

Statement of Support for H.R. 5444

My name is Theresa Hancock; my maiden name is Theresa Jean Burcham, I am a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa in Belcourt ND.

I support making the people who ran these places accountable for the things they did. I support the H.R 5444 The Truth and Healing Commission in its quest for the truth and any remedies they set forth.

I attended an Indian boarding school in Breckenridge, MN/Wahpeton ND area back in the 1970's as did one of my brothers and one or two of my sisters. It was many years ago so I don't remember the exact date.

I do remember we did not stay the whole school year. The only reason we were able to get out of there was our parents came down to visit and we told them secretly what was happening.

We were not allowed to say anything to our parents about the conditions there or you would be punished. Our phone calls and letters were monitored. If they didn't like something in your letter, they would make you rewrite and they told you what to write. Punishments would range from spankings to no food to isolation. It depended on what they felt your offense was. I remember that there was some type of worm or something in the macaroni and we were forced to eat it, (insects in food was common occurrence). To this day, I can not eat macaroni. It was crowded, filthy and a total lack of privacy. The people running the place were abusive. They didn't care about the children that they were supposed to be taking care of and that was evident in the food/conditions we were forced to endure.

Thank you for the opportunity to tell my story. Thank you for your work.

Thank you to the Natural Resources Subcommittee for the Indigenous Peoples of the United States.

Sincerely,

Theresa Burcham Hancock

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