



STATE OF MINNESOTA INDIAN AFFAIRS COUNCIL



website:<http://mn.gov/indianaffairs/>

Resolution 05222014_2

Support for the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition's Request for Congressional Hearing to investigate and report to the United States Congress on the effects of the forcible removal of children and subsequent abuse and neglect resulting from the Boarding School Policy adopted and implemented during the 19th and 20th centuries.

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council Membership consists of representatives of the eleven federally-recognized Indian Tribes located within the State of Minnesota, members of the legislature, commissioners from the state departments, and American Indian community members from Minneapolis/St. Paul, Bemidji, and Duluth; and

Whereas, the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council mission is to protect the sovereignty of the eleven Minnesota tribes and ensure the well being of all American Indian citizens throughout the state of Minnesota; and

Whereas, the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council is aware of the past and ongoing harms suffered in physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health, among members of American Indian/Alaskan Native communities as a direct result of the past federal boarding school policy; and

Whereas, the United States, at the urging of and in support of the Christian churches adopted the Indian Civilization Act Fund of 1819 and the Indian Boarding School Policy (also known as the Peace Policy) in 1869 to provide financial support for church run schools to implement a deliberate policy of the removal and reprogramming of Native American children, the purpose of which was the systemic destruction of indigenous cultures and communities through "civilization" of the children; and

Whereas, between 1869 and the 1960s more than 100,000 Native American children were removed from their homes and families, often involuntarily, and placed in Boarding Schools operated by the federal government and the churches; and

Whereas, Native children that were voluntarily or forcibly removed from their homes, families and communities were taken to schools far away where they were punished for speaking their native language, banned from acting in any way that might be seen to represent traditional or cultural practices, stripped of traditional clothing, hair and all things and behaviors reflective of their Native culture, and many suffered physical, emotional, psychological and sexual abuse, punishment by physical restraints, beatings and isolation in inhospitable surroundings, such as unlighted cellars, and unlighted and unventilated outbuildings designed as “jails”; now

Whereas, the prevailing attitudes of the time allowed neglect and abuse of children who were overseen but not parented, who were bullied and assaulted not only by the adults but also by older children under the modeling and instruction of the caretakers and staff; and

Whereas, these children, their children and now their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, have become the legacy of the boarding schools and the federal policy that established and sustained those schools, where the trauma the children suffered has gone unrecognized and unresolved, and the trauma is passed onto each subsequent generation where this historical and inter-generational trauma continues to work in, undermine and devastate Native American individuals, families and communities; and

Whereas, neither the United States nor any national denomination of the Christian churches in the United States has offered a meaningful apology or offered to provide any redress for the generations of harm caused by the deliberate imposition of the policy of cultural genocide on the Native American children, families, communities, Tribes, Nations, Pueblos or Alaskan Villages; and

Whereas, the facts and history about the pervasive harm caused and continuing to be caused by the trauma and perpetual inter-generational trauma attributable to the Boarding School Policy are poorly understood by the American public, the Congress or the Executive Branch of the federal government; and

Whereas, in order to begin the healing process to address the harms suffered and enduring as a result of the Boarding School Policy, a comprehensive national study is needed of the history of the policy, including complete documentation of the fate of each of the students and the events that took place at each of the schools, gathering of testimony from those that suffered from the abuse, neglect or other trauma, including those who suffer from inter-generational trauma, and recommendations to Congress based on the information gathered from individual victims, communities and experts concerning the nature of the harms and potential paradigms for healing and reconciliation; and

Whereas, similar events in the past have been successfully addressed through Congressional authorization of a commission, studies and reports on other issues;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council does hereby urge the United States government to acknowledge its responsibility for the Boarding School Policy and its continuing inter-generational impacts, and to take meaningful steps to provide redress for these harms; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council does hereby urge the churches involved in the establishment of the Boarding School Policy and its implementation to acknowledge responsibility for their roles, to formally express their regret for those roles, and to provide support, including funding, for the work of the Coalition and for direct healing work carried out in communities; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council does hereby urge the enactment by the United States Congress of a bill to establish a study and report on the American Indian Boarding School Policy; to conduct hearings on boarding school abuses and their continuing impacts; to plan, design and carry out its work in collaboration with impacted Indigenous tribal communities; take testimony from boarding school survivors and others with adequate care available for those who need it when they revisit the trauma they have survived; gather information from experts about inter-generational/historical trauma; take recommendations from affected communities and experts about what is needed to effectuate true community and National healing; raise public awareness and provide public education about the United States Board School Policy and its ongoing effects; and recommend and commit support for culturally-appropriate, community-led remedies with the full and effective participation of survivors, families, communities, Tribes, Nations, Pueblos or Alaskan Villages.

We do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly presented and acted upon by a vote of ___ Yea, ___ Nay, ___ Abstain, at a regular quarterly board meeting of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, a quorum present, held on Thursday May 22nd, 2014 in St. Paul, MN.


Kevin Leecy, Chairman


Curt Kalk, Secretary-Treasurer