

SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA



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Dr. Ponka-We Victors-Cozad
Director of Policy & Advocacy
National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition
2525 E. Franklin Ave., Ste. 120
Minneapolis, MN 55406

Dear Dr. Victors-Cozad:

The Seminole Tribe of Florida strongly supports the “Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act” (S. 1723/H.R. 7227), and urges it’s swift enactment by Congress. The Commission is needed to fully express and understand the impacts of Indian boarding schools and the federal policy of Indian child removal.

Over the course of a century, hundreds of thousands of Native children were taken or coerced away from their families and Tribes and forced to attend government-sanctioned Indian boarding schools. The result was a loss of language and culture and the permanent separation of children from their families.

We have a limited amount of time to hear directly from survivors and record their stories. A Congressional Commission is needed to locate and analyze the records from the 523 known Indian boarding schools that operated in the United States. The Commission will help ensure that accounts of Indian boarding schools - told by survivors, families, and presently undisclosed records—are preserved.

It is essential that children who were forced to attend these schools are not forgotten, and that this era of U.S. Indian policy is acknowledged so that future generations may understand the impact that this trauma has had in their community. We must know the truth in order to make sure that this never happens again.

Sho Naa Bish,

Marcellus W. Osceola, Jr.
Chairman, Tribal Council

“BUT I HAVE PROMISES TO KEEP & MILES TO GO BEFORE I SLEEP”