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## **TASK FORCE ON CHILDREN EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE PRESENTS FINAL FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS TO ATTORNEY GENERAL**

WASHINGTON — Attorney General Eric Holder’s Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence today presented its final report and policy recommendations gathered from public hearings held across the country over the past year.

The task force report includes 56 recommendations and highlights the importance of identifying children who are victims or witnesses of violence and providing support and services to help them heal. It focuses on developing programs to help children access supportive and non-violent relationships with trusted adults in their homes and communities. The task force also calls for all children who enter the juvenile justice system to be screened for exposure to violence.

“I want to thank the task force for their diligent work on this important effort. This report will be carefully considered and used as the basis for action – and as a blueprint for strengthening our robust efforts to protect young people from exposure to violence,” said Attorney General Holder. “The findings of this task force will ensure that policymakers, criminal justice professionals, social service providers, and members of the public continue to regard preventing and remedying children’s exposure to violence as far more than a professional obligation – but as a moral calling.”

As a key part of Attorney General Holder’s Defending Childhood initiative to address children’s exposure to violence, the task force is comprised of 13 leading experts, including practitioners, child and family advocates, academicians and licensed clinicians.

“Every child we help recover from the impact of abuse is an investment in our nation’s future,” said task force co-chair Joe Torre, executive vice president of Major League Baseball and founder of the Joe Torre Safe At Home Foundation. “Our report calls for renewed and expanded efforts to protect our children from violence and psychological trauma, to heal families and communities, and to empower children to claim safe and productive futures. The time for action is now.”

During four hearings held in Baltimore, Albuquerque, N.M., Miami and Detroit from November 2011 to April 2012, the task force heard from people of all ages residing in 27 states and the District of Columbia, including survivors of violence, researchers, practitioners,

advocates and community residents. These testimonials, along with additional research, provided the foundation for the report and recommendations.

“We have the power to end the damage to children from violence and abuse,” said task force co-chair Robert Listenbee, Jr., Chief of the Juvenile Unit of the Defender Association of Philadelphia. “We must mobilize resources on national and local levels to support teachers, health care professionals, police officers, juvenile justice professionals and others who work with children and their families. Our recommendations provide a path for effectively implementing policies, practices and procedures to keep kids safe from violence.”

The task force presented their recommendations today during a public meeting of the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The council, whose membership includes the cabinet officials and heads of 12 federal agencies and nine practitioners, coordinates federal programs for delinquency prevention, detention or care for unaccompanied juveniles, and missing and exploited children.

To view the task force’s report, please visit:

[www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood/cev-rpt-full.pdf](http://www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood/cev-rpt-full.pdf).

For more information about the task force and Attorney General Holder’s Defending Childhood Initiative please visit: [www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood](http://www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood).

The Defending Childhood Initiative is supported by the Office of Justice Programs (OJP). OJP is headed by Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary Lou Leary and provides federal leadership in developing the nation’s capacity to prevent and control crime, administers justice and assists victims. OJP has six components: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking. More information about OJP can be found at [www.ojp.gov](http://www.ojp.gov).

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