



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE *of* PROGRAMS *and* PLANNING

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES**

November 27, 2018

State Capitol, Governor's Press Room

**Members in Attendance:**

Lindsay Blouin  
Rutha Chatwood  
Tommy Clark, via phone  
Sunny Funk, via proxy  
Ramona Harris  
Jane Herwehe  
Lila Hogan, via phone  
Mary Claire Landry  
Hon. Lala Sylvester, via phone  
Mariah Wineski

**Guests in Attendance:**

Taryn Branson  
Kelly Carpenter  
Leslie Chambers  
LeTasha Davis  
Amy Dupuy  
Lt. Valerie Martinez-Jordan, via phone  
Dr. Bruce Parker  
Francis Robinson  
Taylor Robison

**Staff in Attendance:**

Madeline Robertson, Office on Women's Policy, Executive Assistant

**Call to Order:**

Mariah Wineski, Chair, called the meeting to order.

**Approval of the Minutes:**

Mary Claire Landry moved to approve the minutes from the August meeting and Rutha Chatwood seconded. All approved. The motion carried.

**Subcommittee Reports:**

Lt. Valerie Martinez-Jordan gave an update from the Firearm Transfer Working Group. Fourteen trainings have been held throughout the state, reaching approximately 700 attendees including law enforcement and clerks of court.

There has been low judiciary turnout, but Sunny Funk will reach out to the Judicial College to see if they would be interested in hosting. A training will be held on December 10 at the Jefferson Parish District Attorney's office to reach the Jefferson and Orleans area persons who missed prior trainings. It is very difficult to set a date and have every judge make the training, so the plan is to work with the different areas to see if there can be accommodation for those jurisdictions. The workgroup is also working with Helena Moreno to do outreach in her area. The workgroup is focusing on training for smaller parishes that may have a hard time affording to send their entities out of their parish. Implementation is going well.

Mariah presented the update for the Criminal Justice Data Subcommittee. Tracy Dahmer Farris has collected a tremendous amount of data in her work but has since notified the committee that she will need to begin the process of stepping back from this work. Mariah will be working with Tracy to get the final data for the report and the next steps.

Jane Herwehe presented an initial update for the Victimization Data Subcommittee. The subcommittee began looking at potential data sources for nonfatal injuries that are related to domestic violence. Homicides are already tracked in the state. The subcommittee looked at diagnosis codes for strangulation and were not able to find many strangulation events in hospital data. Mary Claire Landry's data shows that many victims do not go to the hospital. Mary Claire uses a tool that includes a question about strangulation that triggers a secondary assessment. The assessment tools have been submitted to the committee. The 2016 sample comes largely from the greater New Orleans area and Mary Claire would like to expand the population to include smaller, rural areas. Mariah has offered to provide training to the smaller domestic violence programs to help keep this data and identify trends and issues. The decision was made by the subcommittee to consider primary data collection by the Domestic Violence Prevention Commission. The Family Justice Center has been doing strangulation assessments for the last couple of years. Mariah and others have gone to other member programs to see about their interest in tracking data. The CDC does a statewide telephone survey to a random sample of the population regarding health behaviors. The group is interested in adding questions regarding violence from a partner in an effort to get a larger statewide sample of persons over 18. Many states have this survey but not all ask domestic violence questions uniformly. The subcommittee proposed a few questions to the full commission for review. These questions have been submitted to the BRFSS coordinator to decide which questions will be included in the final survey. The CDC will also have a say in the questions being included. Rutha suggested that the instructions about "safe place" be moved to the top of the list of information/questions about domestic violence to better protect individuals who may receive the call in the presence of their abuser. The survey will be conducted in the second half of 2019. The data then goes to CDC, and is later sent back to the state. Data will not be available until the summer of 2020 or later. The National Violent Death Reporting System is receiving greater participation from local coroners. Jane asked Mary Claire to present the 2017 data on strangulation at the next commission meeting.

Lila Hogan presented an update for the Legal Subcommittee. The Law Institute's Marriage-Persons Committee did not meet in October. Their next meeting will be on December 10 at 10 a.m. at LSU. The committee will focus on 2 areas:

- An official comment about the issue of reconciliation was/will be made available for the judges in the context of divorce given passage in the legislature last summer. It was decided not to make an official legal exception for domestic violence, but gave guidance to the judges in an official comment regarding the issue of reconciliation and whether or not it is a true reconciliation given victim/abuser circumstances.
- Drafting a statutory definition of "domestic violence." Currently there are 37 definitions of "domestic violence" on the books in Louisiana. Ideally, there would be 1 or 2 definitions that would apply to criminal and/or civil contexts.

Lila asked for committee input regarding an official definition. She has sent the research on what other states use to define domestic violence as a guide to be sent to the commission. She would like to know if members want a different definition for civil versus criminal contexts and suggestions on what would be the best definition of

"domestic violence" for Louisiana. Mariah has sent these questions to the domestic violence programs in the state for their input as well.

**Annual Report to the Governor:**

The final report is due February 1, 2019. Mariah would like a concise report that is easily digestible and that summarizes the structure of the commission and the work of each subcommittee. Bruce Parker suggested including a recommendations document that is bumped out from the final report to make it more compelling. Mariah asked the subcommittees to draft summaries of their work from this year to go in the final report. Summaries are due by mid-December. The rough draft will be sent by email to commission members for comment and the final report will be subject to commission approval at the January meeting.

**Election of 2019 Officers:**

Mary Claire nominated Mariah to a second term as chair, which was seconded by Rutha. The motion passed unanimously. Mariah will follow up with Kimberly Resetar about her willingness to serve a second term as secretary, and the commission will vote once this is confirmed.

**Adjournment:**

There being no additional business to discuss and no public comments, the meeting was adjourned.

**Next meeting - January 15, 2019 at 1 p.m.- Governor's Press Room**