



May 11, 2022

SENT VIA EMAIL

To: House of Natural Resources Committee  
Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples  
[HNRCDocs@mail.house.gov](mailto:HNRCDocs@mail.house.gov)

RE: H.R. 5444/ S.2907 Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies  
In the US

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Committee Members:

Fairbanks Native Association (FNA) is writing in support of H.R. 5444, which would create a commission around the issue of Indian boarding schools. Until recently, it was easy to ignore the issue with the total lack of accountability for the boarding school trauma inflicted upon innocent children, and the countless deaths and disappearances of many of them. We hope the creation of a commission is realized, to determine the scope of such abuse and impact it had on Native families.

FNA is a Native non-profit organization in Fairbanks, Alaska. We serve as a voice for the ten thousand (10,000) Alaska Native and American Indians living in the Fairbanks area.

Our vision and mission statements reflect our work endeavors:

***Vision***

*We are a unified, healthy, and empowered Native community that embraces all cultures.*

***Mission***

*To improve the quality of life for individuals and families by promoting justice, healing and wellness in our community.*

I raise our vision and mission statements because many of our elder members were former boarding school students, forced to leave the love and security of their families and villages in an attempt to assimilate them into the non-Native way of life. To this date there has been no



evaluation of the total number of people impacted by this heartbreaking practice. FNA wishes to address this issue, in line with our mission to promote wellness and healing. However, the scope of the healing work needed is unknown and it is hard to gauge the service need.

To compound the issue, the impact is multi-generational. While there are original victims, their unresolved and unacknowledged trauma has affected subsequent generations of their families. This too determines the level of service need for our planning purposes.

We applaud the intent of H.R. 5444 and look forward to the work that will come of it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Steve Ginnis".

Steve Ginnis, Executive Director  
Fairbanks Native Association

cc: Fairbanks Native Association Board of Directors  
Shirley Lee, FNA Justice Director