



Friends Committee on
National Legislation

A Quaker Lobby in the Public Interest

November 21, 2019

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Merkley and Warren,

The Friends Committee on National Legislation is pleased to offer our support for the Remove the Stain Act.

The Wounded Knee Massacre is a horrible stain on U.S. history, and Congress has the ability today to take a small step to address this wrong.

The Friends Committee on National Legislation is a Quaker lobby in the public interest and has lobbied on Native American concerns since the 1950s. We lead an interfaith coalition that examines and improves the historic relationship between tribes and faith groups and speaks out on current concerns for tribes.

On December 29, 1890, the United States' 7th Cavalry massacred an estimated 350-375 Lakota people, many of which were reported to be women and children, to suppress religious and cultural expression, and to send a clear message to Native people across the settler-colonial nation: conform to our social norms or face the consequences. Twenty Medals of Honor were awarded in the aftermath of this massacre to commemorate the heroism of those soldiers in the 7th Cavalry. They must be withdrawn.

Native Americans serve in the United States armed forces at a higher rate per capita than any ethnic group in the country. To award the soldiers who committed these atrocities at Wounded Knee the highest possible award in the United States military is wrong, and an insult to our Native veterans. It is imperative that Congress vote to revoke these medals.

We at FCNL support the Remove the Stain Act and the removal of those Medals of Honor. As Quakers, we must examine our own history of contributing to the oppression and genocide of this country's Indigenous population. As we seek to improve our relations with Native communities, we are compelled to support legislation that corrects history and attempts to address this nation's brutality against Native Americans. Thank you for introducing this bill that complements the work Representative Heck is doing in the House. We are pleased to endorse this legislation and offer public recognition for this effort.

Sincerely,

Kerri Colfer
Congressional Advocate on Native American Policy