

**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States**

Hybrid Legislative Hearing  
May 12, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. ET

**Legislative Hearing on H.R. 5444**

**Questions from Rep. Leger Fernández** for James LaBelle, Sr., 1st Vice President and Boarding School Survivor, National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition

1. How should we get churches to acknowledge their role in forming and implementing boarding schools for American Indian and Alaska Native children?
2. What does it mean to you when religious institutions continue to withhold records from this era?

**Questions from Rep. Leger Fernández** for Matthew War Bonnet, Boarding School Survivor, Rosebud Sioux Tribe

1. Based on your research, how did boarding schools begin? What was the purpose behind their creation?
2. Your testimony notes how the St. Francis Boarding School forced you to speak English and Latin as a student.
  - a. If you are able to, can you speak further on this experience and how important Native language preservation is to tribal communities?

**Questions from Rep. Leger Fernández** for Dr. Ramona Charette Klein, Boarding School Survivor, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians

1. Your testimony mentions that your experiences at the boarding school made you hesitant to trust others with your story. I want to thank you for sharing your story with us today and your willingness to be here.
  - a. How can Congress help to address the trauma that boarding schools inflicted on individuals such as yourself? What resources would you like to see?

2. While you were at the boarding school, were you able to connect with other students to speak about your shared experiences?
  - a. What about later in life?

**Questions from Rep. Leger Fernández** for The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chief, Shawnee Tribe

1. In your testimony, you note that the Shawnee Tribe sought out historians and researchers to account for the history of the Shawnee Indian Manual Labor Boarding School.
  - a. Can you explain this process a little more? Are there any federal resources available to help with fact-finding projects like these?
2. Can you explain why timely passage of H.R. 5444 is critically important for the preservation of survivor testimony?

**Questions from Rep. Leger Fernández** for Deborah Parker, Chief Executive Officer, National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition

1. After decades of inaction, we are proud of U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Deb Haaland's efforts to jumpstart the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative.
  - a. What other efforts would the Coalition like to see alongside this initiative?
  - b. How would the passage of H.R. 5444 aid these efforts?