



JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF PROGRAMS AND PLANNING
CHILDREN'S CABINET

Louisiana Human Trafficking Prevention Commission & Advisory Board

Meeting

March 18, 2021

1-3pm

Zoom

1. Call the Meeting to Order Chief Tommy Clark
HTPC Chair
 - a. Chief Tommy Clark called the meeting to order.

2. Roll Call Michele Rabalais
 - a. Michele M. Rabalais called the roll for the Commission and Advisory Board.
 - b. The following members of the Commission were present:
 - i. Chief Tommy Clark, Jr. – LA Association of Chiefs of Police; chair
 - ii. DA Kristine Russell – Lafourche Parish (17th JDC); co-chair
 - iii. Casey Morace – Chair, Advisory Board
 - iv. Sec. Marketa Walters – Dept. of Children and Family Services
 - v. Ashley Burgess—proxy, LA Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections
 - vi. Gerald Millet— LA Dept. of Education
 - vii. Richard Pittman— LA Public Defender's Board
 - viii. Bill Sommers— Deputy Secretary, Office of Juvenile Justice
 - ix. Monica Taylor – LA Attorney General's Office
 - x. Lt. Colonel Kenny VanBuren— State Police
 - xi. Bob Wertz—LCLE and Administration of Criminal Justice
 - c. The following members of the Advisory Board were present:
 - i. Casey Morace— Methodist Children's Home; chair
 - ii. Michelle Johnson— Empower 225; co-chair
 - iii. Alliece Cole – Empower 225
 - iv. Laurie McGehee— Caddo Parish Juvenile Justice
 - v. Cassie Hammet— Purchased: Not for Sale
 - vi. L. Clayton Kleinpeter-- Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
 - vii. Reshelle Marino – Louisiana School Counselors' Association
 - viii. Kathryn "Kate" Shipley – Louisiana Alliance of Children's Advocacy Centers and CAC Liaison to Louisiana Children's Anti-Trafficking Initiative
 - ix. Richard Pittman— LA Public Defender's Board
 - x. Maxine Kimbrell—proxy, Eden House



JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF PROGRAMS AND PLANNING
CHILDREN'S CABINET

3. Opening Remarks

a. Office of the Governor

Dr. Dana Hunter

- i. Dr. Hunter notes that she will make comments on behalf of Delery Rice and the Office of the First Lady, as Delery Rice was unable to be present today.
- ii. Dr. Hunter proceeded with her remarks.
- iii. Hunter thanked everyone for the work they've been doing, pressing forward in this hard work to serve victims of human trafficking and vulnerable youth in communities across the state. She shared that the Governor's Office, the Children's Cabinet and the First Lady's office have joined together to partner on a few key initiatives. The first is an initiative with Louisiana State Police to train across the state. State police already have a special investigative unit in place as well as a good training in place, and the Children's Cabinet has developed a training that utilized survivor input and survivor voice. They reached out to them to see how we could marry these two trainings. Dr. Hunter recognized that, on their end, they need law enforcement buy-in and input, and that law enforcement may need, on the other hand, expert advice and survivor input. They committed to each other that as they continue to go about this work, they will be more inclusive, engaging each other, and inviting each other to trainings. Since doing so, they have already agreed to partner to train physicians across Louisiana through a group, Physicians Against the Trafficking of Humans. They have agreed to come to Louisiana to train physicians across the state at no cost. Dr. Hunter notes how thankful the Governor's Office is to state police and is looking forward to this training partnership. The trainings will likely take place beginning in May and April and she will be sure to keep everyone updated.
- iv. First Lady Donna Edwards is continuing her push to train First Spouses across the country and other national leaders. She will be hosting her 3rd Global Summit on April 29 joining with the state of Maryland. They had a call with them yesterday and they have a great lineup of presenters. The Commission and Advisory Board will be invited to attend. It has been a great opportunity to learn what other states are doing.
 1. The last summit partnered with Texas. Texas is a leader in the field of human trafficking, and our state has benefitted from and borrowed a lot of their efforts. We look to them often for expertise, consultation, and guidance on the work that is happening here in Louisiana.
 2. This partnership with Texas will be a year-long partnership, and Louisiana and Texas have joined together to host the summits across the country and are bringing in Maryland to host this next Summit. Mark your calendars for April 29 at 9:30am.
- v. Dr. Hunter noted that, in addition to partnering with Louisiana State Police for training physicians, they are interested in training local police departments across the state in collaboration with State Police. They are looking to partner with Louisiana Chief of Police Association to start an initiative and efforts to make sure our local law enforcement officers are training to recognize human trafficking, how to identify victims, and how to make appropriate referrals to services. Those trainings will likely commence in early summer of 2021.



JOHN BEL EDWARDS

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF PROGRAMS AND PLANNING CHILDREN'S CABINET

- vi. The Louisiana Child and Youth Trafficking Collaborative (LCYTC) is continuing to make headway with the initiative. They have 8 regional specialists across the state. They are working closely with DCFS to establish human trafficking multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) in each region of the state. Dr. Hunter and the LCYTC team are thankful for their partnership with DCFS. They are close to rolling out the MDTs. Confirmed and at-risk youth will be referred to these trafficking-specific MDTs across the regions. Several agencies have worked together to see this happen—OJJ, FINS, the Governor's Office. All the right players are at the table, and they are moving forward together to make sure victims and even individuals who are high risk are not falling through the cracks and that there are thorough assessments of these cases.
- vii. The LCYTC has also completed trainings for EMS providers. They held two pilot trainings for EMS providers, and they are hoping to roll out more trainings across the region.
- viii. Lastly, the Governor's Office and LCYTC initiative have been working closely with partners to identify areas that may need legislative action. We have had conversations with several members of this body to identify areas that we might want to move forward with legislation. They are continuing to look for those opportunities. A member of the Governor's policy team is here at the meeting today to give more information.
- ix. Dr. Hunter thanked everyone for always being present when they call. The Governor's Office has not slowed down. As they continue to find new opportunities, she will include this body. Dr. Hunter says that if there is ever a time that anyone would like more information or would like to be involved in an initiative to please feel free to reach out to her office. Any opportunities will always be brought to this group for their involvement and input.
 1. Taylor asked to share that the Attorney General's Office has been training law enforcement, including Chief of Police Association, on sexual assault, domestic violence, and human trafficking for quite some time. They would be happy to work with Dr. Hunter. They do a lot of regional trainings. They have also done trainings with Truckers Against Trafficking and bus drivers.
 2. Dr Hunter said thank you and she'll be reaching out to her office to include them as a partner.
- x. Chief Clark updated members that he travelled to Alexandria yesterday. Chief Clark will be the next president of the Chief of Police Associate, and their next conference is in July. They have left the training schedule open. He will get with everyone for these trainings. He believes that if we get human trafficking training to the Chiefs it will pave the way to reach local officers.

b. Lafourche Parish District Attorney's Office

D.A. Kristine Russel
HTPC Co-Chair



JOHN BEL EDWARDS

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF PROGRAMS AND PLANNING

CHILDREN'S CABINET

- ii. Taylor added that the subcommittee is focused on attainable goals to make sure we are still moving the ball down the field every legislative session.
- c. Sex trafficking of minors
 - i. Morace introduced the co-chairs and secretary of the subcommittee. Given the large size of the subcommittee, they have decided to appoint three chairs over it: Casey Morace, Christy Tate, and Kate Shipley. They voted on Maria Isabella Pontoriero as secretary. They are taking time to look at the work that was done last year and how they can build upon it.
 - ii. Tate spoke on the work that has been done in past reports to identify gaps in the state, including the Act 409 report. The subcommittee will take those findings and look at what initiatives it will push over the next year to implement. She says the work of finding what needs to be done is finished, and we do not want to reinvent the wheel with regard to juvenile sex trafficking. They will take those recommendations and push forward in the subcommittee what they feel like they can address in the next year.
 - iii. Shipley added that, as others have said, she hopes the subcommittee will prioritize several goals and push them forward, instead of starting from scratch because there has been so much great work done.

7. 2021 Governor's Package and Legislative Priorities

Leslie Chambers

Criminal Justice Policy Advisor

- a. Chief Clark introduced Leslie Chambers who is presenting the Governor's package and legislative priorities. Chambers thanked the Commission for having her present today. The highlight for the human trafficking legislation is the creation of the Office of Human Trafficking Prevention within Governor's Office and places this commission and advisory board within the office. The office will focus on both children and adult human trafficking.
- b. Last year the Governor's package included legislation to expunge criminal records for survivors of human trafficking; this year they have decided to focus solely on the creation of the Office of Human Trafficking Prevention. She understands that Empower 225 is pursuing legislation to expand the current human trafficking criminal code to include trafficking of persons with intellectual disabilities. She was not sure if they are speaking on it today. She will be available to answer any questions about that legislation as well.
- c. Chief noted that Dr. Hunter is working closely to follow the legislation and asked if she had anything to add. Dr. Hunter does not.
- d. Morace asked to speak more on the trafficking of persons with disability proposal. As the law is written, you have to prove force, fraud or coercion. She notes that in Ruston there was recently a case with a woman who has some significant disabilities and that it would be a challenge to prove force, fraud, or coercion. They noticed that the law did not specify any specific standard or penalty for trafficking of persons with a disability.
 - i. Chambers added that the proposed penalty would be a range of 15-50 years. She says that she would be more than happy to follow up with her to tighten the language to ensure that the onus isn't on the survivor with a disability.
 - ii. Taylor said that Heidi Martin is on call and she is a SANE at UNC in New Orleans, and Martin has worked on several cases of women who have



JOHN BEL EDWARDS

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF PROGRAMS AND PLANNING

CHILDREN'S CABINET

- iii. intellectual disabilities. She has a lot of good input that could be helpful. She could speak from a medical professional.
- iv. Chambers said she would love to follow up with them after the call, and that if it looks like it is not something we can pursue for this year, she wants to make sure we can tie up all the loose ends to pursue the legislation next year.
- e. Taylor notes that she wants to put on everyone's radar a bill that has been pre-filed that seeks to legalize prostitution.
 - i. Chambers added that she has read the legislation, and her question to the organization that supports it is whether this bill proposes the decriminalization of prostitution or legalization of prostitution. She will be having follow up conversations with the organization to get clarity on their perspective and what the law proposes. She believes the legislation is asking for the Law Institute to study all of the other related crimes associated with prostitution and the consequences for individuals who have been convicted of those crimes.
 - ii. Laurie McGehee asks if they are speaking on House Bill 67.
 - 1. Chambers confirms.
 - 2. McGehee says she understands House Bill 67 to be a full decriminalization bill that will decriminalize buyers, traffickers, exploiters, brothels, and she does not believe anyone on the call would be for that. She says she wanted to clarify that they are speaking about House Bill 67 that Mandy Landry is bringing.
 - 3. Chambers confirmed Representative Mandy Landry is bringing it.
 - iii. Morace noted that she has the same position as McGehee.
- f. Chief thanked everyone for the discussion, and said that from the Commission standpoint, they may need a subcommittee to follow this legislation with Chambers, that any support she needs for the Governor's Office that we can help. He adds that we do not want to shoot down any legislation or get behind anything that is inaccurate but want to make sure we have an intelligent answer on all corners and that it is in line with what we represent before we push it.
- g. Secretary Walters wanted to take a moment to thank everyone for all the work they have been doing, before we move forward in the agenda. She says that it sounds like Dr. Hunter, the Governor's Office, and the First Lady's Office have been really busy and getting a lot done. She wanted to express her gratitude for all the hard work to the subcommittees, the Attorney General's Office, and everyone who is doing work behind the scenes.
- h. Bob Wertz said that he looked up House Bill 67 and that it looks like it is putting the cart before the horse. He suggests everyone take a look at it. He quoted Section 3 of the legislation that directs the Louisiana Law Institute to study and make recommendations regarding the proposal to repeal prostitution-related offenses. He says it might be that the Law Institute should study the implications first, changing HB 67 into a study resolution but tighten up section 3 that looks at consequences. He suggests that we might consider recommending turning the bill into a study resolution, and based on that report, take another look at this proposal after a year or so.
 - i. Chief says that is exactly why he does not think we should rush into it, especially if the Law Institute can look into it. He notes that no one on this Commission is from the Law Institute but he may reach out to someone at the



JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF PROGRAMS AND PLANNING
CHILDREN'S CABINET

- Law Institute that sits on the DV commission with him.
- ii. Secretary Walters says a lawyer from her department has a seat on the Law Institute so we have indirect representation through her.
 - i. Morace recommends the Commission go forward with a resolution of support for the creation of the Office of Human Trafficking Prevention that Chambers presented.
8. Commission Show of Support Chief Tommy Clark
- a. Sec. Walters makes motion to support the Governor's Package creating Office of Human Trafficking Prevention in the Governor's Office. Wertz seconded the motion.
 - i. Morace asks that everyone on the Commission in favor raise their hand through the reaction tab on Zoom.
 - ii. Shipley asks if the vote is just for Commission members or the Advisory Board too. Morace clarifies that it is just for Commission members.
 - iii. Gerald Millet abstains from vote.
 - iv. 10 in favor. 13 are present, creating a majority of commission. Motion carried.
9. Topics for Next HTPCAB Meeting Chief Tommy Clark
- a. Chief Clark adds that himself, Dr. Hunter, and Taylor will get together to go over the training agenda for the Chief of Police Association.
 - b. Morace adds that next meeting since Congress is in session, we will try to keep it to subcommittee and legislative updates along with an update for statewide training initiative.
10. Public Comment Chief Tommy Clark
- a. Chief Clark open floor for public comments
 - b. Lt. Colonel Kenny VanBuren wanted to thank Chief Clark and Dr Hunter for the opportunity to speak with them over the last couple of weeks and to be on this call. He looks forward to working with Commission to address human trafficking in all its forms. He is encouraged by what he's hearing and that with these collective efforts, sharing of resources and collaboration, we will be able to minimize human trafficking substantially not only in Louisiana but throughout the nation and even abroad. He wants to thank everyone again for allowing him to be a part of this conversation. He is inspired by what he hears. He looks forward to this collaboration and meeting everyone in the future.
 - i. Morace thanked Colonel VanBuren for joining.
 - ii. Chief Clark thanked him as well.
 - c. Chief Clark also thanked everyone for their work, all members of the Commission and Advisory Board, as well as members of the public and support advocates who joined the call. He is hoping the pandemic will end soon so we can keep the ball rolling. He thanked all for their committed effort and support across the state.
11. Other Business Chief Tommy Clark
- a. William Sommers announced that Laurie McGehee, who is on the advisory board and is the Chief Probation Officer at Caddo Parish, will soon be at OJJ heading up their trafficking work. He welcomed McGehee.



JOHN BEL EDWARDS

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF PROGRAMS AND PLANNING

CHILDREN'S CABINET

- i. McGehee wants to thank Sommers for the announcement. She is excited about this new opportunity and to take everything she learned in Caddo Parish to the state.
- b. Chief Clark congratulated McGehee.
- c. Dr Hunter added that she forgot to mention that they had a site visit from their US DOJ federal partners, and they were extremely pleased by the work that is happening in Louisiana. We are getting recognized nation-wide for the work we are doing, and it is a result of the teamwork and collaboration from many on this call. She thanked everyone again.

12. Adjournment

Chief Tommy Clark

- a. Motion to adjourn by Monica Taylor. Bob Wertz seconded.