



The Native American International Caucus (NAIC) Urges Congress to [Reestablish the Truth and Healing Commission and to Pass Legislation to Address the Impact of Indian Boarding Schools](#)

[Urge your members of Congress to take action to reintroduce and pass legislation to reestablish the Truth and Healing Commission.](#)

On March 3, 1819, the passage of the [Indian Civilization Fund Act](#) authorized and encouraged the harmful and forceful assimilation of Indigenous peoples. The Act was instrumental in the proliferation of Indigenous boarding school policies. Over 200 years later, efforts to address and to repair generational trauma continue.

On May 11, 2022, the Department of the Interior (DOI) Bureau of Indian Affairs released [Volume 1](#) of its investigative report as part of its Boarding School Initiative that began in June 2021.

The federal government's investigative report is a significant step to address the facts and consequences of its Federal Indian boarding school policies. These harmful policies were developed to advance the aims of cultural assimilation and territorial dispossession of Indigenous and Native peoples through the forced removal and relocation of Indigenous and Native children.

The federal government compelled generations of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children to experience Federal Indian boarding schools. This system discouraged and often prevented Native children from using their languages, connecting with their cultures, and practicing their religions. The report discovered that the United States supported or managed 408 boarding schools in 37 states (or then-territories) between 1819 and 1969, and it located 53 child burial sites across the system. Religious institutions and church affiliated organizations were closely connected to these policies, with approximately 50 percent of the schools being supported by or being involved with these institutions.

As part of our United Methodist Church's work on racial justice, healing, and our commitment to truth-telling, we are dedicated to naming the legacy of violence and abuse perpetrated by boarding schools, including our Church's role in the kidnapping of Indigenous children from their families and the use of church funding to maintain the boarding school system. The initial findings publicized in Volume 1 make it clear that the federal government should further commit itself to reconciliation work regarding the boarding school policies.

[The United Methodist Church General Conference in 2016](#) promised that the "United Methodist Church will build bridges of respect and understanding with indigenous persons. Our churches must listen and become educated about the history of the relationship between indigenous persons and Christian colonizers in their own geographic locations. Through prayer and relationship building, they will celebrate the gifts that indigenous people bring to the body of Jesus in the world."

[The Native American International Caucus of the United Methodist Church \(NAIC\)](#) asks that, "We need to name and confess the complicity of the aggressors, and we need to locate the sites of church-supported schools, to find and list the names of children who have attended these schools and where applicable, their Tribal affiliations, and to determine the geographical and burial location of our children, and the remaining families of these children. Let us break the silence as our children speak the truth once again."

Tell Congress to Take Action

[Send a letter to your member of Congress here and tell them to take action to reestablish the Contact your member of Congress here and tell them to take action to reestablish the Truth and Healing Commission.](#)

On Feb. 7, the House Natural Resources Committee approved an [oversight plan](#) for its activities in the 118th Congress. The [Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs](#) (formerly the Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples in the U.S.).

The Native American International Caucus of the United Methodist Church (NAIC) asks that you contact your members of Congress and urge them to support the reintroduction and passage of legislation that would establish a Truth and Healing Commission with Native representatives and experts as well as an advisory committee and survivor's subcommittee. This commission would:

- Initiate formal investigations into Indian boarding schools and the attempted termination of cultures, religions, and languages of Indigenous peoples, and into the impacts and ongoing effects of historical and intergenerational trauma in Native communities.
- Conduct culturally respectful public hearings for victims, survivors, and community members to testify and discuss the impacts of these policies.
- Provide recommendations for the federal government to acknowledge and heal the trauma resulting from Indian boarding school policies.

[Contact your member of Congress here and tell them to take action to reintroduce and pass legislation to reestablish the Truth and Healing Commission.](#)

Further reading:

- Native American International Caucus [Advocating for our Children - 06/11/2021](#)
- Native American International Caucus [Justice for Our Children: Healing for Our Communities](#)
- National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition's [resources](#) and [boarding school history](#)
- [United Methodist, other denominations support commission on US Native boarding schools](#)

United Methodist Church Resolutions:

- [#3334 2012 UM Book of Resolutions Regarding Native American Culture and Traditions as Sacred](#)
- [UM Resolution 2016 Native People and The United Methodist Church](#)

Previous Action Alert:

- [Establish the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act](#)