



Resolution #2022-01

STATEMENT AND SUPPORT FOR THE TRUTH AND HEALING COMMISSION ON INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL POLICIES ACT AND ASSOCIATED EFFORTS

WHEREAS, the Native Justice Coalition (NJC) is a regional Native American led non-profit based in Michigan, Anishinaabe Nation, Anishinaabe Aki, with a coalition representing 35 community partnerships across the Great Lakes; and,

WHEREAS, our organization serves as a platform for healing, social, and racial justice by and for Native American people; and, our staff, board of directors, and elders council represent Great Lakes Native American and First Nations communities; and,

WHEREAS, our annual conference and programming addresses intergenerational, generational, and historical trauma from boarding schools; and we work directly with boarding school survivors, to provide a safe and supportive space to share their voices, stories, as well as begin their healing process; and,

WHEREAS, the NJC recognizes the need to address genocidal policies directly through community based work, community outreach, coalition building, advocacy, empowerment, healing initiatives for the individual, family, and greater community that we serve; and,

WHEREAS, assimilation processes against Native Americans, such as the Indian Boarding School 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 non-Native culture through federally funded and controlled Christian-run schools, which had the intent and, in many cases, the effect, of termination, with dire and intentional consequences on the cultures and languages of Indigenous peoples; and

WHEREAS, more than 100,000 American Indian and Alaska Native children were forcibly removed from their family homes and placed in any of 460 Bureau of Indian Affairs-operated schools, including at least 367 known Indian boarding schools, often church-run, at which assimilation and “civilization” practices were inflicted on those children as part of the assimilation efforts of the Federal Government, advancing eradication of Indigenous peoples in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the United States Indian Boarding School policy’s deliberate intention was the separation of Native American children from their families, cultures, and Tribal communities through removal; and

WHEREAS, many tribal children were sent to boarding schools, that served as a place to experiment on and abuse our children medically, physically, psychologically, and sexually; and

WHEREAS, the 2018 Broken Promises Report published by the United States Commission on Civil Rights reported that American Indian and Alaska Native communities continue to experience intergenerational trauma resulting from experiences in Indian boarding schools, which divided cultural family structures, damaged Indigenous identities, and inflicted chronic psychological ramifications on American Indian and Alaska Native children and families; and

WHEREAS, Congress introduced legislation titled: To establish the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the United States, and for other purposes, the Act may be cited as the “Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act” on September 30, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the purposes of this Act are to establish a Truth and Healing Commission (Commission) on Indian Boarding School Policies in the United States to formally investigate and document, for the first time in history, the attempted termination of cultures and languages of Indigenous peoples, assimilation practices, and human rights violations that occurred against American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians through Indian Boarding School Policies in furtherance of the motto to “kill the Indian in him and save the man”; and to formally investigate and document the impacts and ongoing effects of historical and intergenerational trauma in Native communities, including the effects of the attempted cultural and linguistic termination of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, resulting from Indian Boarding School Policies, among other things; and

WHEREAS, the Commission’s main role is to develop recommendations on actions the Federal Government can take to adequately hold itself accountable for, and redress and heal, the historical and intergenerational trauma inflicted by the Indian Boarding School Policies.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors that the Native Justice Coalition hereby supports all congressional efforts to pass legislation approving, and appropriating funding for the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act and similar initiatives, and subsequent recommendations, to hold the federal government accountable for, and redress and heal, the historical and intergenerational trauma inflicted by the Indian Boarding School Policies.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the Board of Directors meeting, at which a quorum was present, on January 31, 2022.

Leora Tadgerson

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Board President

Philomena Kebec

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Board Secretary