

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 19, 2022

Honorable Brian Schatz
Chairman
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
838 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
838 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Schatz and Vice Chairman Murkowski:

We respectfully request that the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs hold a hearing on S. 2907, the *Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the United States Act*. This bill would establish a formal commission to investigate, document, and acknowledge past injustices of the federal government's Indian Boarding School Policies, including attempts to terminate Native cultures, religions, and languages; assimilation practices; and human rights violations. The commission would also develop recommendations for Congress to aid in healing of the historical and intergenerational trauma passed down in Native families and communities and provide a forum for victims to speak about personal experiences tied to these human rights violations.

We are grateful that you are both cosponsors of this bill, which was last introduced on September 30, 2021—the National Day of Remembrance for U.S. Indian Boarding Schools, as expressed by Vice Chairman Murkowski's related concurrent resolution that was agreed to in the Senate by unanimous consent.¹

This bill is supported by a broad coalition of tribal nations, tribal organizations, educators, and human rights groups. In February, the National Indian Health Board passed a resolution in support of the bill.² The National Congress of American Indians and the American Bar Association also previously passed resolutions in support of this legislation.³ Among the bill's supporters are Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN); American Academy of Pediatrics; American Friends Service Committee; American Indian Alaska Native Lutheran Association Inc of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; American Indian Catholic Schools Network (AICSN); American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC); Americans for Indian Opportunity; Association on American Indian Affairs; Bobbi Rahder, Museum Director of the Stewart Indian School Cultural Center & Museum; Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women (CSVANW); Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of MT; Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces; Dr. Alan Ray, citizen of Cherokee Nation (endorsing only for himself); Faith Action Network; First Alaskans Institute; Fort Belknap Indian Community; Franciscan Action Network; Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual

¹ S.Con.Res. 28.

² National Indian Health Board, Resolution 22-01, February 24, 2022, <https://www.nihb.org/docs/02252022/22-01%20NIHB%20Resolution%20on%20Boarding%20School%20Healing.pdf>.

³ National Congress of American Indians, AK-21-004, June 2021, <https://www.ncai.org/AK-21-004.pdf>; American Bar Association, Resolution 801, August 2021, https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/house_of_delegates/2021-annual-supplementals/801-annual-2021.pdf.

Adoration; Friends Committee on National Legislation; Inter Tribal Association of Arizona (ITAA); Interfaith Network for Indigenous Communities (INIC); Jennifer De Leon, Director of Racial Justice, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology; Margo Gray, Chairwoman, United Indian Nations of Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas; MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger; Montana Women Vote; National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd; National Coalition of Native Language Schools and Programs; National Congress of American Indians (NCAI); National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA); National Indian Education Association (NIEA); National Indian Health Board; National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center (NIWRC); National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS); National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH); NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice; Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA); Red Cloud Indian School; Rev. Dr. R. Guy Erwin, President, United Lutheran Seminary; Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council; Saokio Heritage; Seattle Indian Health Board (SIHB); Seven Religious Congregations and Denominations (the Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology, the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Franciscan Action Network, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, the Office of Race Relations of the Christian Reformed Church of North America, and the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church); St. Joseph Mission School; The Alaska Friends Conference, and the Boulder, Intermountain, New York, Southeastern, Fort Collins, and Port Townsend Meetings of the Religious Society of Friends; The Episcopal Church; The Leadership Conference of Women Religious; The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society; Transvisible Montana; Tulalip Tribes; United American Indian Involvement, Inc.; United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF); Upstander Project; and the Shawnee Tribe.

We respectfully ask that the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs schedule a hearing to consider this legislation at its earliest convenience.

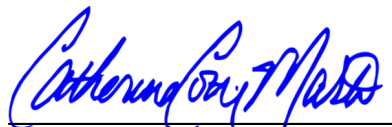
Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



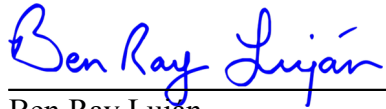
Jon Tester
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



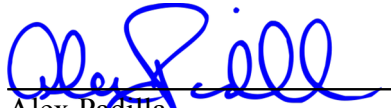
Tina Smith
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



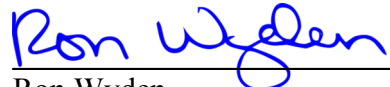
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



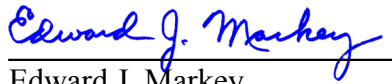
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



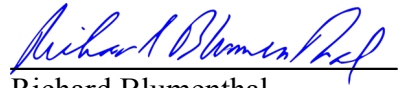
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



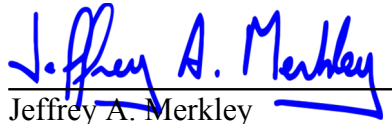
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator