

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1526

Recognizing the week of September 30th as “National Orange Shirt Week” or “National Week of Remembrance”, which aims to honor those who were forced to attend Indian boarding schools, and to recognize the experience of Indian boarding school victims and survivors.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 1, 2024

Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the week of September 30th as “National Orange Shirt Week” or “National Week of Remembrance”, which aims to honor those who were forced to attend Indian boarding schools, and to recognize the experience of Indian boarding school victims and survivors.

Whereas assimilation processes, such as the Indian Boarding School Policies, were adopted by the United States Government to strip American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children of their Indigenous identities, beliefs, and languages to assimilate them into non-Native culture through federally funded and controlled Christian-run schools, which had the intent and, in many cases, the effect, of termination, with dire and intentional

consequences on the cultures and languages of Indigenous peoples;

Whereas assimilation processes can be traced back to—

(1) the enactment of the Act of March 3, 1819 (3 Stat. 516, chapter 85) (commonly known as the “Indian Civilization Fund Act of 1819”), which created a fund to administer the education, healthcare, and rations promised to Tribal nations under treaties those Tribal nations had with the United States; and

(2) the Grant Administration’s peace policy with Tribal nations in 1868, which, among other things, authorized amounts in the fund established under the Act of March 3, 1819 (3 Stat. 516, chapter 85) (commonly known as the “Indian Civilization Fund Act of 1819”), to be used by churches;

Whereas, according to research from the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, the Federal Government funded church-run boarding schools for Native Americans from 1819 through the 1960s under the Act of March 3, 1819 (3 Stat. 516, chapter 85), which authorized the forced removal of hundreds of thousands of American Indian and Alaska Native children as young as 3 years old, relocating them from their traditional homelands to 1 of at least 526 known Indian boarding schools, of which 125 remain open today, across 38 States;

Whereas, beginning in 1820, missionaries from the United States arrived in Hawai’i, bringing a similar desire to civilize Native Hawaiians and convert “Hawaiian heathens” to Christians, establishing day schools and boarding schools that followed models first imposed on Tribal nations on the East Coast of the United States;

Whereas, as estimated by David Wallace Adams, professor emeritus of history and education at Cleveland State University in Ohio, by 1926, nearly 83 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native school-age children were enrolled in Indian boarding schools in the United States, but, the full extent of the Indian Boarding School Policies has yet to be fully examined by—

(1) the Federal Government or the churches who ran those schools; or

(2) other entities who profited from the existence of those schools;

Whereas, in 1878, General Pratt brought a group of American Indian warriors held as prisoners of war to what was then known as the Hampton Agricultural and Industrial School in Hampton, Virginia, for a residential experiment in the education of Indigenous people;

Whereas, prior to arriving to the Hampton Agricultural and Industrial School in 1878, the American Indian warriors held as prisoners of war had already spent 3 years imprisoned, during which time they were forced to shave their traditionally grown hair, dress in military uniforms, participate in Christian worship services, and adopt an English name;

Whereas General Samuel C. Armstrong, founder and, in 1878, principal, of the Hampton Agricultural and Industrial School, was influenced by his parents and other missionaries in the United States involved in the education of Native Hawaiian children;

Whereas General Armstrong modeled the Hampton Agricultural and Industrial School after the Hilo Boarding School in Hawai'i, a missionary-run boarding school that targeted high performing Native Hawaiians to become in-

doctrinated in Protestant ideology, which was similar to boarding schools led by missionaries in the similarly sovereign Five Tribes of Oklahoma, including the Cherokee and Chickasaw;

Whereas, in addition to bringing a group of American Indian warriors held as prisoners of war to the Hampton Agricultural and Industrial School in 1878, General Pratt influenced Sheldon Jackson, a Presbyterian missionary who, in 1885, was appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to be a General Agent of Education in the Alaska Territory;

Whereas Hampton Agricultural and Industrial School continued as a boarding school for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians until 1923;

Whereas, founded in 1879, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School set the precedent for government-funded, off-reservation Indian boarding schools in the United States, where more than 10,000 American Indian and Alaska Native children were enrolled from more than 140 Indian Tribes;

Whereas Indian boarding schools, and the policies that created, funded, and fueled their existence, were designed to assimilate American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children into non-Native culture by stripping them of their cultural identities, often through physical, sexual, psychological, industrial, and spiritual abuse and neglect;

Whereas many of the children who were taken to Indian boarding schools did not survive, and of those who did survive, many never returned to their parents, extended families, and communities;

Whereas at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School alone, approximately 180 American Indian and Alaska Native children were buried;

Whereas, according to research from the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition—

(1) while attending Indian boarding schools, American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children suffered additional physical, sexual, psychological, industrial, and spiritual abuse and neglect as they were sent to non-Native homes and businesses for involuntary and unpaid manual labor work during the summers;

(2) many American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children escaped from Indian boarding schools by running away, and then remained missing or died of illnesses due to harsh living conditions, abuse, or substandard health care provided by the Indian boarding schools;

(3) many American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children died at hospitals neighboring Indian boarding schools, including the Puyallup Indian School that opened in 1860, which was first renamed the Cushman Indian School in 1910 and then the Cushman Hospital in 1918; and

(4) many of the American Indian and Alaska Native children who died while attending Indian boarding schools or neighboring hospitals were buried in unmarked graves or off-campus cemeteries;

Whereas, according to independent ground penetrating radar and magnetometry research commissioned by the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, evidence of those unmarked graves and off-campus cemeteries has been found, including—

(1) unmarked graves at Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Oregon; and

(2) remains of children who were burned in incinerators at Indian boarding schools;

Whereas, according to research from the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, inaccurate, scattered, and missing school records make it difficult for families to locate their loved ones;

Whereas parents of the American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children who were forcibly removed from or coerced into leaving their homes and placed in Indian boarding schools were prohibited from visiting or engaging in correspondence with their children;

Whereas parental resistance to compliance with the harsh no-contact policy resulted in the parents being incarcerated or losing access to basic human rights, food rations, and clothing;

Whereas, in 2013, post-traumatic stress disorder rates among American Indian and Alaska Native youth were 3-times the general public, the same rates for post-traumatic stress disorder among veterans;

Whereas, in 2014, the White House Report on Native Youth declared a state of emergency due to a suicide epidemic among American Indian and Alaska Native youth;

Whereas the 2018 Broken Promises Report published by the United States Commission on Civil Rights reported that American Indian and Alaska Native communities continue to experience intergenerational trauma resulting from experiences in Indian boarding schools, which divided cultural family structures, damaged Indigenous identities, and inflicted chronic psychological ramifica-

tions on American Indian and Alaska Native children and families;

Whereas the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences Study shows that adverse or traumatic childhood experiences disrupt brain development, leading to a higher likelihood of negative health outcomes as adults, including heart disease, obesity, diabetes, autoimmune diseases, and early death;

Whereas American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians suffer from disproportional rates of each of the diseases compared to the national average;

Whereas the longstanding intended consequences and ramifications of the treatment of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children, families, and communities because of Federal policies and the funding of Indian boarding schools continue to impact Native communities through intergenerational trauma, cycles of violence and abuse, disappearance, health disparities, substance abuse, premature deaths, additional undocumented physical, sexual, psychological, industrial, and spiritual abuse and neglect, and trauma;

Whereas, according to the Child Removal Survey conducted by the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, the First Nations Repatriation Institute, and the University of Minnesota, 75 percent of Indian boarding school survivors who responded to the survey had attempted suicide, and nearly half of respondents to the survey reported being diagnosed with a mental health condition;

Whereas the continuing lasting implications of the Indian Boarding School Policies and the physical, sexual, psychological, industrial, and spiritual abuse and neglect of American Indian and Alaska Native children and families influenced the present-day operation of Bureau of Indian Education-operated schools;

Whereas Bureau of Indian Education-operated schools have often failed to meet the many needs of nearly 50,000 American Indian and Alaska Native students across 23 States;

Whereas, in Alaska, where there are no Bureau of Indian Education-funded elementary and secondary schools, the State public education system often fails to meet the needs of Alaska Native students, families, and communities;

Whereas the assimilation policies imposed on American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians during the Indian boarding school era have been replicated through other Federal actions and programs, including the Indian Adoption Project in effect from 1958 to 1967, which placed American Indian and Alaska Native children in non-Indian households and institutions for foster care or adoption;

Whereas the Association on American Indian Affairs reported that the continuation of assimilation policies through Federal American Indian and Alaska Native adoption and foster care programs between 1941 to 1967 separated as many as one-third of American Indian and Alaska Native children from their families in Tribal communities;

Whereas, in some States, greater than 50 percent of foster care children in State adoption systems are American Indian, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian children, including in Alaska, where over 60 percent of children in foster care are Alaska Native;

Whereas the general lack of public awareness, accountability, education, information, and acknowledgment of the ongoing and direct impacts of the Indian Boarding School Policies and related intergenerational trauma persists, signaling the overdue need for an investigative Federal commission to further document and expose assimilation and termination efforts to eradicate the cultures and languages of Indigenous peoples implemented under Indian Boarding School Policies; and

Whereas, in the secretarial memorandum entitled “Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative” and dated June 22, 2021, Secretary of the Interior Debra Haaland stated the following: “The assimilationist policies of the past are contrary to the doctrine of trust responsibility, under which the Federal Government must promote Tribal self-governance and cultural integrity. Nevertheless, the legacy of Indian boarding schools remains, manifesting itself in Indigenous communities through intergenerational trauma, cycles of violence and abuse, disappearance, premature deaths, and other undocumented bodily and mental impacts.”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives recog-
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 3 of Remembrance”, which aims to honor those who were
 4 forced to attend Indian boarding schools, and to recognize

- 1 the experience of Indian boarding school victims and sur-
- 2 vivors.

