

LAW PROJECT
LAKOTA PEOPLE'S

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Resolution Calling for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to Investigate the Impacts and Ongoing Effects of the United States' Indian Boarding School Policy

WHEREAS, the United States' Indian Boarding School Policy caused physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harm to members of American Indian and Alaskan Native communities, and continues to cause inter-generational trauma;

WHEREAS, the 1869 "Peace Policy," or Indian Boarding School Policy, provided funding for boarding schools focused on assimilating and "civilizing" Native American children, resulting in the systemic destruction of their respective cultures and communities;

WHEREAS, United States policy led to the forced separation of Native American children from their families during the Boarding School Era, thereby committing genocide under the United Nation's definition of the term defined in Article Two of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, by "forcibly transferring children of the group to another group";

WHEREAS, in 1893, Congress allowed the Bureau of Indian Affairs to withhold food rations and supplies from Native American parents or guardians who refused to enroll and keep their children in the boarding schools;

WHEREAS, by 1960 there were 460 federally funded boarding schools nationwide, with enrollment totaling more than 100,000 children;

WHEREAS, Native American children in boarding schools were punished for speaking their Native language and banned from representing traditional or cultural practices, and were brutalized emotionally, psychologically, spiritually and physically while in the boarding schools, in some cases to the point of death;

WHEREAS, boarding schools practiced oppressive discipline and corporal punishment on Native American children, beating and isolating them while restrained in inhospitable surroundings, such as unlighted and unventilated cellars and outbuildings;

WHEREAS, the assimilation of Native American children persists today in a more subtle form, as they are being removed from their families at an alarming rate, and are dramatically overrepresented in state foster care and adoption systems, where the percent of Native American children in foster care is double that of the percentage of total Native American children in the United States;

WHEREAS, the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission found that its Indian Boarding School policy, which was directly modeled after the U.S.' policy, was a form of cultural genocide;

WHEREAS, the trauma suffered by the children in the boarding schools has gone unrecognized and unresolved, and has been passed down onto subsequent generations resulting in the undermining and devastation of Native American individuals, families and communities;

WHEREAS, a Congressional Commission is needed to begin an official healing process to address the harms suffered and enduring as a result of the Boarding School Policy;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we hereby support the enactment by the United States Congress of a bill to create a Truth and Reconciliation Commission on American Indian Boarding School Policy; to take testimony from boarding school survivors, identifying how it impacted their lives so that their stories will not be lost in U.S. history; to release a comprehensive national study focused on the impacts and ongoing effects of the boarding school policy; to provide recommendations to Congress on how to begin an official process of healing, which includes specific ways to address the effects of the boarding school policy; and to provide recommendations to Congress on how to move toward having Child and Family Service Programs be run by Tribal Nations for Tribal Nations.

The foregoing resolution was adopted on August 18, 2016 DATE

by Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odjawa Indians TRIBE / ORGANIZATION

Signed  Tribal Secretary
daron otto