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ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE CHILDREN EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE HOLDS THIRD PUBLIC HEARING

WASHINGTON – The Attorney General’s Advisory Committee of the Task Force on American Indian and Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence will hold its third public hearing today and tomorrow in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. The theme of the hearing is American Indian children exposed to violence in the community.

“American Indian and Alaska Native children encounter violence and trauma at unusually high rates, and the effects of this exposure can be devastating,” said Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs Karol V. Mason. “The information and ideas being gathered at this hearing will guide our efforts to help tribal leaders and families protect their children.”

Robert L. Listenbee, Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, will provide opening remarks at the hearing, which will provide witnesses and experts in the field the opportunity to discuss Native Children’s exposure to violence. The hearing follows the National Indian Child Welfare Association’s annual Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, a four-day event that took place in Fort Lauderdale, April 13 -16. Today’s public hearing includes a panel on the Indian Child Welfare Act, with participation from Tribal leadership, Native child advocacy organizations and experts on child trauma and community violence.

The Attorney General’s Task Force on American Indian and Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence is comprised of a federal working group that includes U.S. Attorneys and officials from the Departments of the Interior and Justice and a federal advisory committee of experts on American Indian studies, child health and trauma, victim services and child welfare.

Former U.S. Senator Byron Dorgan and Iroquois composer and singer Joanne Shenandoah co-chair the 13-member committee. The advisory committee will draw upon research and information gathered through public hearings to draft a final report of policy recommendations that it will be presented to Attorney General Eric Holder in the coming months.

Attorney General Holder created the task force in 2013 as part of his Defending Childhood initiative to prevent and reduce children’s exposure to violence as victims and witnesses. The task force is also a component of the Justice Department’s ongoing collaboration with leaders in American Indian and Alaska Native communities to improve public safety.

The advisory committee held its first public hearing Dec. 9, 2013, in Bismarck, N.D., and the second in Scottsdale, AZ Feb. 11, 2014. The final public hearing will be held in Anchorage, Alaska. For more information about the advisory committee and public hearings, please visit www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood.

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