

REMARKS

OF

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AT THE

FEDERAL ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST
AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE WOMEN
LIVING IN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

ON

THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2013
WASHINGTON, DC

Thank you, Bea. I'm very pleased to be here. I want to join Bea and Greg in welcoming all of you to today's meeting. I'd also like to thank each of you for making the trip to Washington – I know it was a long trip for many of you – and for your important contributions to the work we're doing at the Office of Justice Programs and in the Department of Justice on behalf of tribes.

I had the pleasure of speaking to all of you at your meeting in Albuquerque in December 2011, and I just want to reiterate that we view your work here as vitally important to OJP's mission. This task force marries two central aspects of our mission: supporting tribal public safety and strengthening our body of research so we can help criminal justice practitioners do their jobs better.

Our work to support tribes runs the gamut, from tribal courts and corrections programs to victim and youth services and the tracking of sex offenders. We've worked to make those programs responsive to tribal needs, and we've also tried to make them accessible. Through the Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation – which OJP administers in partnership with the Office on Violence Against Women and the COPS Office – we've created a streamlined approach to make it easier for tribes to apply for funds. CTAS serves as a single application for many, though not all, of our tribal-specific programs, covering eight different areas, including violence against women. It also allows tribes to see the number and breadth of services available.

The issue of violence against Indian women is a top priority of OJP and the Department. We sent several OJP policy experts – including Linda Baldwin, our SMART Office Director – to the Annual Violence Against Women consultation in Tulsa last October. We're addressing the issue through a number of programs and activities like the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner and Sexual Assault Response Team Initiative run by our Office for Victims of Crime. We've also published a DVD and guidebook on prosecuting domestic violence crimes in Indian country in partnership with the National Indian Country Training Coordinator. And in December, at our biennial Indian Nations Conference, we convened a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner/Sexual Assault Response Team Native Advisory Committee to counsel the Attorney General on addressing sexual assault in Indian country.

We've also helped lead the Department's efforts to implement the Tribal Law and Order Act. Last year, I established the TLOA Interagency Programs Steering Committee to coordinate OJP's efforts with other federal agencies, and we've been able to make a lot of progress through this collaboration. One of the major benefits of TLOA is that it provides our Bureau of Justice Statistics additional ability to collect tribal crime data. This, of course, will give us a better understanding of the nature and extent of crime in Indian country, a goal I know everyone in this room shares. In fact, BJS published its Technical Report on Tribal Crime Data Collection Activities. You can find that on BJS's Web site.

Expanding our knowledge base, particularly around an issue as critical as this one, is one of my highest priorities. Through our "what works" database, CrimeSolutions.gov, and our new Diagnostic Center, we're working hard to gather information about effective programs and get that information out to the field. Translating what we know from research and making it

available to practitioners is one of the major ways we can have an impact on public safety in tribal communities. And our National Institute of Justice has been leading the way.

But if we really hope to gain a full understanding of the issues tribes face in combating violence against women, we need experts like all of you – people who know these issues first-hand and who understand all the dynamics involved. We'd be missing something vital without your feedback and guidance. So we're grateful for your contributions, and we look forward to hearing from all of you.

Thank you.

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