

REFERENCE TITLE: Indian boarding schools; urging investigation

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Introduced by
Senators Steele: Borrelli, Bowie, Contreras, Hatathlie, Marsh, Quezada,
Rios, Stahl Hamilton

A CONCURRENT MEMORIAL

URGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR TO INVESTIGATE FORMER
AND CURRENT INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS IN ARIZONA.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 To the Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior:

2 Your memorialist respectfully represents:

3 Whereas, beginning with the Indian Civilization Act of 1819, the
4 United States enacted laws and implemented policies establishing and
5 supporting Indian boarding schools across the nation; and

6 Whereas, the express purpose of these laws and policies was to
7 implement cultural genocide by removing and reprogramming American Indian
8 and Alaska Native children to accomplish the systematic destruction of
9 native cultures and communities; and

10 Whereas, between 1869 and the 1960s, hundreds of thousands of Native
11 American children were removed from their homes and families and placed in
12 boarding schools operated by the federal government and churches; and

13 Whereas, Native American children who were forcibly removed from
14 their homes, families and communities during this time were taken to
15 schools far away where they were punished for speaking their native
16 language, banned from acting in any way that might be seen to represent
17 traditional or cultural practices, and stripped of traditional clothing,
18 hair and personal belongings and behaviors reflective of their native
19 cultures; and

20 Whereas, Native American children suffered physical, sexual,
21 cultural and spiritual abuse and neglect and experienced treatment that in
22 many cases constituted torture and child abuse for speaking their native
23 languages; and

24 Whereas, many children never returned home from Indian boarding
25 schools and their fates have yet to be accounted for by the United States
26 government; and

27 Whereas, in the wake of the discovery of thousands of unmarked
28 graves at boarding schools in the United States and Canada, United States
29 Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland ordered a comprehensive review of
30 the troubled legacy of federal boarding school policies; and

31 Whereas, according to the National Native American Boarding School
32 Healing Coalition, most boarding schools were closed in the 1980s and
33 early 1990s, but dozens remain open, with 15 still boarding students as of
34 2020; and

35 Whereas, Arizona had the second highest number of Indian boarding
36 schools of any state in the nation, with 51 of the total 367 Indian
37 boarding schools in the United States.

38 Wherefore your memorialist, the Senate of the State of Arizona, the House
39 of Representatives concurring, prays:

40 1. That the United States Department of the Interior investigate
41 all 51 of the former and current Indian boarding schools located in
42 Arizona.

1 2. That the United States Department of the Interior use, or
2 designate the use of, ground penetrating radar to look for unmarked graves
3 and return any discovered remains to their families or tribes, as
4 requested, for appropriate repatriation and burial.

5 3. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit
6 copies of this Memorial to the Secretary of the United States Department
7 of the Interior.