



U.S. Sentencing Commission

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NEWS RELEASE

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UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION ANNOUNCES FORMATION OF TRIBAL ISSUES ADVISORY GROUP

Members to Review Impact of Federal Sentencing Guidelines on Tribal Communities

WASHINGTON, D.C. (February 27, 2015) —The United States Sentencing Commission announced today the formation of a Tribal Issues Advisory Group (TIAG), which will consider methods to improve the operation of the federal sentencing guidelines as they relate to American Indian defendants, victims, and tribal communities.

The TIAG will look at whether there are disparities in how federal sentencing guidelines are applied to defendants from tribal communities or in the sentences received by such defendants as compared to similarly situated state defendants. The group will also examine whether there should be changes to the guidelines to better account for tribal court convictions or tribal court orders of protection and consider how the Commission should engage with tribal communities in an ongoing manner.

“The Commission last conducted a holistic review of the impact of the sentencing guidelines in tribal communities more than ten years ago,” said Chief Judge Patti Saris, Chair of the Commission. “Since then, there have been important changes to federal law and tribal court jurisdiction, so the time is ripe for a reexamination.”

The TIAG is composed of federal appointees and at-large members. The federal judge appointees are Judge Diane Humetewa from Arizona, Judge Brian Morris from Montana, Chief Judge Ralph Erickson from North Dakota, and Chief Judge Jeffrey Viken and Judge Roberto Lange from South Dakota. The ten at-large members were selected from a broad array of applicants from across the country, and they represent a wide spectrum of tribal communities and roles in the criminal justice system. The TIAG at-large members include tribal court judges, social scientists, law enforcement officials, defense attorneys, and victims’ advocates.

“I commend the Commission for creating a mechanism to develop insights and information that have the potential to improve the lives of our citizens in Indian Country,” said Chief Judge

Erickson. “I look forward to working with the distinguished members of this Group and with the Commission to rationally address longstanding sentencing issues in Indian Country.”

The complete list of TIAG members follows. More information on the TIAG can be found online at <http://www.ussc.gov/advisory-groups>.

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The United States Sentencing Commission, an independent agency in the judicial branch of the federal government, was organized in 1985 to develop a national sentencing policy for the federal courts. The resulting sentencing guidelines provide structure for the courts' sentencing discretion to help ensure that similar offenders who commit similar offenses receive similar sentences.

**United States Sentencing Commission
Tribal Issues Advisory Group Members**

Chair of the Tribal Issues Advisory Group

Honorable Ralph Erickson
Chief District Judge, District of North Dakota

Judicial Appointees

Honorable Diane Humetewa (*Hopi*)
District Judge, District of Arizona

Honorable Roberto Lange
District Judge, District of South Dakota

Honorable Brian Morris
District Judge, District of Montana

Honorable Jeffrey Viken
Chief District Judge, District of South Dakota

Department of the Interior Appointees

Mike Berrigan
Associate Solicitor for DOI, Division of Indian Affairs

Honorable Kevin Washburn (*Chickasaw*)
Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs

Department of Justice Appointees

Honorable Amanda Marshall
United States Attorney, District of Oregon

Tracy Toulou (*descendant of the Colville Confederated Tribes*)
Director of the Office of Tribal Justice

Federal and Community Public Defender Appointee

Neil Fulton
Federal Defender for South and North Dakota

At-Large Members

Dave Archambault II (*Standing Rock Sioux*)
Chairman, Standing Rock Sioux

Honorable Robert Blaeser (*White Earth Nation*)
Chief Judge, White Earth Nation

Kathleen Bliss Quasula (*Cherokee Nation*)
Partner, Lewis Brisbois Brisgard & Smith LLP and Commissioner for Nevada Indian
Commission

Honorable William Boyum (*Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians*)
Chief Justice, Cherokee Supreme Court

Wendy Bremner (*Confederated Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska and
descendant of the Blackfeet Nation*)
Bureau of Indian Affairs Victim Specialist

Barbara Creel (*Pueblo Jemez*)
Professor of Law, University of New Mexico School of Law and Director, Southwest
Indian Law Clinic

Troy Eid
Shareholder, Greenburg Traurig LLP

Miriam Jorgenson, Ph.D.
Professor Public Policy, University of Arizona and Research Director, Native Nations Institute

Brent Leonhard
Tribal Attorney, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Edward Reina (*Salt River Pima Indian Community*)
Director, Public Safety Tohono O'odham (retired)

Standing Advisory Group Liaisons (non-voting)

Angela Campbell
Practitioners Advisory Group Liaison

Rick Holloway
Probation Officers Advisory Group Liaison

Ruth Jewell (*Penobscot Nation*)
Victims Advisory Group Liaison