

Dear members of the House Natural Resource Subcommittee for Indigenous People,

Our names are SuAnn Reddick and Eva Guggemos. Although we are neither Tribal nor boarding school survivors, we are compelled to state our support of H.R. 5444/S.2907, establishing a Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies.

On September 8, 2000, Kevin Cover, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Indian Affairs offered a public apology for “the acts committed against children entrusted to its boarding schools”. Yet, despite the acknowledgement of wrongdoing, more than twenty years have passed, and nothing has been done to address the longstanding injustices and intergenerational traumas against Native people, until now.

We have spent those years as historians and researchers, working with many individuals, students, Tribes, archives and government agencies, gathering public documents and records of children and others who died at Forest Grove and Chemawa Indian Schools. Our work began long before the revelation of unmarked graves in Canada and the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative, and we are grateful for the opportunity to share what we have learned. We presented some of our findings to the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) in 2019, and in October 2021, we published a website with maps and information about the Chemawa Cemetery. <https://heritage.lib.pacificu.edu/s/deaths-chemawa/page/welcome>

We have learned much over these years, and respectfully offer our help and support to anyone who may be researching Forest Grove or Chemawa.

However, those who attended these schools and their families need much more than this. They deserve the full resources of the government to uncover the truth about what happened to their parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, full disclosure of the federal government’s assimilation policies, and the opportunity to heal from the trauma they endured because of those policies.

With thanks to the Natural Resources Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States,

SuAnn Reddick and Eva Guggemos

SuAnn Reddick, Independent Historian and long-time Chemawa Indian School volunteer
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