

## Minute Supporting the Establishment of a Federal Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding Schools

*"The Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the U.S. Act would provide an important avenue for an investigation about the losses that occurred through the Indian Boarding School Policies and the lasting consequences of the violence of this attempted genocide. Only through a formal investigation which includes meaningful consultation with Tribal Nations and significant input from survivors and their descendants, can the US begin to reconcile with the past and can tribal communities begin to move toward healing from the egregious abuses which occurred."*

**- Juana Majel Dixon, National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Board Secretary and Traditional Councilwoman of the Pauma Band of Mission Indians**

Hartford (CT) Monthly Meeting of Friends supports the creation of a bipartisan Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding Schools as called for in federal bills H.R. 5444 and S. 2907.

From 1819 to 1969, the federal government and religious institutions partnered in running over 400 Indian boarding schools across 37 states or then territories. Well over 100,000 children were taken or coerced away from their families and forced to attend these government-sanctioned and funded institutions. These schools focused on cultural assimilation of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children, resulting in the loss of language and culture and the separation of children from their families, identity, and traditions. Many of the children endured physical and psychological abuse. According to the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, "To date, there has never been an accounting of the number of children forced to attend these schools, the number of children who were abused, died, or went missing while at these schools, and the long-term impacts on the children and the families of children forced to attend Indian boarding schools. We have a limited amount of time to hear directly from survivors and record their stories."

Now is the time for a federal Truth and Healing Commission to:

- (1) Formally investigate and document the assimilation practices and human rights violations that occurred through Indian Boarding School policies, and the impacts and ongoing effects in Native communities
- (2) Hold public hearings for survivors, families, organizations, and Tribal leaders to testify, discuss, and document the impacts of the physical, psychological, and spiritual violence of Indian boarding schools
- (3) Locate and analyze the records from the 400+ Indian boarding schools that operated in our country, and
- (4) Develop recommendations on ways to acknowledge and contribute to the healing of the historical and intergenerational trauma caused by the Indian boarding schools.

Quakers were among those collaborating with the federal government to assimilate Indigenous Peoples into Western civilization by eliminating Tribal cultures. Dozens of these Indian schools were operated by Quakers. We acknowledge our complicity in the historic trauma of the boarding school era. Now is the time to work in solidarity with Tribal nations and Tribal organizations to create a truth, reconciliation, and healing process. We encourage our Connecticut legislators to sign on as co-sponsors of these bills, and to make public statements supporting this legislation.

*Approved at business meeting 1/16/21*