

My name is Megan Simpson. I am not enrolled in a nation, but my mother and her mother are enrolled members of the Coeur d'Alene nation. My grandmother was forced to attend the Mary Immaculate School in DeSmet. She was born in 1930. This school and the numerous government policies of the time, resulted in a significant loss to my family of cultural knowledge. My family does not speak our language, does not know many of our traditions, and is isolated in our disconnection from our ancestors. My grandmother was taken from her father after her mother died, as he was considered by the government to be an unfit parent. My grandmother was sent to live with relatives and eventually left the area for Washington state. While I learned many things from my beloved grandmother, she had a very difficult time talking about her time at Mary Immaculate school. My grandma was resilient and proud of who she was, and yet our family has lost so much of our history and culture because of the impact of these schools, the US Government and the Catholic Church.

I support "H.R. 5444 the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act" as a first of many steps that need to be taken.

Thank you to the Natural Resources Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States for hearing our voices and working to address the irreparable harm done to our First Nations communities.

Megan Simpson