



Oneida Nation
Oneida Business Committee
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July 22, 2022

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

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Vice Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Submitted electronically to: testimony@indian.senate.gov

Re: Support of S.2907 - Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act

Dear Chairman Schatz and Vice Chairman Murkowski:

I am writing on behalf of the Oneida Nation to urge the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to support and pass S. 2907 - Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act out of Committee. This legislation will create a Congressional Commission to locate and analyze the records from the over four hundred known Indian boarding schools that operated across the country. This Congressional Commission will bring together boarding school survivors, tribal representatives, along with experts in education, health, and children and families to account for the long-lasting impacts of the federal Indian boarding school policy. S. 2907 will also be an important additional measure to support the U.S. Department of the Interior's Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative.

For well over 150 years, hundreds of thousands of American Indian and Alaska Native children were taken, forced, or coerced to attend federal government supported Indian boarding schools far away from their families, communities, and Tribal Nations. These schools were part of a policy of cultural assimilation and genocide, the disposition of tribal lands, and produced long-lasting impacts including the loss of Native languages and cultures. Many children that were taken from their families and tribal communities died at the boarding schools. These children were never returned home to their loved ones and often their families were never notified of their deaths. The very first Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report, conducted by U.S. Department of the Interior, has helped shed light on the schools.

Over the past three years, the Oneida Nation has returned home the remains of our precious children that attended the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. The historical intergenerational

trauma was re-lived by the families and our community, as we mourned for our children. We know that we have more of our children to bring home and with the creation of the Congressional Commission in S.2907, will help further a full and complete review of the total number of Native children forced to attend Indian boarding schools; the total number of Native children who were abused, died, or went missing at Indian boarding schools; and the long-term impacts that Indian boarding schools have had on the children who attended and their families.

S. 2907 will ensure that there will be a full accounting of the Indian boarding schools and will promote truth, justice, and healing. The Oneida Nation urges the Committee to support the passage of S.2907 when it comes before the U.S. Senate.

With a Good Mind, a Good Heart and a Strong Fire,

Tehassi tasi Hill

Tehassi tasi Hill, Chairman
Oneida Nation

A good mind. A good heart. A strong fire.

