



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, July 25, 2012

Office of Justice Programs
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TASK FORCE ON CHILDREN EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE BRIEFS CONGRESS *Yankee Legend Joe Torre Describes Impact of Witnessing Violence as a Child*

WASHINGTON—During a briefing with Congress on Attorney General Eric Holder’s Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence today, Justice Department officials and task force co-chairs Joe Torre and Robert Listenbee, Jr. described their comprehensive work since the task force launch in October 2011 and discussed lessons learned through four public hearings held across the country over the last nine months. The task force is a key part of Attorney General Holder’s Defending Childhood initiative to address children’s exposure to violence and will present policy recommendations in a final report to the Attorney General later this year.

At the briefing, Joe Torre, a Yankee legend, executive vice president of Major League Baseball and founder of the Joe Torre Safe At Home® Foundation, described the impact of witnessing abuse as a child.

“It took decades before I finally started to talk about the violence in my childhood,” Torre said. “And as the task force has heard from one person after another, things haven’t changed enough. Every child deserves a safe home, a safe school, and a safe community.”

The task force held four hearings from November 2011 to April 2012 in Baltimore, Albuquerque, N.M., Miami and Detroit, and heard personal testimony from 65 people from 27 states and the District of Columbia. These included survivors of violence, young people, social service providers, medical personnel, researchers, practitioners, advocates, tribal and local officials, private foundation representatives, and community residents.

“Violence hurts children across the country—whether they live in urban, rural or tribal communities,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs Mary Lou Leary. “The Department of Justice is committed to reducing this impact and identifying concrete ways to make our children and our communities safer.”

The task force is composed of 13 leading experts, including practitioners, child and family advocates, academicians and licensed clinicians. More information about the task force and Attorney General Holder’s Defending Childhood initiative is available at: www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood.

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary Lou Leary, provides federal leadership in developing the nation’s capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist 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 <http://www.ojp.gov>.