

The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition

2525 E. Franklin Ave., Ste. 120

Minneapolis, MN 55406

Loritta M. Rood

May 14, 2022

RE: H. R. 5444 the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Loritta M. Rood of the Shoshone Bannock tribe located on the Fort Hall reservation in Fort Hall Idaho. I am a direct descendant of Chief Targhee of the Bannock tribe.

My father, Lee Roland Stone, attended Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Oregon, I believe from age 6 to age 13, from 1944-1952. My father passed away in 2015.

I agree and support H.R. 5444 the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act. We have the technology to return these children to their homes for a proper burial. I understand that there were diseases that these children caught that they may not have had immunity to. But, if the children died from anything other than by disease, we need to investigate and, "Right the Wrong," to begin the healing process.

My father shared stories of his time at Chemawa, and I know he did not share the worst stories of his time at the school. My father spoke of punishment at the school, even describing the perpetrator as having a twitchy eye when he was whipping the boys, they would withhold food, and punish the boys if any of the students spoke their native language. My father was small and only grew to five foot four inches tall. I often wonder if his height was the result of poor nutrition, by withholding food if he was acting out. My father was lucky, his mother picked him up and moved him out of the school at the age of thirteen. He used to tell me he fought his way to the top and was finally there when his mother picked him up. His first instinct was to fight. That was all he knew, and he became a good fighter for his size. He and my mother fought every weekend, although he never hit her, he would throw things. I vividly remember coming home and there was red on the kitchen walls, and I thought, he killed her? He threw a ketchup bottle at the wall that exploded. My brother and I were happy when they finally divorced. My father's sisters stayed in the girls Indian Boarding School until they graduated. Once they graduated from the school, they married abusive men, abused alcohol and/or drugs, and passed down the abuse.

The pain is still on the reservations across our county. The elders do not trust anyone, understandably, and they pass their distrust to their children. Domestic abuse is rampant, alcohol and drug abuse are also out of control. It is time to treat our Native people with dignity, return the children's remains to their home for a property burial to start the healing process. I believe investigating how these children died will be a big part of helping, "Right the Wrong," and will help our people heal from a lifetime of abuse and treatment as second-class citizens.

I would like to thank the Natural Resources Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States.

Sincerely,

Loritta M. Rood

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