

SENATE RESOLUTION

8703

By Senators McCoy and Nguyen

1       WHEREAS, The United States, at the urging of and in support of  
2 the Christian churches of that time, adopted the Indian Civilization  
3 Fund Act on March 3, 1819, to provide financial support for church  
4 run schools to "civilize" Native American children through an  
5 education program intended to eradicate Native American culture; and

6       WHEREAS, In 1869, the United States, in concert with and the  
7 urging of several denominations of the Christian Church, adopted the  
8 Indian Boarding School Policy or "Peace Policy" for the removal and  
9 reprogramming of Native American children to ensure the systematic  
10 destruction of indigenous cultures and communities; and

11       WHEREAS, The Indian Boarding School Policy was a deliberate  
12 policy of cultural genocide, founded on the assimilationist directive  
13 to "Kill the Indian and save the man"; and

14       WHEREAS, Between 1869 and the 1960s, Native American children  
15 were removed from their homes and families, often involuntarily, and  
16 placed in Boarding Schools far from their homes which were funded by  
17 the federal government and operated by the federal government and  
18 churches, where children were punished for speaking their native  
19 language, banned from acting in any way that might be seen as  
20 representing traditional or cultural practices, shorn of their hair,  
21 stripped of traditional clothing and all things and behaviors  
22 reflective of their native culture, and shamed for being Native  
23 American; and

1 WHEREAS, The prevailing attitudes of the time allowed for  
2 the neglect and abuse of children who were overseen but not  
3 parented, who were bullied and assaulted not only by the adults  
4 but also by older children under the modeling and instruction of  
5 the caretakers and staff, and who were neglected as a whole  
6 through the denial of adequate food and medical care; and

7 WHEREAS, These children observed and suffered physical,  
8 emotional, cultural, spiritual, psychological, and sexual abuse,  
9 and punishment by physical restraints, beatings, and isolation  
10 in inhospitable surroundings; and

11 WHEREAS, There were more than 350 Indian Boarding schools  
12 across the United States, located within 30 States, which  
13 included 14 Indian Boarding schools in Washington state; and

14 WHEREAS, These children, their children, and now their  
15 grandchildren and great-grandchildren, bear the burden of the  
16 legacy of the boarding schools and the federal policy that  
17 established and sustained those schools, where the children  
18 suffered trauma that has gone unrecognized and unresolved, and  
19 has been passed onto each subsequent generation; and

20 WHEREAS, This historical and inter-generational trauma  
21 continues to devastate, undermine, and negatively impact Native  
22 American individuals, families, and communities; and

23 WHEREAS, The United States has not offered a meaningful  
24 acknowledgment of responsibility or offered to provide any  
25 redress for the generations of harm caused by the deliberate  
26 imposition of the policy of cultural genocide on the Native  
27 American children, families, communities, tribes, Pueblos, or  
28 Alaskan Villages;

29 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Senate pause to  
30 acknowledge the two hundred first anniversary of the signing of  
31 the Indian Civilization Fund Act; to recognize and remember the  
32 surviving children of Indian Boarding Schools, their children,  
33 grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, and to honor their  
34 resiliency and determination to endure such atrocities.

35 I, Brad Hendrickson, Secretary of the Senate,  
36 do hereby certify that this is a true and  
37 correct copy of Senate Resolution 8703,

1 adopted by the Senate  
2 March 2, 2020

3 BRAD HENDRICKSON  
4 Secretary of the Senate