

**Panel #1: Tribal Leader's Panel: Overview of Violence
in Tribal Communities – 04/16/14**

Anita Fineday:

So let me move to the introduction of panel number one. Panel Number 1 is a tribal leader's panel and the tribal leaders will provide an overview of violence in tribal communities.

Our first three witnesses will identify the key exposures to community violence and tribal communities. They will analyze how tribal children exposed to violence in the community are identified, screened, assessed and helped in Public Law 280 and Non-Public Law 280 affected areas. They will recommend improvements that could be made in the system, institutions or programs to increase and improve the identification, assessment, and treatment of children exposed to violence in the communities.

The witnesses for Panel Number One are Brian Cladoosby from the Swinomish tribe. He is president of the National Congress of American Indians and chairman of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community. Erma Vizenor who is chairwoman of the White Earth Tribal Nation. And Cyril Scott who is president of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. We'll begin with president Cladoosby. [APPLAUSE]

Brian Cladoosby:

Thank you very much. First of all I want to thank the Creator for allowing me to be in the homeland of the Seminole Nation. My name is Brian Cladoosby, I'm the chairman of the Swinomish Tribe and president of the National Congress of American Indians. My traditional name is (Speepots? @ 32:27_APR161242AM) and it's a great honor to speak to you today about a subject that should be important to all of us. As a grandfather, as a father, as the chairman of my tribe and president of NCAI, nothing is more important to me than our Indian children.

I speak today on behalf of my grandchildren, Isabella and Nathaniel; on behalf of my nieces and nephews, on behalf of my daughters, and all of Indian children across this continent. And I have one question to ask all of you today: Are we failing Indian children today? You sitting out there in the audience, members of the committee, myself, tribal and

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non-tribal leaders across the country. I ask you, are we letting them down?

Too many children are the victim of crime, maltreatment, sexual violence, gang violence and bullying. Many of you here in the room might be victims. But you are survivors. And you don't have to live in the past. You can thank God for the present and how you can change the future by breaking the cycle, one child at a time, one family at a time.

Even the indirect impacts of these injuries can have lasting effects on the developing psyche of a child. Like I said, most likely, there are many of us in this room that have been victims. For too many Indian children, trauma is the norm, not the exception.

Each of us today must commit to breaking the cycle of violence before it is replicated in another generation of Indian children. And it's very, very sad and it breaks my heart to tell you that suicide is the highest cause of death among Indian youth today. Let me repeat that: Suicide is the highest cause of death among Indian youth today.

And you got to ask yourself: What kind of despair must take hold of a community for that statistic to be true? We have to make a commitment that this cannot be tolerated no longer in our communities. The work of this advisory committee is an important step forward in responding to this crisis. It makes my heart glad that you are all planning to step back, to consider the causes of violence against Indian children. Of course as many of us in this room know, these causes are many, and very complicated.

As the leader of a tribal government, we need our partners at the federal, the state, and the local levels to work with us to address how and why violence against Indian children happens. And I say "work with us" because all too often in the 19th and 20th century, the courses of action that were taken were taken without the involvement of tribal leaders or tribal members.

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An honest assessment of the root causes of violence against Indian children must begin with recognizing the role of colonization and federal Indian policy. We need to look at how federal Indian policy constrains tribal communities as they try to respond, prevent, and heal from violence against Indian children. How many federal government employees do we have in the room today, raise your hand? Thank you. How many of you consider yourself my trustee? Now the rest of you federal employees that didn't raise your hand, raise them now because you are my trustee. [LAUGHTER]

And I don't do that to embarrass you, I don't do that as a gotcha question, I do that as a learning tool, to let you federal employees know that it's an honor for you to say that I am a trustee for Chairman Cladoosby and the Swinomish Tribe and all the 566 tribes that make up the tribes in the United States of America. So once again it's not a gotcha, it's not to embarrass you, it's just an education tool. Because you do not come into these roles in the federal government, in your first day, someone doesn't come up to you and say, "You are now a trustee for 566 nations in the United States."

But that trust obligation requires that you and the rest of the federal government make decisions in the best interest of Indian people in that you do so with utmost good faith. Now that's a very high bar. As a tribal leader, but more as a father and grandfather, as an uncle to Indian children, I know that I have a special obligation also to care for Indian children and that's a higher bar. Quite literally nothing is more important to me than my grandchildren, my daughters, and the children and grandchildren of every Indian parent in the United States of America. Our children are our most treasured legacy.

As we examine the approaches and solutions to protect Indian children from violence we must join your trust obligation with our natural drive to protect these precious children, to produce a new system, a new generation, one that actually protects Indian children.

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As the advisory committee prepares its report, we ask that you keep a few specific subjects in mind: Number one, the federal trust responsibility and what it means. Number two, the engagement of tribal leaders in communities in devising solutions to local problems. Like I said, this is the 21st century, treat our tribes as 21st century tribes. We are not the 19th and 20th century tribes that the federal government thought we were when they made these rules and regulations that were more paternalistic in nature inside of a government to government. Number three, respect for the sovereignty and unique history and culture of each native community.

My written testimony discusses in detail the keys to successfully addressing the rising tide of violence against Indian children. Three things that we need to see happen. Number one, empowering tribal leaders to reduce the exposure to violence at the local level. Two, improving enforcement of the Indian Child Welfare Act at the state and federal level. And three, very important. We just had a judge introduced here I believe, a new judge that will be taking over. Investing in tribal justice systems and jurisdiction.

My written testimony includes a number of specific recommendations, I will highlight just a few. We need a federal law, similar to the Violence Against Women Act that allows tribal communities to prosecute anyone who harms an Indian child. We need to return exclusive juvenile jurisdiction to tribes who have the capability, who have the infrastructure, and who want to take on this responsibility. We need compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act across all jurisdictions, tribal, federal, and state.

I don't expect this advisory committee to address all the world's problems, but I do ask you to think about every Indian child who is afraid today, as you deliberate on your course of action. And I look forward to answering any of your questions. Thank you for your time and once again, I thank God for being in the homeland of the Seminole Nation.

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God bless you in the work that you do. (NATIVE LANGUAGE @ 41:09_APR161242AM). [APPLAUSE]

Anita Fineday:

Thank you, President Cladoosby. Next we have Chairwoman Vizenor from the White Earth Tribal Nation. Please proceed, Chairwoman Vizenor.

Erma Vizenor:

Miigwetch. Madam Chair, Shenandoah, members of the task force, my name is Erma Vizenor, chairwoman of the White Earth Nation of Anishinaabeg. White Earth, Minnesota. Miigwetch. Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of our Native American children who are exposed to violence, its effects, and to give recommendations. And to our relatives of the Seminole Nation. Miigwetch for being our host for this hearing.

The White Earth Nation located in northwestern Minnesota is the home of the White Earth Nation of Anishinaabeg, the original people. Also known as the Ojibwe or Chippewa people. Our tribe of 20,000 members is the largest tribe in the state. We are also the economically poorest tribe in the state. White Earth is the first tribe in the country to implement the Tribal Law and Order act of 2010. And just the first part of April, our first case was prosecuted in federal court and it was a domestic violence case with a firearm under the Tribal Law and Order Act.

In 2009 residents on the White Earth Reservation, with income below poverty level, was 79.7 percent compared to 14.6 percent in the whole state. Since 2009, our overall economy has not improved, only gotten worse. Poverty has been and continues to be a way of life for many of my people. Studies demonstrate there is a positive correlation between being poor and being a victim or a perpetrator of domestic violence and child abuse.

On the White Earth reservation majority of violent crimes for police calls are assaults, domestic abuse, domestic disputes, fights, stabbings and guns. Why the violence that is foreign and unheard of in our traditional tribal teachings and values where women and children are regarded as sacred? We

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know most domestic violence is learned and reinforced. According to studies the most single, most influential factor of domestic violence is a continuation of a generational cycle of violence or a history of abuse in the family.

Children who grow up in an environment where there are verbal threats, conflicts, and physical violence are more likely to resort to the same methods as adults. Drug and alcohol abuse leads to out of control behavior, poor emotional health that contributes to anger. Poor or negative self-esteem is linked to domestic violence. A child thinks "if I were just good enough, I wouldn't get beaten." Or, "I will never amount to anything."

As the child grows to adulthood, frustration and isolation also grow along with anger due to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. Being a victim of violence and abuse or witnessing violence and abuse leaves an indelible mark on a child. Many children experience post-traumatic stress disorder similar to those as mentioned, similar to those of soldiers in combat. Any incident or violence or witnessing violence triggers that fear, anxiety, and helplessness all over again. Many children who are abused or witness violence become desensitized to violence. It is normal.

I hear and see the effects of violence on children every day at White Earth. Please allow me to share just a few stories. Story number one: One Friday, at the end of the school day, a 12-year-old boy went to the principal and asked, "Please call someone to take me for the weekend." And the principal asked why. The boy said, "I don't want to go home. There are people who come, do drugs. There are fights with knives. I am scared. I think about it all the time. The weekends are the worst at home. I have no place to go."

Story number two: A month ago, an 18 month old boy was removed from the home of his biological mother who had neglected the boy. The mother abused drugs. The boy was placed in a foster home on the reservation. Whatever this little 18 month old did to cause the foster parent to violently

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shake him to unconsciousness makes me grieve. The boy was taken to a hospital in intensive care.

I was shown the photos of that little boy in a coma with tubes to breathe. The doctor said the little boy will never walk or talk. I was asked by the boy's family, "How would you allow your Indian Child Welfare Department to license such a home? Our baby is injured for life." I inquired. All of the procedures were properly followed in licensure. But sadly to say, this innocent child is a victim. First of neglect, and then the violence that will affect him as long as he lives.

Story number three: Staff from our Circle Back program, a transition program for recovering youth with addictions informed me that our young girls, as young as 13 and 14 years of age are selling their bodies – prostitution – for \$20 to buy drugs. They see nothing wrong with it. To them, the sexual abuse is normal.

Drug abuse is rampant, not only on the White Earth reservation, but other reservations as well. I have been informed that 80 percent of the Indian babies born at the Bemidji Hospital have drugs in their bodies at birth. Have withdrawals that require specialized care at hospitals in Fargo, North Dakota. I cannot forget hearing about the baby who has damaged hands from clinching during withdrawals. Babies born victims. The violence of drugs. The Bemidji Hospital serves White Earth, Leech Lake and Red Lake Tribes, the three largest tribes in Minnesota.

White Earth has programs that combat violence and addictions such as Down On Violence Everyday, our DOVE program. (Oskimando? @ 49:18_APR161242AM), the new spirit center. The only culturally appropriate youth treatment facility in the state. A women's shelter for abused moms and their children. A woman's wellbriety center where moms and bring their children as they heal from addictions. White Earth also has programs that heal such as traditions, language and culture. We call it TLC. Reservation-wide talking and healing circles.

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In 2009 the tribal council issued a health emergency declaration on the abuse of illegal drugs, calling for coordination, collaboration, and assistance from state and federal agencies to help us combat drug abuse. White Earth has a domestic violence code and Judge Fineday, when she was our judge, she probably drafted that code.

Yep, of all the programs that we have, they are far from enough to deal with the crisis of violence and addictions. We lack adequate resources and funds. Many times it feels like we are losing ground, losing our children. So whenever I have the opportunity to speak about our children, I tell it like it is and I ask for help. No one can effectively solve a problem such as violence and its effect on children unless we go to the source of the problem. And I must emphasize, we have to go to the source of the problem.

For us as Native Americans, the source of the root of brokenness and violence in our families, communities and tribes, is the historical trauma that is attributed to the boarding school policy formalized in 1869 and continued well into the 1970s as well as the loss of our homelands in this country. It is the untold story of cultural genocide.

In 2000, the United States Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Kevin Grover summed up the federal boarding school policy. Quote: The trauma of shame, fear, and anger has passed on from one generation to the next and manifest itself in the rampant alcoholism, drug abuse, and domestic violence that plague Indian country. Many of our people live lives of unrelenting tragedy as Indian families suffer from the ruin of lives by alcoholism, suicides made of shame and despair, and violent death at the hands of one another. Unquote.

To civilized and Christianized native people, the federal boarding school policy took children away from families and communities often by force or coercion. Stripped away our culture, language, and identity. In collaboration with Christian churches -- there was no separation of church and state in those days -- the boarding school subjected children

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to harsh labor, punishment, regimentation, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and shame for being an Indian. The children experienced no love in the boarding school. No modeling of parenting. For many the only touch they received from the small population of adults at the schools were the beatings, or worse, forced sexual contact with adults or older students who themselves had been victims.

Don Coyhis of White Bison told me about an elderly woman in Minneapolis who survived the boarding school. As a child, she had three fingers cut off at the boarding school. Every time she spoke her tribal language a finger was cut off for punishment. Far from her family, imagine the trauma to this child as well as the children who saw what happened to them as well.

The federal church boarding schools were systematic destruction of indigenous cultures and communities through the removal and reprogramming of native children. Many children died at the boarding schools. The children who survived returned to their communities not as Christian farmers that the policy envisioned, but as deeply scarred human beings, lacking the skills, community, parenting, extended family, language and cultural practices.

As I mentioned earlier, the single most influential factor of domestic violence is the continuation of a generational cycle of violence or abuse in the family. It is the federal church boarding school's era where the cycle of neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and psychological abuse began and continues today.

On behalf of our native children and families, I, along with the Native American Rights Fund and the National Native American Boarding Schools Healing Coalition call for and request your assistance to convene a congressional oversight hearing on the federal boarding school policy. And this is similar to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that First Nation has with the government of Canada.

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We request a study and a report on the boarding school policy, its effects and its continuing harm today. In addition, we need assistance in gathering records and information about boarding schools by the federal government and by churches. We need assistance in gathering information about intergenerational and historical trauma and to effectuate true community, and national healing; to raise public awareness and provide public education; and to commit support for culturally appropriate community-led remedies.

Miigwetch. I thank you very much. And I submit also the legal review from the Native American Rights Fund, the article—and it's a very good one—let all that is Indian within you die. And I think I have enough copies for all of you so take a copy and read it. We need to know our history. We need to know what has happened to us and why we have the problems that are plaguing our communities today and especially our children. Miigwetch. [APPLAUSE]

Anita Fineday:

Thank you chairwoman Vizenor. Next we will hear from President Scott from the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. President Scott.

Cyril Scott:

(inaudible @ 57:09_APR161242AM). I'd like to thank Madam Chair and the panel and all you here today. I'd like to recognize some people here that are with me here that are on the forefront of the Defending Childhood Initiative in our homelands. This young lady has stepped up to the plate and I'm very proud to introduce her here today. She's a great champion of our children and home, Miss (Micah Underman @ 57:37_APR161242AM). Micah, would you stand up please? [APPLAUSE]

Another one, our attorney general, Aisha (inaudible @ 57:47_APR161242AM) that just came to us newly but is very involved and I want to thank her also. Aisha, would you stand up please? [APPLAUSE]

In our ways and our traditions at home I need to apologize to my elders for speaking in front of them here today. I have an

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elder that I haven't seen since I was young man here with me today. So Jim Clairmont, it's good to see you and I do apologize for speaking in front of you here today. But on this occasion, to speak on behalf of the people of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe I am here today with a warm heart to talk about something that is annihilating children in Indian country.

I've been on the reservation for 51 years. I've been a part of the abuse, the violence, the beatings, the verbal abuse. I've seen it. I've witnessed it myself and it's happened to me. So I speak on behalf of the children that have been through this process. I know what it's like to be woken up in the middle of the night by a non-member, a stepfather that come home drunk and had nothing else to do but to take it out on the Native American children. I have lived that. I've been kicked away from the table, not being able to eat because he didn't want you to eat that day.

So I lived them experiences. So I can sit here and I can talk about these experiences on behalf of the children and Native American country. It's a sad day. Now many of our children go abused, like Madam Chair said, this started back in the boarding school days with our parents. It's a crying shame. 1826, when treaties became—our ancestors came to the federal government with our pipe. "Sign these treaties and smoke in the good way." Tell them hey, as Native American people we're going to respect these treaties. The federal government came that same day with their Bible. Put their hand on that Bible and said, "Hey, Native Americans, we're going to respect your treaties, your cultures and your ways."

I wonder when that's going to be done. We would not be sitting here talking of these things if them things were honored here today. I come from the Rosebud Sioux Tribe up in South Dakota, the second forth (inaudible @ 61:39_APR161242AM) in the nation. Eighty-seven percent unemployment. The drug rate is very high. We are in a time of crisis down there. When we talk about our children and tribal government, I took an oath of office to protect my homelands and our people.

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We talk about our children being sacred, our elders being sacred. I believe all Native Americans are sacred in our heritage, in our ways. How do we stop child abuse, domestic violence, all these things? By instilling our culture back into our people. Our language. Our way of dance, our way of song. Just everyday ways of life that our ancestors have done. There's lot of good ways that we need to instill them back in, not only in our youth but all members of every tribe.

You know, on the way down here, and this morning I woke up, prepared some things to read and say here today. But I thought the best thing I could do is come in here and talk to my relatives here today from my heart. So that's the way I am speaking today, from my heart, on behalf of our children, and behalf on a way of life. And that was disrupted when the English come to our country. They have displaced us, they have abused us, and it goes on here today.

But now we see the federal government working with us and I thank for that. It's a time that you do come to the table, and you have come to the table. ICWA, Defending Childhood Initiative, there these things, VAWA, all these things are great things that are being done in Indian country.

The number one tool we could use in Indian country today is economic development. You take the stress of money away from our people, give them a good job. There's not one person in here that does not want their child or grandchild to have something better. In Indian country poverty runs rampant. That's where abuse, alcohol abuse comes. When you're in despair, you're in depression. It's because you cannot provide a good healthy, safe way of life for your children. And it bothers you every day, I know it does. It bothers me.

You know, I hate to see my grandchildren go to a baseball game without what the neighbors have, baseball cleats, there these things. It bothers all of us.

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So we need to create, as Native American people, economic development on all Indian reservations here in the United States, and our relatives up north, native Alaskans. It's at a point in time where as Native Americans, we need to band together once again on behalf of our children and on behalf of a way of life that was given to us. We have been given a lot of things over the years. They tell me. I say everything we have given we are borrowing from our youth, our children. Our land, our ways of life. We need to keep our ways of life in our children going at all cost.

One thing we have done in Rosebud, I'm not just talking about the XL Pipeline here in a protest. Lot of you have read the media. We set up a traditional encampment against the protest of XL Pipeline that's going to contaminate not only our land and our water, but our way of life. They're going to bring transients into Indian country that our laws will not allow us to prosecute them. Where are these people going to come? To Indian country. To my homelands. Who's going to be violated? Our children. Our women. Our lands.

But the best thing I can tell you today, with the spirit camp up in our homelands, it's for educating. We're taking our children. Our council made a motion yesterday and I'm very proud of them, to start having culture classes, all kinds of classes for our children out there. It's the first time in Indian country that I ever heard of it done. And I'm very proud of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe and their stance not only against XL Pipeline, but of child abuse, domestic violence.

We heard Madam Chair talk about prostitution. When I first became president of Rosebud Sioux Tribe, it isn't only the outsiders that are doing harm to our people. Some of them are our own people. I became tribal president of Rosebud Sioux Tribe which is a great honor to me. Well one night I was called at 3 o'clock in the morning by a 13-year-old girl and asked to come to Sioux Falls, South Dakota and get her in the middle of the night.

What has happened, she was on this thing, I speak about Facebook wherever I go because I believe it's a great way to

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(violate? @ 66:38_APR161242AM) our people and our children. That's what happened. She got in contact with an aunt of hers in Sioux Falls and told her how bad things were at home. So the aunt calls the sister and says, "I want to take her. Bring her to Sioux Falls, put her in a nice school and give her an education." The first thing they did was they addicted her to heroin. Put her out on the streets in Sioux Falls, South Dakota for three months.

The worst day of my life was driving to see this young lady. When I arrived at the bus station in Sioux Falls she was hiding in a dumpster. But she had enough sense to call somebody and want to go home. I left that day, that night, drove all night and I show up in a place in Rapid City for youth. I walk in with this young lady, who is now going into withdrawals. And I told them, I said, "Hey, we need to get this young lady in here today." "A thousand dollars. We can't touch her. Thousand dollars." I paid the thousand dollars. It was a great honor. A great honor of the stories the other day when I was home, she came to my house. Hugged me and cried and said, "Thank you. Thank you for all you have done. I am now going to speak." She is going to devote her life to the children in Indian country. And I thanked her for that.

So once again, when it comes to our children and our way of life, that's what we need to see, economic development as Native Americans is the way we save our people. Tighten your borders up. Once you start economic development you have the revenue to do things, to strengthen your homelands. So again, my name is Cyril Scott, president of Rosebud Sioux Tribe. It's a great honor to be able to sit up here and talk on behalf, not only the people of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, but Indian country as a whole. And again, thank you. [APPLAUSE]

Anita Fineday:

Thank you, President Scott. At this time, we will turn to the advisory committee and open up the floor for questions from the advisory committee to the members of this panel. I would just remind all of the speakers to speak into their microphones and speak slowly enough. This hearing is

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being recorded so that everyone is aware of that. It will ultimately be transcribed from that recording. So I'll open it up to advisory committee members for questions.

Female:

Thank you all for your testimony, I appreciate it. I have a question for President Scott. I understand that the Defending Childhood Initiative has been on the Rosebud Reservation for the last couple of years and would you be able to address the successes and the lessons learned from that initiative that was the initiative for why we are sitting here today. And I know that Rosebud and Rocky Boy were two tribes that have been working very hard on that. If you could address some of the successes and also the lessons learned from that, that would be greatly appreciated.

Cyril Scott:

And I thank you for your question. Yeah, it's a great honor to do that. One of the best things I see that comes is that we go into our schools. We have the capability to go into our schools and talking to our children. Miss Lunderman and her brother, they go in. And by them being in the schools and talking about it, when they're done the children feel comfortable enough to come and speak on other things. What's going on in their homes, what the problems are. The downfall of Defending Childhood Initiative, and that it really isn't a downfall, so excuse me, what needs to be added into this initiative, as me and Madam Chair spoke: Preventative maintenance.

We need to get to these kids, these children, at an early age and start being able to condition their minds to know right from wrong. So that the initiative is great. It does great things. And without the great leadership of Micah, the attorney general and the people at home, our children would go on to be abused in this manner.

Right now, we are facing the end of the grant. We hope this does not go away. This is something not only Rosebud or Rocky Boy, and just a few reservations, we all need it. Like we said, it runs rampant throughout Indian country. By securing the initiative throughout Indian country is a better way to keep our children out of harm's way. Without it, we're

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back to square one. But education, education, education. To our children, through this initiative is the way we're going to reach our goals to stamp abuse out in Indian country.

Anita Fineday:

Thank you, President Scott. Jefferson Keel?

Jefferson Keel:

Yes. I have a question for the panel and first of all, I want to thank you, all of you, for coming in, presenting testimony and it's not only for me, challenging to listen to this type of testimony, but as someone who has witnessed it and experienced that type of behavior in our communities, I can tell you that some of these things bring back vivid memories of childhood.

But my question is, and it's for anyone who would like to—when we talk about breaking this cycle of violence that happens within our communities, many of our children are exposed to this. Many of them are not only witnesses, but they're victims of this type of abuse. And the Violence Against Women Act was a step in the right direction toward prosecuting those perpetrators of people within our communities and allowing the tribal courts to take charge and prosecute some of these perpetrators.

But what specific recommendations would you have for the agencies that we're talking about? Specifically the Department of Justice, the Bureau of Indian Affairs that has justice programs—all of those agencies that have funding available—what are specific recommendations that the committee could look at and make that would improve not only the conditions, but how we get the children and families into the proper type of counseling and those activities that they would benefit from? How would you like to address that and anyone can start.

Cyril Scott:

Now, Mr. Keel, thank you. You know, as we sit here and we talk about our counseling, I think Rosebud, through this initiative only has one counselor that we retain at this time. We need more counselors. We need more hands-on with our children. We need the funding capabilities to set up places where we can take, as a family unit. You can't heal

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the child if you can't heal the whole family. Starting with grandmothers. If your grandpa whipped you back in the day your dad's gonna whip you and it goes on and on. So we need facilities, monies for facilities to take them as a family unit, to be able to work with them and talk to them in that manner. That's one good way of doing that.

The other way, again, I'm gonna always speak of this, is monies for education to teach our children and our people what we're all forgetting in Indian country is our culture and our way of life. And we never had these problems back in the days. But now we do. So education. Facilities to put the whole family unit into counseling, more counselors, more money for law enforcement. All these things. Domestic violence.

The VAWA Act itself is a great tool. Violence Against Women. Now it gives us the right to go amend our laws. I believe to prosecute violators in Indian country, across Indian country. I thank the vice chair from the (inaudible @ 77:17_APR161242AM) tribe in Washington that spent all of her time to make sure that was done. She left her children home, her husband home, and she did an excellent job. That's leadership.

And with Defending Childhood Initiative, we can do these same things. We can write laws that better defend not only the Native American children. There's lot of children across United States. Native American, non-Native American, I don't care. No child should ever be harmed no matter what your race is. A child is a child. We need Defending Childhood Initiative in the outlying communities for every race. In Chicago. New York City. Wherever there's children being abused, we need to use this initiative to also help them. They're children and this is a great initiative. And I want to always thank you for it and giving it to Rosebud, for us to be an opportunity of a shining star. So Jefferson, I hope that answers your question. Thank you.

Brian Cladoosby:

There was never a marshal plan, effective marshal plan in Indian country. When you have the Rosebud Sioux saying

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there's 87 percent unemployment. And when you have the White Earth saying that 80 percent of their people are below the poverty line. I mean that tells you right there, that's the story right there. There's no marshal plan.

At Swinomish, we're a firm believer that education is the key to destroying poverty, destroying domestic violence, and destroying drug and alcohol abuse. It's the federal government's responsibility in our treaties—education is a treaty right, it's not a line item.

And people also say, "Why do you always bring up the boarding school experience? That was two generations ago. Why do you still bring that up?" My grandfather was part of that generation. That wasn't that long ago. These adults that were teaching our elders were wolves in sheep's clothing. They had their prey corralled. Our grandparents had nobody to speak for them.

You say, "Why do you keep bringing up that boarding school experience?" Because that's where a lot of the cycle began; where our grandparents were taught abuse, where they were taught domestic violence, where they were taught sexual abuse, where they were taught verbal abuse, where they were taught mental abuse. That was part of their education system two generations ago. That's why we still talk about it. Because they brought that home to our reservations. It wasn't part of their culture.

So we need to break that cycle one tribe at a time, one generation at a time, one Native American at a time. Because they brought that home and that was part of my parents' culture: The beatings, the sexual abuse, the mental abuse, the verbal abuse. That was part of our upbringing.

And so number one, we need a marshal plan for Indian country. Number two, education has to be funded as a treaty right, not a line item. Number three, we have to recognize that historical trauma is still part of our communities and we need to break it one native, one child at a time. Thank you for your question, Mr. President.

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Anita Fineday: Thank you President Cladoosby. I think we have about five minutes of time left for this panel and just President Vizenor. Chairwoman Vizenor.

Erma Vizenor: Thank you. I'd just like to make a brief comment on immediately what we as tribes can do. We need to invest in early childhood education, even before the child is born. We need to invest in parenting skills. Teach our young people how to parent.

And the third thing is we as tribal governments have responsibility to serve our own people. In Minnesota, White Earth, I went to the state legislature. And all the human services, and health and human services that were administered by the counties, from the state, to the counties, to the tribe, we have taken over those services now. It's time for us as tribal governments to own the services to our people and to serve our people. We are the decision makers. We are the governments to serve our own people. Not the counties, not the state, but the tribal government.

Anita Fineday: Thank you, Chairwoman Vizenor. We have one question from Miss Shenandoah.

Joanne Shenandoah: Thank you very much for those words and my next question could be somewhat rhetorical for Brian. And of course with that thought in mind, I want to ask these two questions: Some nations have set aside monies towards terrific advocacy programs which we have viewed and seen. Yesterday I heard from the executive director of NICWA, Gil Vigil. And what he was saying is that he thought that tribal leadership has varying priorities. How would you say we heighten the awareness of changing priorities to children's issues in Indian country, potentially through NCAI? And secondly, has there been any discussion of nations who have actual gaming facilities who would assist other nations with issues regarding their children? So those are two kind of pointed questions that I've had.

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Brian Cladoosby:

Yeah, thank you very much. I had a great talk today with Sarah, with Denise, with Gill, with Mr. Cross on just exactly that issue. You know, we need to bring our four organizations together. And I know that NCAI, with these organizations in the past has done work so we're not reinventing the wheel. There's some great reports out there from '07, '08, '09. We just need to take those.

You know, it's like that new tool, I just had to have that brand-new saw. I bought it. It's in my shed. Guess what, it's still sitting there in the box. [LAUGHS] Well we create tools all the time through commissions like this and through work at NCAI. And we finish those reports and we set them on the shelf. You know, well we need to take those off the shelf sometime, dust them off. And so talking with Sarah and them today, and Denise, and Denise started the discussion with them yesterday that you know, I as the president of NCAI need to talk closely with the presidents and the boards of these other organizations to make sure we're on the same page, going in the same direction. We're in the canoe and we're paddling, you know, in the same direction in our work. Our children are our greatest asset.

And you know, in Washington, we have a program set up where all 29 tribes get gaming machines. Seven of those tribes can't have a casino so their machines, they're able to lease to other tribes and get money that way. That's the model we set up in Washington so all the tribes benefit even though that they are in locations that would never, ever allow for a casino. And so that's one model in Washington that we use to ensure that all tribes in Washington are benefiting from IGRA and maybe that's a model that other tribes across the nation can also look at incorporating. It might be kind of like late for some of them because they're so far into the game now. But that's just one model that we use in Washington to ensure the poorest of the poor still have income coming in every month through gaming.

Anita Fineday:

Thank you President Cladoosby. With that this concludes Panel Number One. We thank you for your testimony and we will move to the second panel. And while that's taking

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place I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Gina Tyner-Dawson who is a senior advisor for Tribal Affairs within the Office of Assistant Attorney General within the Office of Justice Programs, within the Department of Justice. [APPLAUSE] So Gina. Thank you for being with us here today.

[END PANEL #1]