemic of
23 sexual violence against children on the Navajo Nation;
24 and whereas, these crimes often go unreported or
25 unreported for years after the crime occurred; and

1 whereas, even the crimes that are reported, the federal
2 and Navajo statute of limitations for these crimes are
3 three and two years respectively from the occurrence of
4 this crime; and whereas, there is a national movement
5 that is gaining movement in the fight of removal, to
6 remove sexual statutes of limitations for child sex
7 abuse cases.

8 Now, therefore, resolved by the State of New
9 Mexico, that the United States and the Navajo Nation be
10 requested to take proactive steps to protect children
11 who are victims of violent crime and to hold the
12 perpetrators accountable. And be it further resolved
13 that this copy of memorial be transmitted to the New
14 Mexico congressional delegation, and the president of
15 the Navajo Nation, and the speaker of the Navajo Nation
16 Council.

17 Those are hard statistics, but I commend Navajo
18 Nation on speaking and acknowledging what's hard.
19 Pueblo nations have a lot of work to do because we don't
20 have those stats. And our kids are going through these
21 lives without figures and without representation. And
22 it's time for us to do something.

23 So thank you for whoever stood behind this and
24 worked for Senator Pinto, because this is a reality that
25 any tribal nation could have if they're not getting the

1 jurisdiction and the justice that is due served. We can
2 create these processes, and the door has been opened.
3 So let's not forget that. Every one of your
4 representatives in this state has a copy. We just have
5 to push it into law. Thank you.

6 MS. WAULS: Thank you for your call, or action,
7 really. And this is why we have these public forums,
8 because regardless of what we are tasked here to do as a
9 task force, we need to be constantly reminded of the
10 urgency of these issues. And MMIW, violence against
11 women, violence against all of our people has a root
12 cause that is interconnected, and if we're going to
13 address and make our community safe, we have to work
14 collaboratively, and we have to work in an approach that
15 is very multidisciplinary.

16 So I appreciate that. And I also want to remind
17 folks that if at any point, you need comfort or support,
18 please go and meet with our grandmothers from the Tewa
19 Women United over in the Chaco 3.

20 Our next speaker is Andrew Carey.

21 MR. CAREY: Thank you. My name is Andrew Carey.
22 I'm with the University of New Mexico. I did research
23 with tribal agencies, police agencies in Nevada. I'm at
24 UNM now. And the questions I had, just a couple of
25 questions. The BIA had only three or four officers to

1 serve their 20 reservations across the state of Nevada.
2 And -- which meant that all times for them could be
3 hours or sometimes even days, you know, if they had to
4 go clear across the state.

5 What I'm curious about is, how does the staffing
6 for the BIA in Nevada compare to -- or New Mexico
7 compare to Nevada? Not to knock the BIA cops down.
8 They were good cops. They were just spread extremely
9 thin.

10 Then I have a question about the law enforcement
11 records bureau. My question was about their
12 relationship with tribal agencies. Is the relationship
13 -- like these are the services we provide, please take
14 advantage of them, or is there active outreach to tribes
15 and tribal agencies? Okay. You know, this is how you
16 can use our services, technically.

17 And the last question I had was, in Nevada, there
18 were some issues of prejudice among non-Indian police
19 agencies that sometimes had an effect on people dealing
20 with the reservation community and stuff like that, and
21 I was wondering is there any indication of anything like
22 that here. It's just a question. Okay. Thank you.

23 MS. WAULS: Thank you, Andrew, for your question.
24 These are -- I think you pose some really great
25 questions that we can think about as we draft this

1 survey to law enforcement to better understand how we
2 can kind of close any gaps or barriers that might be
3 existing. So that's definitely helpful to the task
4 force. Hopefully, we can provide you those answers, you
5 know, after we get a response back from the records
6 bureau and the different agencies about their processes
7 and staffing issues and things like that. We definitely
8 will -- again, when the report comes out, we hope to be
9 able to answer those questions.

10 All right. The next speaker is Sonlatsa
11 Jim-Martin.

12 Please state your full name.

13 MS. JIM-MARTIN: (Navajo spoken.) My name is
14 Sonlatsa Jim-Martin. (Navajo spoken.)

15 I'm here today representing the murdered and
16 missing indigenous relatives working group with the
17 Navajo Nation and with Honorable Council delegate Amber
18 Crotty.

19 Some things I wanted to share with the task force
20 after listening to the various speakers and panel are
21 some areas that I think the task force can look deeper
22 into based on the work that we've been doing. First, I
23 want to say that as a Navajo woman, missing and murdered
24 indigenous women has been around since 1492. This is
25 not new. And since the 1970s, the American Indian

1 movement, we've been as advocates bringing up these
2 issues and concerns in New Mexico since the 1970s. And
3 so for me, personally, I'm a mother of four daughters
4 and I'm concerned.

5 I've been an advocate since high school,
6 addressing social justice issues in our community. And
7 so what it has come to at this time, and as you can see
8 with all the participants since this morning, majority
9 are women here -- indigenous women, majority are
10 community advocates, community activists, individuals
11 working at the grassroots level, addressing this because
12 it hasn't been addressed by the state. It hasn't been
13 address by various agencies.

14 So with community members, voting citizens in our
15 tribe, from their grassroots efforts they created the
16 missing and murdered indigenous relatives working group,
17 and with their advocacy, now there is going to be a
18 development of a community action tool kit. And that is
19 because we know there are not enough law enforcement on
20 the Navajo Nation. We feel for our officers. We know
21 that there are not enough. We also know that the system
22 has gaps. There are loopholes. And it doesn't work
23 fast enough when we're talking about missing and
24 murdered indigenous people. So community members are
25 coming together to be the response team. That's

1 happening at the grassroots level. And this community
2 action tool kit is coming because women and communities
3 are saying "Enough is enough. We have to be the
4 response team."

5 For the human trafficking speakers, from the New
6 Mexico Office of the Attorney General, one of the
7 questions I would have is, do you have Native American
8 representation? Do you have folks on your team, on your
9 staff, who are engaged and involved in our Native
10 communities, so that we can help you identify those
11 statistics and help you identify those gaps that we see.
12 Human traffic awareness is much needed. And for many of
13 our community members, they see what's happening at the
14 level within those family units, but they don't see the
15 bigger picture of what's happening in the state or even
16 in the world around human trafficking.

17 So if we can get that to be provided with
18 cultural sensitivity and cultural relevance in our
19 communities, I think that will help.

20 For the missing and endangered persons
21 investigations, alerts, and advisories, one of the
22 things that we are seeing is community members want to
23 be more proactive in getting involved in those alerts.
24 A lot of that is because of what happened to our little
25 girl Amber. And we know it's took a mother to use

1 social media to get the alert out there that her
2 daughter was stolen. It took social media. It took her
3 own efforts to bring that awareness to communities
4 because there was not enough response coming from
5 missing person units. The alert didn't exist. We know
6 that's being worked on. But our community people want
7 to be a part of that alert system. So how can we be
8 involved in that from advocates to family members.

9 Lastly, for law enforcement, we have many
10 community organizations and even at our community
11 chapter communities for the Navajo Nation, 110 chapter
12 communities have emergency response plans. Most of that
13 is for natural disaster, but with the missing and
14 murdered indigenous relatives working group, we are
15 including now the component of human lives, missing
16 murdered indigenous women, the Silver alerts, the
17 Brittany alerts, the Amber alerts. We are now designing
18 that into our emergency response plans for our 110
19 Navajo chapter communities. And those are because
20 community members and advocates that you see here today
21 are wanting to be a part of the solution. They're
22 wanting to be proactive.

23 So we do want to know from law enforcement how
24 can we be a part of your alerts and your emergency
25 responses when these come up. We do know we need more

1 victim advocates on the Navajo Nation and in the State
2 of New Mexico. We also think more of -- I think it was
3 wonderful to see a nonsworn person -- I forget what her
4 name was -- sitting on the panel. We need more
5 individuals like her that are there to assist law
6 enforcement because we know they are managing so much.
7 How can we make that happen? And these are questions to
8 the task force. How can we get more search and rescue
9 and alert teams engaged at the community level so that
10 our community members can be a part of protecting our
11 communities. Thank you.

12 MS. WAULS: Thank you so much for those comments.
13 I definitely was trying to write as much as I could down
14 because they were really great focus areas that we can
15 take as a task force and moving forward with some of our
16 data gathering and working and trying to gather
17 recommendations. So I appreciate that.

18 So we have one more speaker, and then we're going
19 to wrap it up. But I do want to encourage our attendees
20 to make sure to take a look at our vision terms and
21 definitions and provide feedback. We want to provide an
22 opportunity for you-all to help us further develop those
23 definitions so that they are responsive to our community
24 needs, to the understanding and the language we need to
25 be utilizing when we talk about MMIW and addressing this

1 issue. So I just want to put that call out there.

2 So our final speaker for today is Bear.

3 Please state your full name.

4 MS. BEAR: My name is Bear. I'm from Tewa, also
5 known as Taos Pueblo. I'm a community member there,
6 born and raised. This event came to my attention on
7 social media. As a young indigenous woman, that is kind
8 of a big thing now -- social media -- to really reach
9 out to people. I don't really have like a title, but I
10 guess you can say -- well, I am an indigenous woman
11 hip-hop MC, and I've done a lot of shows all over New
12 Mexico, as well as other states.

13 I realize that being at the forefront for our
14 youth, and as well as females like myself, who is also
15 -- I used to call myself a victim of abuse and all of
16 that, but I've overcome a lot of that on my own, and it
17 was because I didn't really have that support system,
18 and realizing what I can do with my voice for our
19 indigenous people -- I can bring awareness with using my
20 voice as a female hip-hop MC.

21 Couple of years ago I found the strength and
22 power to participate in a rap battle, which was here in
23 Albuquerque, and it was against men. I got 3rd place in
24 that, and then the following year, which was last year,
25 I made my way up to 1st place. I won it against men

1 from all over the country.

2 Thank you.

3 So that was very empowering, and I realized what
4 I can do with my voice. That same weekend I had a show
5 with an all-sober lineup. I am a recovering alcoholic,
6 as well as substance abuser. I take pride in that,
7 because I know how hard it is to overcome all of that,
8 especially on your own and not have any support.
9 Especially being indigenous, and our elders are always
10 telling us to keep to tradition, but I grew up a double
11 life, a modern and a tradition life and it's been very
12 hard to find balance in that.

13 But being an MC has allowed me to use my voice to
14 bring awareness of these matters. I see what's going on
15 in the world. I see everybody hurting, not just
16 indigenous people. One thing we need to understand is
17 that we all have differences, and everybody is at their
18 own level of consciousness and perception. It doesn't
19 matter the color of our skin. It doesn't matter our
20 languages or anything like that. We all have
21 differences.

22 I -- during that weekend of that battle, I had
23 another show with -- which was the all-sober lineup with
24 Wake Self, who had just recently passed away. He was a
25 big influencer and supporter in my life. In hip hop,

1 because hip hop being a male dominant genre, I was very
2 discouraged by a lot of men that I couldn't do it
3 without men, or I couldn't, you know, do any of that on
4 my own. But, you know, I didn't listen and I listened
5 to the people who are encouraging, like Wake Self, as
6 well as Defy. I don't know if you guys ever heard about
7 him, but he's an indigenous MC from the Navajo Nation.
8 They have always supported me and been there for me, and
9 told me that, you know, "Do it. Keep it moving. Don't
10 give up. Don't get discouraged. You have a gift, you
11 have that light in you, we can see it."

12 And I listened to them. And I continued to do
13 that. And I did the battle, and I did not think that I
14 was going to win at all. Because of it being a
15 male-dominant genre, I didn't think that would be
16 possible. But I really believed in myself, and I
17 actually did it and I won. But that same weekend, that
18 show that I had -- or another show that I had, it was
19 the all-super lineup with Superman, who is also sober,
20 Zinine from the bay area, and Wake Self. And Honey,
21 she's from Utah. She's also a part of the Navajo
22 Nation. So we're an all-sober lineup and we took pride
23 in that.

24 Superman told me there's a need for young women
25 like yourself to represent indigenous people because you

1 are at that forefront and you have that attention, and
2 you are young, you're part of the youth.

3 So since then, since last year, I've been really
4 thinking hard about that. I've been dealing with my own
5 battles as a single mother to a three-year-old son. A
6 lot of people get really surprised by that, but I am a
7 mother, and I see, you know -- I know what it's like to
8 have that connection with your child, and I couldn't
9 imagine what it would be like to lose your child and,
10 you know, wonder where they are.

11 I used to be problematic, and my mother, you
12 know, was wondering -- always wondering where I was and,
13 you know, very scared and all that, but I changed since
14 then. And two years drug and alcohol free, and like I
15 said, I take pride in that.

16 Thank you.

17 I want to know what I can do with all of you here
18 to be that voice for you guys, because I see that
19 there's not anyone really that's, you know, in their
20 early 20s here to, you know, gain knowledge in all of
21 this, to spread awareness, especially through my music.
22 And the reason why I'm here is so that way I can network
23 with people, be that voice, be that image for young
24 women, the youth, as well as adults, and inspire and
25 motivate them to be understanding of their children that

1 we have been growing up in a modern and a traditional
2 world. That it's very different from what all of you
3 guys have been raised. You know, it's just very
4 different. But like I said, I'm -- I'm willing to offer
5 my services, my voice for your programs to be that
6 image, to spread that awareness to our indigenous
7 people.

8 And, you know, I have a lot of trauma that I'm
9 still dealing with, but I'm seeing as a therapy -- and
10 when I see people, you know, get inspired by what I'm
11 doing, it gives me a natural high, and it makes me want
12 to do it even more because people listen that way.
13 Being sober means having a clear mind and having that
14 pure and positive energy out to my audience, and they
15 feel that, they know it. And since I've been able to be
16 that image for people, people have confided in me, and
17 feel the need to talk to me about their drinking and
18 substance abuse. You know, I consider myself an empath.
19 I feel people's negative energy. I feel people's
20 positive energy. I just feel people's energy. And it's
21 because I've become more spiritually attuned now that
22 I'm sober. And I want people to build that same way.
23 I've been told, "Oh, you're selfish. Oh, you think
24 you're better."

25 It's not that. Once you become sober and -- you

1 feel really great as an individual for how far you've
2 come, and you just want everybody else to feel that same
3 way. And that's exactly what I want to do.

4 I've been inspired by a lot since I won that
5 battle, and I want to, you know, inspire others as well.
6 And I want people to find it within them, just like how
7 I did, to be that light for the rest of the world, for
8 our communities. I want to, you know, reach out to
9 schools, do performances, talk about sobriety, and all
10 that. I'm also a student at UNM. I am studying
11 holistic health and healing arts as a background for my
12 psychology degree, and that even took me a lot to do as
13 an individual because I didn't really have that much
14 support. I did, but not really emotional support,
15 understanding of, you know, how I'm a youth but have
16 grown up in a double life, modern and traditional.

17 But my name is Bear, once again. You can find me
18 on Instagram which is bcar.3mc, you can also e-mail me
19 at Bcar.3mc@gmail.com. I hope to hear from you guys. I
20 really want to reach out to the communities. I want to
21 be that voice and that image, you know, for our youth
22 because, you know, there's only so much that adults can
23 do and really understand of our youth these days, in
24 this time. Like, you know, I found out about this on
25 social media. People pay attention to that part these

1 days, especially our youth.

2 I would really hope to hear from you guys. I'm
3 offering my services for free. You know, I really want
4 everybody to feel good. I want this world to thrive in
5 the best way that we can by, you know, sticking to our
6 roots, you know, preserving the sacredness of our
7 landing culture, so that way we can feel comfortable
8 enough to go to each other for guidance and for help,
9 because I feel like the modern world kind of took that
10 away from us. Yeah.

11 MS. WAULS: Thank you, Bear, for your comments.
12 We can definitely connect you to our task force members
13 that represent different, you know, local organizations
14 and also try to -- we want this space to be an
15 opportunity for collaboration. So as we hear from
16 everybody, I really want to encourage you-all to connect
17 with one another, if you aren't already doing that, and
18 bring your ideas back to the task force, so we can --
19 with this report, you know, try to support you-all in
20 increased resources, or just recognizing that there are
21 organizations that we need to be partner -- the state
22 needs to be partnered with in supporting -- to address
23 this issue.

24 All right. So I'm going to hand it over to
25 secretary for a couple words.

1 MS. TRUJILLO: Thanks, Samantha. And I just want
2 to thank everybody as we close here, for all the offers
3 of being of service, because we do need you and
4 definitely want to thank you for coming here. I think
5 one of the things that we have talked about is the
6 involvement with our youth. So I'm very thankful for
7 those of you who have come, Action Alliance, and to you,
8 Bear, as I do see the opportunity for us to -- also,
9 Vadalín, I'm forgetting your daughter's name. Kwani,
10 and her presentation. So I think there's a lot of
11 opportunity.

12 So in closing, I just want to say thank you, and
13 please keep on reaching out, and we really look to you
14 for guidance, and we'll take everything -- we take
15 everything to heart that you put out there.

16 And I want to thank everybody for joining us.

17 And ask the Tewa Women United to please come up
18 here to help bless us. I still want to thank everybody
19 who had the courage to get up and share what they did
20 with us, because it's very sacred, and we honor that
21 here. And so I want to make sure that we close and heal
22 and make sure that everybody whose traveled to come here
23 gets home safely.

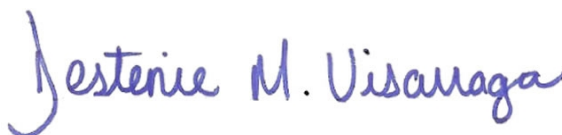
24 (Whereupon, a blessing was had.)

25 (The proceeding was concluded at 2:11 p.m.)

1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2 I, DESTENIE M. VISARRAGA, RPR, NM CCR #136, DO
3 HEREBY CERTIFY that I did report in stenographic
4 shorthand the questions and answers set forth herein,
5 and the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of
6 the proceeding had upon the taking of this transcript.

7 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither employed by
8 nor related to nor contracted with any of the parties or
9 attorneys in this case, and that I have no interest
10 whatsoever in the final disposition of this case in any
11 court.

12 

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