

March 11, 2014

Linda Benally, President-Elect
National Native American Bar Association
P.O. Box 11145
Tempe, AZ 85284

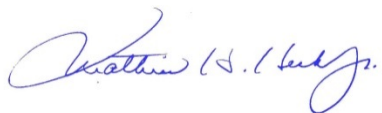
Dear Ms. Benally:

The ABA Criminal Justice Section leadership recognizes that people living on Tribal Lands confront challenges relevant to criminal justice surpassing those of other communities within the United States, and that those challenges jeopardize the rights of Native Americans and the rights of future generations as citizens of their sovereign tribes, as citizens of the United States, and as parties to treaties with the United States. CJS leaders further recognize that federal and state legislatures have resisted recognition of these rights and have been slow to incorporate distinct tribal values and social identities into federal, state and local criminal justice systems.

In recognition of these conditions and in response to these challenges, I am pleased to announce that the Section has established a new standing committee, the Committee on Tribal Lands. This committee shall be charged with the task of developing policy initiatives and resolutions which seek to: recognize and protect the rights of Native Americans by promoting the rule of law; effectively intervene with and restore those victimized by child abuse on Tribal Lands and ensure that those child victims of criminal conduct have prompt access to legal advice and counsel and to specialized services and protections such as those provided by Child Advocacy Centers approved and accredited by the National Children's Alliance; effectively intervene and restore all victims on Tribal Lands of sexual assault, domestic and all other forms of criminal violence, human trafficking and exploitation, the trafficking in controlled substances and individuals facing the challenges of chemical dependency; intervene with, rehabilitate and restore to their communities those who have committed such acts on Tribal Lands; promote the right to counsel on Tribal Lands; and build and support within Tribal Lands and Native American communities the capacities necessary to accomplish these aims.

We look forward to announcing the co-chairs of this new group in the coming weeks, and will begin outreach this Spring to build its ranks and to develop a work plan and policy goals. We anticipate a great deal of interest in this committee and its important work, and we would be honored to collaborate with the National Native American Bar Association in some way. Just let us know how we can work with you, your fellow leaders, and membership. Finally, please contact Section Director Jane Messmer at Jane.Messmer@Americanbar.org, if you or any of your colleagues and members would like to join the Criminal Justice Section and the Tribal Lands Committee or any of the forty-plus substantive committees of the CJS.

Very truly yours,



Mathias H. Heck, Jr., Chair
ABA Criminal Justice Section