



**HELPING EVERY LIFE AND PARENT TASK FORCE  
MEETING MINUTES  
SEPT. 13, 2022, 10 A.M.  
OKLAHOMA STATE CAPITOL BUILDING  
SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 4S.9  
2300 N. LINCOLN BLVD., OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73105**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Juli Merciez, BSN, RN MPC, Co-Founder and President of The Cottage is a pregnancy center and residential maternity home. Chair; *Governor J. Kevin Stitt appointment*  
Dr. Michelle Brunnabend, D.O., licensed OBGYN, owner, and physician at Aspen Women’s Center. *Governor J. Kevin Stitt appointment*  
Lori Carter, First Assistant Attorney General, *designee for Attorney General John O’Connor*  
Crystal Coon, *designee for Senate Pro Tempore Greg Treat*  
Samantha Galloway, interim Director. *Secretary of Human Services Justin Brown designee*  
David Lewis, CEO of Go Life Mobile Medical Inc. *Governor J. Kevin Stitt appointment*  
Dierdre McCool, Executive Vice-President at Butterfield Memorial Foundation. *Governor J. Kevin Stitt appointment*  
Sandra Puebla, Deputy State Medicaid Director. *Secretary of Health and Mental Health Kevin Corbett designee [Appeared Remotely]*  
Jackie Shawnee, Chief of Staff. *Commissioner of Health Keith Reed designee*  
Gayla White, Director of Hope Pregnancy Ministries. *Governor J. Kevin Stitt appointment*  
Danny Williams, *designee of House Speaker Charles McCall [Appeared Remotely]*

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

**GUESTS:** Ellen Buettner, OHCA  
Cody Smith, LegisOK  
Barbara Hoberock, Tulsa World  
Tim Tuck, OMES Legal  
David Crall, Senate  
Whitney Blyen, Press OK Watch  
Emma Morris, OK Policy Institute  
Beverly Hicks, OMES Clerk

**1. Determination of quorum and call to order:**

Chairwoman Juli Merciez called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. A roll call was taken, and a quorum was established.

## 2. **Welcome/Introductions:**

Chairwoman Merciez welcomed members and guests to the meeting. The members introduced themselves and shared their fields of expertise, their thoughts on an essential plan for the State, and what they plan to accomplish while serving as a member of the Task Force.

## 3. **Review of Task Force Responsibilities:**

Chairwoman Merciez went over the six responsibilities of the Task Force as outlined in Executive Order 2022-14 that Governor J. Kevin Stitt signed on July 8, 2022, and filed with the Secretary of State on July 11, 2022. The Task Force is requested to submit a report to Governor Stitt, House Speaker McCall, and Senate Pro Tempore Treat by October 28, 2022.

Governor Stitt promised to sign every pro-life piece of legislation that has come across his desk. He delivered on his commitment and created the Helping Every Life and Parent Task Force represented today to carry out his pr.

*Rep. Williams entered the meeting at 10:10 a.m.*

## 4. **Group Discussion of Opportunities:**

Chairwoman Merciez stated that Oklahoma has always been a state of opportunity and feels it is vital to meet for this first time to value our culture and history and to do the same with this Task Force.

The members shared and discussed ideas, individual experiences, successes, barriers encountered, and goals they want to see accomplished through this Task Force.

The Task Force looks forward to embracing the opportunities charged before them to help in changing the lives of others for the betterment of the State and all citizens of Oklahoma.

Samantha Galloway moved that the Task Force make a recommendation in the final report to the Governor, the Pro Tempore, and the Speaker that they increase the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) related to income for pregnant mothers from 138% to 205% and extend postpartum benefits from 60 days to 12 months. Dr. Michelle Brunnabend seconded the motion. The motion passed, and the following votes were recorded:

Ms. Merciez, aye; Dr. Brunnabend, aye; Ms. Carter, aye; Ms. Coon, aye; Ms. Galloway, aye; Mr. Lewis, aye, Ms. McCool, aye; Ms. Puebla, aye; Ms. Shawnee, aye; Ms. White, aye; Rep. Williams, aye.

## 5. **New Business:**

Chairwoman Merciez asked that Task Force members reach out and connect on a more personal basis to learn more about what each organization is doing, providing opportunities to collaborate and understand programs and the many resources provided.

## 6. **Task Assignments:**

Chairwoman Merciez asked the following members to take the lead on the assignments listed below.

**State Programs:** Representative Danny Williams.

**Adoption and Birthmoms:** First Assistant Lori Carter.

**Men and Fathers:** David Lewis and Gayla White.

**Abortion Recovery Program:** Gayla White and Sister Brigid Mary Meeks.

7. **Discussion and possible action on approving meeting dates for 2022, all Tue. at 10 a.m.:**

**Sept. ~~27~~ 26**

**Oct. 11**

**Oct. 25**

Lori Carter moved to adopt the meeting dates with the amendment of the September date changed to the 26th. Crystal Coon seconded the motion. The motion passed, and the following votes were recorded:

Ms. Merciez, aye; Dr. Brunnabend, aye; Ms. Carter, aye; Ms. Coon, aye; Ms. Galloway, aye; Mr. Lewis, aye, Ms. McCool, aye; Ms. Puebla, aye; Ms. Shawnee, aye; Ms. White, aye; Rep. Williams, aye.

6. **Adjournment:**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.