



Bob Ferguson
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF WASHINGTON

**Washington State Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People
Task Force (TF)**
March 20, 2023 at 1 PM, via Zoom

- Call to Order
- Introduction of Task Force Members
- Public Comment Session
- Legislative Update (AGO Legislative Team)
- Family Advisory Council Proposal
- Upcoming Timeline Review: Annual Report
- Update on Annual Summit
- Upcoming Meeting Dates
- May 5th Planning
- Updates from Subcommittees
- Adjourn

Present

Task Force Members:

Annie Forsman-Adams
Aubony Burns
Anna Bean
Jani Hitchen
Patti Gosch
Anita Mitchell
Carolyn DeFord

Craig Bill

Gina Mosbrucker
Steven Merrival
Patricia Whitefoot
Abigail Echo-Hawk
Charlene Tillequots
Yvonne Cagey

Other attendees:

Alex Buijs
Antonio Asencio-Pigmon
Asa Washines
Ellen Austin Hall
Malynn Foster
Shanna Howtopat
William Kincaid

Introductions

Public Comment Session

Shanna Howtopat introduced self to the Task Force (TF) as an MMIWP advocate with Mother Nation.

Legislative Update

Asa Washines: This morning, HB 1177 had a hearing. One of our recommendations from last year was the creation of cold case unit. It previously passed the house unanimously. It should be moving smoothly forward. This is something community and the TF wanted. The legislative team did a lot of work on that bill.

Rep. Mosbrucker's bill creating an updated toolkit also had a hearing today.

Senate Bill 5477 from Sen. Torres reauthorizes our TF and implements our recommendations on NAMUS. Also expect a smooth process with that bill.

Related, there will be work in our office to create a study on boarding schools, with a tribal advisory committee. That is next on our plate.

Family Advisory Council Proposal

Annie: This proposal is still in the works. We are doing internal edits. We have not lost the thread. This came from a conversation at the December summit about increasing the participation of families on the TF and to compensate families as much as possible. The family advisory council would not be voting members but would advise the TF. Wanted to let folks know that we are working on that. One of the things that we should discuss is whether we are comfortable with the Executive Committee leading that rather than waiting for the next quarterly meetings, but we cannot vote on that now because we don't have quorum.

Anna: All for getting things moving quicker. Necessary to hear voices of those advocating. I would hope that folks would be into the executive moving forward. What do you have as of now in terms of the proposal? Could we see it? Everyone should be able to give thoughts.

Annie: Not quite ready to share yet, but will share with TF for feedback. Should be ready in next few weeks.

Jani: Echo the comments about timeliness and using the Executive Committee to move this. Question around makeup of council: would it be representative of the whole state of Washington?

Annie: Yes, we would be advertising and asking for people from all over state to submit their interest through web based form. We would have folks not associated with the TF review those. That way none of us are burdened with selecting people we know, to ensure we get a good cross section of the community.

Quorum at 1:30 PM

Patti: Is the regional site visits part of this council?

Annie: No, that is a separate piece. What we would be voting on here is allowing the Executive Committee to implement the family advisory council proposal rather than voting on that at the June meeting.

Anna moved, Jani seconded

Passed

Upcoming Timeline Review: Annual Report –Shared screen with anticipated time line. Discussion ensued.

March/April	AGO staff drafting report content
May	AGO staff work with subcommittee chairs and Task Force members to develop recommendations
June	5: Recommendations released for public comment 16: Task Force meeting, expected vote on recommendations 23: Hold for follow-up Task Force meeting if additional votes needed
July	Task Force members review report and provide feedback to AGO staff
August	Formatting and copy-edits
September	Anticipate release of report prior to the 2023 Summit

Asa: To clarify, you will get recommendations to review in May before the June meeting.

Jani: Are these June meetings to be in-person?

Annie: Those will both be virtual

Patricia: How much time do you anticipate for the May gatherings?

Annie: We won't meet in May, just working in subcommittees for developing recommendations.

Patricia: How much time do you anticipate for that?

Annie: We have started pulling recommendations based on subcommittee meetings, and those are also open to discussion and more input. What's important to remember, that with new recommendations, it takes a few weeks to vet them. If we have any recommendations we'd like included in the report, the sooner you let me know, the better. Then the public and TF will have a couple weeks for feedback.

Patricia: My recommendation was made at the community services meeting. Last week, the discussion had to do with having two agencies working on this – the WSP and AGO. My concern is that we have these separate agencies and want to work effectively together. Families are going to several agencies for support, to be bounced around. I want to make sure the relationship is smooth. Not sure how to address that. Want to have conversation with key supervisors/figure heads. Don't want the TF and its work to get caught in the middle of agencies.

Patti: Should do public education on what to expect. Right now, working on PowerPoint for that on what to expect of WSP on missing persons. Could bring in conversation for other agencies on what is meant to happen.

Malynn: As family, it is hard to navigate different entities for support. Not addressing jurisdictional issues yet. Need roadmap.

Patsy: Would like representation from FBI on here – or put them on the agenda periodically.

Aubony (in chat): We have had an agent attend a few meetings.

Annie: We can ask that they take a more involved role.

Patti: How can we get federal agencies state authority to get past jurisdictional barriers? I brought up idea to cross-deputize federal agencies so they can come off reservation for investigations. There have been some conversations. Would need to be federal request.

Anna: That discussion and issue of reservation hopping would need a full session to discuss. Deserves a full meeting on its own.

Patti: Need to look at stats of people reported to law enforcement. Law enforcement doesn't report missing persons because being missing is not a crime. Those stats impact funding and attention. Need to get agencies to start recording those statistics.

Malynn: There was case of girl reported as missing, then she aged out and was not listed. She was found in shallow grave. I think a lot of families think that when they report a loved one missing, they remain listed but that isn't the case. Families need to know how to ensure loved one stays listed as missing.

Patsy: Need workgroup on this.

Malynn: I agree – jurisdictional and reporting issues need to be addressed in depth.

Jani: Is this one of the questions we've sent to our data team? How people report for each jurisdiction?

Annie: So how do people report a missing person?

Jani: Yes – how would I report someone missing?

Aubony: David Heitzman's group has been working on this.

Carolyn: Maybe we can get a report of missing persons purged from lists in Washington state?

Patti: I can look into that.

Annie: Going back to the conversation on federal agencies and authority – we are aware of that discussion and working on it, but that is very complicated and lots to consider. We can continue discussing that.

Update on Annual Summit

Annie: Brief update – will be held on east side after the Centennial Accord in Tri-Cities area.

Asa: Potentially September 20. We want more participation so we think if we do it in conjunction with the accord, we can get more attendance.

Annie: Last December, the summit and the TF were together. This year, the summit will be one day and TF meeting will be the week before on September 11 via Zoom. That will be a light meeting to discuss report.

Asa: Again, we want to expand the scope of the work, so will invite tribes from Idaho and Oregon.

May 5th Planning

Annie: Spoke with the Executive Committee and families – consensus that we want to amplify and support community work. Thinking we will release a public statement, and create a Twitter hashtag, encourage people to wear red. Wanted feedback on that, and need to vote on if Executive Committee can create statement.

Patti: Maybe we reach out to agencies beforehand to let them know about May 5 – many do not know about it.

Malynn: Would like to see statement before it goes out. Will you contact tribes about it too to offer them support?

Annie: Yes that's the plan.

Jani: If we had a sample proclamation, cities and counties across the state could share.

Patsy: Was also going to suggest proclamation or resolution, in conjunction with WSP.

Patti: We put things on our Twitter page each year.

Motion to allow Executive Committee work on that statement.

Passed

Subcommittee updates

Annie started with community resources and services subcommittee

Annie: Need more support for this subcommittee. We also need to replace Chris Stearns for co-chair.

Carolyn: Wondering if instead of waiting for community services providers to come to us, we do outreach to more community orgs. There are some who can offer help and don't realize it – like churches.

Shanna: Wanted to let everyone know within first days of starting my position, I went to Portland to assist search for person in WA. We were communicating with the parents and assisted with gas cards and hotels. We are trying to get the word out that if there are families in need of help with searches, they can call us at Mother Nation and let us know where they are in need – can help with gas cards, hotels, printing flyers.

Aubony gave criminal justice subcommittee update

- Have representatives from law enforcement on all levels
- Have built our knowledge base, made connections, shared family insight with law enforcement
- Identified eight goals – working on three of them already
- Met with group of medical examiners and coroners

Carolyn gave families subcommittee update

- Had over 33 different individual attend from various professional backgrounds
- Discussed family participation in research project
- Discussed importance of programming and educating youth
- Discussed the toolkit development, create workgroup to focus on that work
- Goal to have guest speakers – we had first family speak to subcommittee in March, invited NECMEC and NCIC to come to meetings
- Resuming talking circles
- Discussed social media scams
 - Abigail suggested in chat: can we do a webinar on “how to spot a fraud?”

Anna gave tribal subcommittee update

- ATNI: drafted letter to get more tribal involvement with MMIWP, did a panel
- Testified in support of cold case unit legislation
- Pivoting toward federal recommendations, expanding to include other states
 - Malynn suggested: educational campaign/workgroup with communities on what MMIWP crisis is and how to be involved

Annie gave data subcommittee update

- Providing feedback to WYSAC research team
- Getting IRB approval
- Research guidance from Wisconsin MMIW group
- Beginning interviews soon

Jani moved to adjourn at 3:25 pm.

Anna seconded.

Passed, adjourned at 3:25 pm.