

May 18, 2022

ATTN: House Natural Resource Committee

I am writing to you today regarding the passage of H.R. 5444 / S. 2907, the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the US Act.

My name is Patricia Patrick Gardner and I am an enrolled tribal member of the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe in northern Wisconsin. I did not attend boarding schools however many of my family members and ancestors attended boarding schools.

My great grandfather, Alex Larock, attended Hampton Indian Boarding school during the years 1897 to 1901. He wrote about being afraid of traveling over the Allegheny Mountains.

I am in full support for "H.R. 5444 the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act".

Personally the Boarding School Era has affected me in various ways. Our tribes lost their culture, their language and their sense of self. This was detrimental to them and has caused a lot of the issues we face today. My family did not use their language, they were ashamed. They also lost their culture. I, as an elder have sought to learn my language and my culture. I am still learning. It is a shame that our ancestors were not able and they were forced to not practice their ceremonies.

I believe that the "truth" needs to be told and taught in our schools. We have a right to find our children and we have a right to analyze all records of Indian Boarding schools.

Again, I am in full support for "H.R. 5444 the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act".

I thank you, Natural Resources Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States, for the opportunity to speak on this very important issue.

Best regards,

Patricia Patrick Gardner

Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe