

Testimony for H.R. 5444

My name is Melveena Malatare from the Blackfeet Nation located in Browning, Montana. I am 73 years, have three grown children, 10 grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren. I have a BSW in social work and a MA in counseling. In 1996, I was trained in unsolved grief through the Grief Recovery Institute. Through this training, a few of us got together and began to work on a more cultural related model. We published a booklet on this called The Historical Trauma and Unresolved Grief. That's it in a nutshell on me.

I worked with this model throughout the past 20 years in various fields of work. I found generational trauma and unresolved grief to be one of the primary reasons the Native Americans suffer from diseases, illness, and poverty in the past and still today. Unresolved grief and trauma is passed from generation to generation through households, behaviors, and cell memory (Epigenetics). Our ancestors could not heal from the horrors of the Mission Era and Boarding Schools. Therefore, the memories are in the Native's cells behaviors and until they can resolve these, the sufferings will continue. Yes, my family is a product of that Era. On both sides of my parents, their parents and grandparents suffered at the hands of the people of the churches.

I teach and work with clients in a treatment center so that they will understand the whys of their addictions and other behaviors. There is much damage done to many of our young people today. We are becoming a society of brokenness and pain. Our young are dying from their addictions leaving their young with grandparents to raise. Our elders are out living their children. This is totally wrong. I will continue to teach this and others so they can carry on this model. The Jewish Holocaust is being forgotten. Many believe this didn't happen to 6 million Jews. Well, this is my very fear that our native children will not know what our ancestors went through at the hands of the government and churches. This isn't taught in our schools. So, it is up to me and others to continue this work.

When I retire, I will continue this work by telling the stories passed down. There are graves yet to be discovered in the U.S. Canada is far ahead in this work. The Native Canadians and the Indians from Montana are blood related. So, their ancestors are our ancestors.

Hopefully, what I have said will convince of decisions to be made for the Native American and the mission and boarding school era. Of course this is only a tiny bit I have shared. Hopefully, someday I can share more of all I talked about.

Sincerely,

Melveena Running Rabbit Malatare, MA

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