

Midcoast Friends Meeting letter

The Honorable Raul Grijalva

Chairman

Committee on Natural Resources

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman

Ranking Member

Committee on Natural Resources

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: SUPPORT FOR H.R. 5444—TRUTH AND HEALING COMMISSION ON INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL POLICIES ACT

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Westerman,

On behalf of the members of **MIDCOAST FRIENDS MEETING**—a Quaker congregation located in Damariscotta, Maine—we write to **urge passage of H.R. 5444** as noted above.

Quaker concern for Native Americans goes back to the 1600's. We have not always acted wisely but we have a consistent record of seeking to treat Indians with fairness and respect.

A recent study by the Department of the Interior documented 408 Indian Boarding Schools spread across 37 states from 1809 to 1969. Quakers joined with other religious groups to sponsor schools to train young Native Americans. However well intended, these schools sought to separate their students from family, tribal language, and Native culture and to compel assimilation into the dominant white society.

As recommended by Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, the full legacy of all these schools should be researched and made public since the carry-over effects are still with us, especially among affected tribes.

We write to **urge strong support for passage of H.R. 5444 to establish the commission**. We request prompt action on this bill.

Diane Dicranian, Clerk, Midcoast Friends Meeting

James Matlack, Clerk, Ministry and Counsel Committee