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State of California
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE



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November 12, 2015

Dear Tribal Leader:

Following a recent series of meetings with tribal leaders and tribal advocates, we in the California Department of Justice have realized a need to convene an ICWA Compliance Task Force (Task Force).

The first of the meetings took place as a part of the California's annual ICWA summit on June 10th and 11th, where tribes shared their ICWA compliance issues with both myself and Bureau of Children's Justice Director Michael Newman. In light of the issues elucidated there, many of which had devastating consequences for the children and tribes involved, we convened a listening session on July 29, 2015 to hear tribal concerns about compliance with ICWA and state law. The Task Force was born out of this listening session.

The first actual Task Force meeting was held on September 8, 2015 and focused on initial logistics. In preparation for a more substantive October 27, 2015 meeting of the task force, an invitation to attend was sent to all federally recognized California tribes. The meeting on October 27th solidified the mission of the task force and the process by which the task force will operate.

The mission of the Task Force is to generate recommendations for DOJ's review of systemic failures impacting Indian children and their families in as timely a manner as possible, with a soft deadline of February 1, 2016. The Task Force will accomplish this goal independent of the DOJ. It is an autonomous body that will operate under the direction of tribal leader co-chairs. We very much look forward to receiving the recommendations of the Task Force and thank the Task Force Co-Chairs for their commitment to addressing ICWA enforcement gaps in California.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Olin Jones", is written over a circular stamp.

OLIN JONES
Director
Office of Native American Affairs

For KAMALA D. HARRIS
Attorney General

OJ: