

A Minute in Support of a Truth and Healing Commission for Native Peoples

Brought forward by Friends Peace Teams | Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples
and the Indigenous Peoples Concerns Committee of the Boulder Meeting

The Intermountain Yearly Meeting supports the “Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policy Act” (HR 8420) that was considered by the U.S. House of Representatives in 2019-2020. Although HR 8420 did not become law, IMYM continues to support the establishment of a Truth and Healing Commission. The bill’s purpose was to set up a Truth and Healing Commission to address the historical trauma experienced by Native American and Alaska Native children who were forcibly removed from their homes between 1869 and the 1960’s and placed in Indian Boarding schools. The children were taught to reject their Native languages, cultures, and spiritual practices and adopt Euro-American culture. Native Americans continue to suffer multigenerational trauma caused by this policy of forced assimilation and cultural genocide. Quakers were among the strongest supporters of the Indian boarding school policy and operated some 30 Indian schools (some in collaboration with the federal government) for varying periods of time. We recognize that the history of the Indian schools is more complex than can be described in this brief minute.

Senator Elizabeth Warren is working with U.S. Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, and plans to reintroduce the bill this year. Senator Warren will consult with the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition for wording for the bill. It is expected to be introduced before the August Congressional recess, with wording very similar to last year’s bill.

IMYM urges individual Friends and monthly meetings to watch for this bill and to urge their congressional representatives to support it. IMYM further urges Friends to learn the history of the Quaker Indian schools and consider ways to support Native-managed healing processes, including programs to teach Native languages and prevent youth suicide.

Resources for Further Information and Reflection

- 1) The website for the [National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition](#)
- 2) Paula Palmer’s video [The Quaker Boarding Schools: Facing our History and Ourselves](#)
- 3) Paula Palmer’s article “*Quaker Indian Boarding Schools, Facing Our History and Ourselves*,” [Friends Journal, October 1, 2016](#).
- 4) Friends Peace Teams [Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples](#) website
- 5) [HR 8420 link](#)
- 6) [Decolonizing Quakers](#) website
- 7) Interior Secretary Haaland Opinion | [My grandparents were stolen from their families as children.](#)