



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0767R, **Version:** 1

RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING THE HARM AND ONGOING HISTORICAL AND INTERGENERATION TRAUMA EXPERIENCED BY AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE CHILDREN AND COMMUNITIES DUE TO THE UNITED STATES' INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL POLICY; CALLING ON THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO COMMISSION A STUDY AND REPORT ON THE BOARDING SCHOOL POLICY; AND SUPPORTING EFFORTS OF RECONCILIATION IN ADDRESSING THE IMPACTS OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA, LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL LOSS, AND GENOCIDE.

BY PRESIDENT VAN NETT, COUNCILOR TOMANEK, AND COUNCILOR FORSMAN:

WHEREAS, the United States government deliberately attempted eradication of Native American people and culture through, among other things, the operation of Indian boarding schools from the 1860s until the 1970s; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native children as young as four years old were forcibly removed from their family homes and communities and placed in those boarding schools; and

WHEREAS, the stated purpose of the boarding schools was to "kill the Indian...and save the man"; and

WHEREAS, in those boarding schools, American Indian and Alaska Native children were forbidden from speaking their language, prohibited from engaging in their cultural and spiritual practices, and subjected to physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual torture; and

WHEREAS, by 1926, nearly 83 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native school-age children were enrolled in boarding schools; and

WHEREAS, there were 16 boarding schools in Minnesota, the first established in 1871 and some lasting until the 1970s; and

WHEREAS, children from all eleven Minnesota reservations as well as those living in urban areas were forced to attend boarding schools in different parts of the state and the country; and

WHEREAS, most if not all of the boarding schools in the United States had associated cemeteries for the many children who died while in their care; and

WHEREAS, many children were buried in cemeteries on or near former school sites and significant numbers are in graves marked as "unknown;" and

WHEREAS, there has never been an accounting of the actual number of American Indian and Alaska Native children removed to boarding schools, or the identities, numbers, Tribal identities or causes of death of the children who passed away while in the custody of the schools; and

WHEREAS, the United States has never apologized or offered to provide any meaningful redress to American Indian and Alaska Native communities for the pain and trauma suffered by generations of children and families due to the federal government's Boarding School Policy.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the city of Duluth acknowledges the pain and suffering, acts of torture and genocide, and ongoing historical and inter-generational trauma suffered by American Indian and Alaska Native children, families and Tribal communities resulting from the Boarding School Policy.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the city of Duluth fully supports federal legislation establishing a new Truth and Healing Commission on the Boarding School Policy to investigate and document assimilation practices, human rights violations and cultural degradation, and genocide of Indian Boarding Schools, to study the impact and ongoing effects of historical and intergenerational trauma in Tribal communities, and to provide a forum for victims and families to discuss the personal impacts of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual violence.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the city of Duluth encourages the United States government to accept responsibility for the harm caused by the Boarding School Policy and to take meaningful steps to promote truth and healing, and to provide and fund reconciliation, redress and justice for those harms.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to acknowledge the ongoing historical and intergenerational traumas impacting American Indian and Alaska Native communities caused by the federal government's Boarding School Policy. The city council calls on the United States Congress to establish the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policy to investigate and document the history and human rights violations resulting from the Policy and to develop recommendations to acknowledge and heal the historical and intergeneration traumas caused by forcibly removing children from their mothers and fathers, grandparents, extended families, and Tribal communities and sending them to institutions where they suffered tremendous physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harm.