Resolution #: AK-21-004
Title: Call for the National Congress of American Indians to support the “Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act”

Comments:
This resolution requests that NCAI support the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act, which would, among other things, establish the first formal commission in United States history to investigate, document, and acknowledge past injustices of the federal government's cultural genocide and assimilation practices through its Indian Boarding School Policy.

Recommendations:

The Resolution Committee suggests tabling this resolution as NCAI has already endorsed and supported this legislation when previously introduced by Congresswoman Haaland and Senator Warren in the 116th Congress. In recognition of the importance of the issue, the Resolutions Committee refers this resolution to the Litigation & Governance Committee, Subcommittee on Human, Religious & Cultural Concerns for consideration of potential action items.

NCAI will continue to support similar legislation under Resolution #PHX-16-063, Call for the United States to Acknowledge its Role in the U.S. Boarding School Policy and to Account for the American Indian and Alaska Native Children Who did not Survive as a Result; and Resolution #REN-13-055, Support to Create a Commission on American Indian Boarding School Policy.

Sponsor a member in good standing (yes/no)?: __Y___
The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #AK-21-004

TITLE: Call for the National Congress of American Indians to support the “Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act”

WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, Indian Boarding School Policy and American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian Assimilative Policies were adopted by the United States Government to strip American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children of their Indigenous identities, beliefs, and languages to assimilate them into White American culture through federally funded, Christian-run schools, which had the effect of cultural genocide; and

WHEREAS, by 1926, nearly 83 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native school-age children were enrolled in Indian boarding schools in the United States, but because nearly 62 percent of the school records have been lost or destroyed, the full extent of the Indian Boarding School Policy has not been identified; and

WHEREAS, the Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 2016 asking how many boarding schools the government funded, how many children attended, and how many went missing or died at the schools and the BIA responded that they could not answer because research would be needed; and

WHEREAS, the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) has found 367 assimilative Indian Boarding Schools in the U.S. through independent research and has only been able to locate 38% of the boarding school records and 62% of the records are being held in private collections that we do not have access to; and
WHEREAS, the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) filed a submission to the United Nations in 2019 about children who went missing at Indian boarding schools in the U.S. whose whereabouts are still unknown and the U.S. has yet to respond to our allegations and answer to where those children are; and

WHEREAS, according to UN 1948 Geneva Convention on the definition of genocide, the U.S. had never acknowledged it genocidal policies; and

WHEREAS, the Policy’s deliberate intention was the separation of Native American children from their families, cultures, and Tribal communities through removal, cutting their hair, taking their clothing and issuing uniforms, forbidding them to speak their language or engage in any cultural practices, and carrying out severe and often brutal punishments constituting, in many cases, physical, emotional and mental torture for non-compliance. To this day, families are still mourning for the loss of their children; and

WHEREAS, in partnership with NCAI and the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) along with other coalition members, organizations, tribal nations, survivors, and descendants, organizations and national leaders including Boarding School survivors, are in support of the “Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policy and other Native American Assimilation Policies Act”.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) requests that the United States Congress to approve the “Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act”; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI supports the efforts by Tribal Nations, Families and organizations seeking this information through a national “Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act”; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NCAI calls upon the US Federal Government to comply with all requests and efforts to obtain this information by families, decedents, Tribal Nations, Alaska Native Villages and Native Hawaiians as well as Indigenous organizations and coalitions working on their behalf to confirm current initiatives through the Federal Freedom of Information Act, the United Nations Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances and other international mechanism; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.
CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2021 Mid Year Conference of the National Congress of American Indians, held June 20, 2021 - June 24, 2021, with a quorum present.

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Fawn Sharp, President

ATTEST:

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Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary