



National Congress of American Indians | 1516 P St NW, Washington, DC 20005 | (202) 466-7767 | [www.ncai.org](http://www.ncai.org)

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## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #CT-25-051

### **TITLE: Call to Protect the National Oral History Project of U.S. Indian Boarding School Survivors**

**WHEREAS**, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of Indian peoples, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety, human rights and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

**WHEREAS**, the promotion, protection and preservation of Tribal members' health, welfare and human rights is a priority for all Tribal Nations; and

**WHEREAS**, attempts to destroy Native American and Alaska Native cultures, religions, and languages through assimilationist practices and policies can be traced to the early 17th century and the founding charters of some of the oldest educational institutions in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, as early as 1800, and until 1969, the Federal Government directly or indirectly supported approximately 526 Indian Boarding Schools across 38 States; and

**WHEREAS**, American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children were required by law to attend boarding schools with the intended purposes of stripping them of their languages, cultures, and Indigenous lifeways; and



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**WHEREAS**, American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children, as young as 3 years old, were forcibly removed from their homes and sent to Indian Boarding Schools located throughout the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian peoples continue to experience intergenerational trauma and cultural and familial disruption from experiences rooted in Indian Boarding Schools Policies, which divided family structures, damaged cultures and individual identities, and inflicted chronic physical and psychological ramifications to our children, families, communities, and Nations; and

**WHEREAS**, NCAI passed previous resolutions (ATL-14-026, PHX-16-063, MOH-17-014, REN-13-055, AK-21-004, SAC-22-011, NO-23-008, NO-23-080,) which called on the U.S. Federal Government to acknowledge its role and responsibility to fully investigate its role in, and the historical and intergenerational traumas brought by Indian Boarding School Policies and called for a beginning to the process of healing among our people, families, communities, and Tribal Nations; and

**WHEREAS**, efforts to preserve personal histories and support the healing journeys of Indian boarding school survivors remain an ongoing initiative in a cooperative agreement between the U.S. Department of the Interior and the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition in the, first of its kind, National Oral History Collection of Indian Boarding School Survivors (Oral History Project), set to culminate in 2026; and

**WHEREAS**, the Oral History Project has interviewed over two hundred Indian boarding school survivors from twelve regions throughout Indian Country, worked with Tribal leadership, community helpers, and sustained culturally responsive gatherings to collect and preserve personal narratives, and contributed to the intergenerational healing of Tribal citizens and the Tribal Nations they belong to; and

**WHEREAS**, the Oral History Project is an important contribution as a vital, on-the-ground effort to support Indian Country in addressing the harms and ongoing intergenerational impacts of the Federal Indian Boarding School Policy era; and

**WHEREAS**, Indian boarding school survivors are the sons and daughters of sovereign Tribal Nations, who as elders—some as old as 96 years of age—have expressed their urgency and desire to contribute to the Oral History Project, stating that they do not know how much time they have left; and

**WHEREAS**, Tribal Nations remain eager continue the Oral History Project with funds previously appropriated by the United States Congress and dedicated to the initiative; and



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**WHEREAS**, NCAI strongly asserts that federal support for Tribal programs and initiatives, such as the Oral History Project, is not a DEI program, but a fundamental trust and treaty responsibility; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Endowment for the Humanities cancellation of \$1.6 million in critical federal funding dedicated to Indian boarding school research, education, and preservation has provoked serious challenges and derailed Indigenous-led efforts to investigate, learn, and support healing in Tribal communities; and

**WHEREAS**, NCAI strenuously urges the U.S. Department of the Interior to maintain the Oral History Project as a priority in its ongoing commitment to fulfill its trust obligation to Tribal Nations.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, NCAI calls on the U.S. Department of the Interior to permit the Oral History Project as planned with the congressionally-appropriated funds already allocated, as a responsibility of the Federal Government to continue fulfilling its trust obligation to Tribal Nations; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

#### **CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted unanimously by the NCAI Executive Committee on June 17, 2025, following recommendations of adoption by the relevant Committees and referral from the General Assembly at the 2025 Mid Year Convention of the National Congress of American Indians, held June 8-11, 2025, in Mashantucket, CT.

Mark Macarro, President

ATTEST:

Leonard Fineday, Acting Recording Secretary