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FEDERAL INDIAN BOARD SCHOOL INITIATIVE

OCTOBER 29, 2023

10:08 A.M.

PUEBLO OF ISLETA
1100 BROADWAY BOULEVARD, SOUTHEAST
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO 87105

23 REPORTED BY: KIM KAY SHOLLENBARGER
COURT REPORTER
24 VERITEXT LEGAL SOLUTIONS

1 SPEAKER: (Native language) Thank you for taking the
2 time to be here, I really appreciate it. Secretary Deb
3 Haaland here has taken the time to be here and talk about the
4 issues that we have had in the past. And I know it's very
5 concerning, and as I stated, we as Tribal members, Tribal
6 leaders have to take the time to help our community, help the
7 elders, help the young people, to make sure they're protected
8 and they carry on our traditions, our customs and our
9 languages and it's very important. And I really appreciate
10 the time that you guys have taken to come here and to express
11 the past that has happened.

12 And as you well know, it wasn't only back when the
13 boarding schools were done, I personally went through a few
14 issues and it was very concerning, but we've overcome that.
15 Now with your leadership how we are protecting our young
16 people and helping our elders and our community. And as I
17 ask the grace period, especially for the Governors that are
18 here, Lieutenant Governors, Tribal leaders, spirit gives you
19 that wisdom, that knowledge of the patience that you will all
20 need to carry on our communities and to work together as a
21 coalition, collaborative programs that we have here, that we
22 all meet together as brothers and sisters, as we all know

23 that's how we came about here as brothers and sisters.

24 I really appreciate it and thank you for being
25 here. Like I said, I hope everybody has a beautiful day and

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1 the winter now that is coming, I hope you have a beautiful
2 winter. Thank you so much.

3 SECRETARY HAALAND: Good morning, everybody. I'm so
4 happy to be back home and be with you all this morning.
5 Thank you for coming. Thank you to the Governor and the
6 Council for hosting us and I think it's just a really
7 beautiful day outside, so I'm really happy to see all of you
8 (Native language).

9 Thank you so much, Governor, for everything you do
10 and for opening us up today as we embark on this journey
11 together. It's an honor to join you on the ancestral home
12 lands of the Tiwa people. I will speak briefly because I am
13 here to listen to all of you and not talk. Your voices are
14 important to me and I thank you for your willingness to share
15 your stories. And I also know that there are some of you who
16 won't share at all, but will be here to listen and support
17 our community and I thank you for that as well.

18 Federal Indian Boarding School policies have
19 impacted every Indigenous person I know. Some are survivors,
20 some are descendents, but we all carry this painful legacy in
21 our hearts. Deeply engrained in so many of us is the trauma

22 that these policies and these places have inflicted. My
23 ancestors and many of yours endured the horrors of the Indian
24 Boarding School assimilation policies carried out by the same
25 department that I now lead. This is the first time in

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1 history that the United States Cabinet Secretary comes to the
2 table with this shared trauma, but it's not lost on me and
3 I'm determined to use my position for the good of the people.

4 I launched the Federal Indian Boarding School
5 Initiative in 2021 to undertake the comprehensive effort to
6 recognize the legacy of boarding school policies with the
7 goal of addressing their intergenerational impacts and to
8 shed light on the traumas of the past.

9 In New Mexico alone there were 43 boarding schools
10 leaving intergenerational impacts that persist in the
11 communities represented here today. It is my department's
12 duty to address this shared trauma that so many of us carry.
13 To do that we need to tell our stories and today is part of
14 that journey.

15 Through the road to healing our goal is to create
16 opportunities for people to share their stories, but also to
17 help connect communities with trauma-informed support and to
18 facilitate the collection of a permanent oral history. This
19 is the eleventh stop on the Road to Healing, which is a
20 year-long tour across the country to provide Indigenous

21 survivors of the Federal Indian Boarding School system and
22 their descendents an opportunity to make known their
23 experiences.

24 I want you all to know that I am with you on this
25 journey, I will listen, I will grieve with you and I will

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1 feel your pain. As we mourn what we have lost, please know
2 that we still have so much to gain. The healing that can
3 help our communities will not be done overnight, but it will
4 be done.

5 This is one step among many that we will take to
6 strengthen and rebuild the bonds with the Native communities
7 that Federal Indian Boarding School policies set out to
8 break. Those steps have the potential to alter the course of
9 our future for us and for our grandchildren. I am grateful
10 to each of you for stepping forward to share your stories, I
11 know it isn't easy.

12 Now I am very honored to turn the floor over to my
13 dear friend and colleague, Assistant Secretary of Indian
14 Affairs, Bryan Newland.

15 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you, Madam
16 Secretary. And thank you, Governor, for the prayer and for
17 hosting us today. (Native language) My name is Bryan
18 Newland, I serve as the Assistant Secretary for Indian
19 Affairs and I'm honored to be with you today to listen, as

20 Secretary Haaland said.

21 We know that whether it was by carriage or by
22 train, so many Native children were removed from their
23 families and lands and taken to Federal Indian Boarding
24 Schools here in New Mexico, creating a void in many pueblo
25 villages and Apache communities. Some children were taken to

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1 Albuquerque or Santa Fe and others were taken to far away
2 places like Carlisle, Pennsylvania where I recently visited.

3 As we continue our investigation of the Federal
4 Indian Boarding School system in learning about your
5 experience, we know that just reviewing federal records isn't
6 going to tell a whole story of the boarding school system,
7 that's why we need to hear from you and people about their
8 families and their individual experiences.

9 In addition to that, the next steps of our
10 investigation include identifying marked and unmarked burial
11 sites across the Federal Indian Boarding School system in
12 determining the total amount of federal support for these
13 schools. We also want to encourage you today in going
14 forward to raise other things you think we need to consider
15 as part of this investigation.

16 I want to acknowledge the Indian Health Service
17 team who is supporting this conversation with trauma-informed
18 mental health support. We've got folks back here in the

19 room, if you can stand and raise your hand. They will be
20 available if you need, today. They've been with us
21 throughout this journey. If you need to talk to somebody, if
22 this is too much for you, if this is triggering, please find
23 our friends from IHS and we've got a quiet, private space to
24 speak with them.

25 I also want to thank Chairwoman Shelly Lowe and her

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1 team from the National Endowment for the Humanities, which
2 has been helping us to share survivor stories across the
3 world. We also have the Bureau of Indian Education Director,
4 Tony Dearman, with us today, over here. Tony and his team
5 have been playing a critical role to ensure that our children
6 across Indian Country receive an education today that
7 integrates their cultures. And we also appreciate the
8 Governors and Tribal leaders here for their support for
9 survivors across New Mexico and across the country.

10 So a few housekeeping points for today's
11 conversation. This is an opportunity for survivors and their
12 family members to tell about their experiences at these
13 boarding schools. I know many people wish to share their
14 views and thoughts on federal policies relating to forced
15 assimilation of Indian people, we of course welcome hearing
16 from you, we want to make sure that we reserve the
17 conversation today for people to talk about their

18 experiences. So if you have other things you wish to share
19 with us, you can send it by email on the sheet that was
20 provided to you outside the room. We appreciate everybody
21 making space for survivors and their relatives to talk about
22 their experiences here today.

23 To make a comment during this conversation today
24 just raise your hand and we'll have some of our mic runners
25 find you in the room and when you speak please state your

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1 name, your Tribal identity or affiliation, as well the name
2 or the names of the boarding schools you wish to speak about.
3 Can I have our mic runners here raise their hands so we can
4 find you. Okay, we've got one here, one in the middle of the
5 room.

6 Please note that we've got members of the press in
7 the back of the room who are going to be here for the first
8 hour-ish of our conversation today until we go to the lunch
9 break. They play an important role too in making sure that
10 we are telling the story to the American people in the world
11 and I know that many folks who came today may not wish to
12 speak while the press is here, so we will excuse them at the
13 lunch hour and then after the lunch break there will be an
14 opportunity for people to speak without the press present.
15 Please note that we also have a court reporter here who is
16 transcribing this meeting today and we're making a transcript

17 to assist our work with the Federal Indian Board School
18 Initiative. Under federal law those transcripts may be made
19 available in the future, so just please be aware of that.

20 We plan to stay for the better part of the day and
21 hear from as many people as we can during that time. We also
22 know that this is a conversation that is difficult. It's
23 difficult for everybody involved, but especially most
24 difficult for those of you who are sharing you're own
25 personal stories and those of your family members. We want

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1 you to take care of yourself, we are here to support you. As
2 I mentioned, we've got folks from IHS here to support you as
3 well.

4 We want to extend our gratitude to you for coming
5 today with the courage to speak about your own experiences
6 and your family members experiences and we want you to know
7 that you are not alone. We're here right alongside you to
8 support you and do everything we can to promote healing
9 across Indian Country with the Nation and with each community
10 and with each person who has been affected by these boarding
11 schools.

12 So with that we're going to put the microphone down
13 for a bit and we will hear from you. If you wish to speak
14 simply raise your hand. We're going to try to just go in
15 order. There is no time limit, just ask that folks be

16 mindful of others who have come to speak today and we're here
17 to listen.

18 With that, we'll open the floor up to anybody who
19 wishes to speak.

20 SPEAKER: Good morning, my name is Rodney Jones and
21 I am here from the Pueblo of Isleta. Can you give us a brief
22 history of the boarding schools here in New Mexico, just a
23 quick brief history, maybe when it began, when it ended and
24 Albuquerque's role maybe, and if the day schools were part of
25 this boarding school issue. Thank you.

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1 SECRETARY HAALAND: So today is not about that, with
2 respect, sir. We made a report about the boarding schools.
3 Today is for survivors and descendents and they know how the
4 boarding schools affected them. We are very happy to make
5 sure that you have a link to the report that we have made,
6 that we have done. The most we can tell you is that the
7 boarding school assimilation policies started in this country
8 in the mid-1800s and they continued in some places on to the
9 1960's. So we're happy to share that link with you so you
10 can read personally about the report we made, but the
11 boarding school survivors and descendents here may know how
12 that era has affected their lives and that's what we're
13 reserving this space for today.

14 SPEAKER: Good morning, everybody. My name is

15 Jaramillo and I was sent to Albuquerque Indian School in
16 1949. I was picked up from Isleta. I had four young
17 brothers that went with me. I survived. It was a long time.
18 I stayed there. I stayed there at Albuquerque school for 11
19 years. I was there for 11 years. It was very difficult at
20 that time because when you're small and, you know, just
21 barely learning how to live, how to get by. The most
22 important thing I tried to do was to take care of my
23 brothers, because they were more -- they were still small
24 guys and I was the oldest. We got other people there. We
25 had other friends there who were going through the same

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1 thing. We went through a lot of abuse. I talk about this
2 abuse. You know, it's embarrassing. It was embarrassing at
3 that time. But, you know, at the time we were -- we could
4 talk about and get over it. You know, we can forget those
5 things, you know.

6 Just one story I want to tell you. We used to have
7 bed checks early in the morning, we had bed check, we had
8 roll call in the morning and we had bed check at nighttime at
9 nine o'clock. Before bed check came around -- and these were
10 employees there that worked there. One employee that I hate
11 to tell you about, but he was a Puerto Rican. When it was
12 shower time for us to go take a shower, he used to come here
13 and he used to shower with us. I don't know how he picked

14 his victims, but one night he called me. He told me come to
15 his room. He told me I want to see you. I didn't know why
16 he wanted to see me, maybe I done something wrong. He took
17 me down to his room, and he had his room all fixed up, he had
18 lights. Oh, he was playing music. And he had a pint of
19 wine. He said, "not going to hurt you." I didn't know what
20 to do. I was afraid of him. That's how we were taught, to
21 be afraid, you know. He told me, "sit down, sit down, I want
22 to talk to you." I sat down and he talked to me and tried to
23 calm me down. He told me to stand up, I stood up, and he
24 grabbed me and he kissed me. He kissed me, oh, my God, he
25 kissed me. I never been kissed like that before. He gave me

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1 a kiss, and we fell to the bed, and I couldn't breathe. I
2 couldn't breathe. I try to get away from him. And just that
3 time the bell rang, it was nine o'clock, that save me, save
4 me. It was bed check time. I told him, "hey, man, bed
5 check." He told me, "I don't want you to say a thing." He
6 says, "I'm going to bring you back down here." That was the
7 worst experience I ever had in my life, man. And today I
8 still think about it. I still think about those things, you
9 know. I seen people over there. It was, I don't know.
10 Maybe that was how supposed to, I don't know how to explain
11 this, man. But it was something that I experienced real bad
12 and I know some of these people that went there, but I don't

13 think they experienced that kind of a thing, but since we
14 were small people we were defenseless. If I was to turn and
15 fight back, you know, I was disciplined. Either disciplined
16 real bad. But I survived, man. I went to that school 11
17 years, man. I still think about it. I think about it every
18 day. I think about it every day. I think about it. I hope
19 these kids don't -- I hope it never happen kids, you know.
20 Nowadays we protect kids, protected pretty good. At that
21 time we didn't have -- they didn't have anything to fall
22 back. I have a problem. I have a problem. But that's just
23 a short story what I am telling you guys. 11 years is hard
24 to talk about, man. I stand here and shake, because I'm
25 still embarrassed about this whole thing, you know. 77 years

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1 old and I still think about it. Whatever happened to the
2 schools. I seen people being kicked around. Oh, my God, you
3 know. A lot of abuse, I hate to talk about it, you know.
4 That's all I have to say. Thank you.

5 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you for coming
6 to share today. Anyone else who wishes to speak this
7 morning? We've got a speaker in the front here.

8 SPEAKER: (Native language) Santa Fe, New Mexico.
9 Hi, I am known as Blue Bird Woman, meaning reflection of the
10 universe. Wolf is my clan. I come from a long line of about
11 10,000 years of leadership. I want to offer this to Madam

12 Secretary as a sacred request to reinstate the task force for
13 the murdered and missing women that the Governor of New
14 Mexico has not continued to fund. I was chased in my vehicle
15 just the other night by construction workers. So I offer
16 this. May I approach the table. Every morning I arise
17 before daylight, and I have been on a healing journey of my
18 own since I was born. I follow the seven tenets that are
19 written on my DNA, love, wisdom, respect, truth, honesty,
20 humility and bravery. It's hard to know where to begin. I
21 am the great-granddaughter. In 1836 my great-grandfather
22 refused to sign the treaty that would have sent all Michigan
23 Natives to Kansas. The great leaders of our Nation in Indian
24 Country were sent to Carlisle. My grandfather was sent to
25 Carlisle (Native language) means the great walker. He was

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1 stripped of his identity, his dignity, the seven grandfather
2 teachings. I am from Michigan and Canada. I am from Ontario
3 where my grandfather learned to be a pedophile from the
4 priest that raped him. He damaged my family irreparably. My
5 other tribe, they dance in Harbor Springs, Michigan, where my
6 father James Raymond Walker, Veteran of the Korean War, was
7 sent to school. I stand here before you one of six children
8 of Mary Ann Julian to Larry Walker and James Raymond Walker.
9 I went to childhood from 1970 to 1976. The school existed
10 until 1983. I stand before you today with this history, with

11 this truth. I can't speak for my brothers, nor my sisters,
12 but I can tell you that I have been on a healing journey for
13 many, many years to find my Indian way home. I held my
14 mother, as well as six of us did, as she walked into the
15 spirit world. There was no church when I saw the
16 instantaneous separation of her spirit. I saw the life of a
17 maple tree from beneath the ground until its final seed. My
18 mother raised all six of us by herself, because my father was
19 on walkabouts after being raped by the priest in the church.
20 He was then raped on his way out. Indian tribe, Michigan.
21 Today is the day we buried my father. It's hard to speak the
22 truth when people don't want to hear it. But I have a
23 special place here today as an advocate for our Native
24 people. We are separated from our languages. When I was six
25 we were sent to -- well, actually when I was two we fled to

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1 the Indian reservation. Based on the jealousies that existed
2 there an elder told me, "you're one of the Walker girls,
3 aren't you." "Yes," I said. "I'm really sorry," she said,
4 "we were jealous of your mother. We were jealous of her, so
5 we reported her to the government that she was unfit and
6 that's why you children were sent away." When I was little
7 on the Reservation I knew my ways and I knew my language and
8 I danced in the gully because it was illegal for Indians
9 dance in the United States. I arrived at the school years

10 later. My older siblings had timed out. When I arrived
11 there they said, "you will no longer speak your language, you
12 will no longer call your sisters, sisters, I'm your sister,"
13 the nun said. Her name was. They told me I would no longer
14 dance. I became a jingle dress dancer. If you know about
15 the dance, it's the dance of healing. There's certain ways
16 to move. The movements of the fan is for the honor beat to
17 honor those who have walked on, those who have been killed,
18 those who are still in the walls of those schools, those
19 infants that were conceived by the nuns, were put in those
20 waters. When I was in that school and I was in that basement
21 I could feel people looking at me, I could feel death. And
22 when the nun came to me and she said, "oh, little Mary
23 Margaret, what do you want to be when you grow up?" I said,
24 "an actress." Not an actress to be famous, but an actress to
25 set a precedent and a role model to help our people find our

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1 Indian way home. And she said, "oh, Mary Margaret, that's
2 not an ethical profession." My six-year-old self said,
3 "neither sleeping with the bus driver." I was separated
4 constantly for my outburst of truth, which are written on my
5 DNA. They hoarded the clothes in the closets. They told the
6 benefactors that we were orphans. So when they sent us home
7 from one of the most affluent communities in the country, the
8 benefactors gave them money and told them we were away at

9 school, away at camp because we were orphan. I'm not an
10 orphan. I'm not a victim. I'm not a survivor. I'm a
11 (Native language) As Angeline Gurule says in her book, fire
12 keeper's daughter. Women are like impossible to control. I
13 don't want to be controlled more than anybody else and I have
14 always loved and I loved in the way that they taught me from
15 Jesus. And I heard that if you pray, little children pray,
16 that their prayers come true. And I would lie in that cold,
17 steel bed. If we turned over in our bed and hit the
18 mattress, hit the metal pole in the middle, you got a beating
19 for rolling over in the bed making noise. We couldn't go to
20 the bathroom at night, because Sister Maxine Curtain said, we
21 had the potty trots. And so when I wet my bed all the girls,
22 hundreds, surround my bed and point at that wet spot on my
23 bed to humiliate me. I was forced to wear clothes that were
24 too small because they hoared them in those closets and so I
25 had these tights that had stars on them and they came to my

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1 knees because they were for a four-year-old. And I didn't
2 know where my older siblings were, and I had to use the
3 bathroom and they were upstairs in the dormitory and I was
4 all by myself in a room full of girls and I didn't know where
5 to get help and so I farted, and I had diarrhea and it came
6 out a little bit and everybody laughed and they said, "oh,
7 someone stinks," and then they kept calling, and I felt

8 sicker and sicker. I didn't have no family. I was in a cold
9 building made of beautiful oak trees and mahogany cabinets,
10 tin ceilings, beautiful square building. So I went upstairs,
11 I climbed those cold stairs, that was my job everyday, to
12 clean those stairs from top to bottom. It kept me out of the
13 way, it kept me shut up, it kept me hidden away. And I got
14 up there and on one side was a dormitory, almost half the
15 size of this room, and on the other side was a little door
16 where I was, called the little girls door. And it was dark
17 so I ran over there and I was looking around the corner to
18 see if I could see my big sister and I didn't. So I ran to
19 the other side and the nun saw me, in their black habit, her
20 white forehead, possibly pregnant. She said, "oh, little
21 Mary Margaret, what's wrong?" And I said, "I farted and I
22 have a shitty ass." And she said, "don't talk like that, we
23 don't talk like that here, it's time to grow up. Get her
24 away from me, disgusting." This was also a time of respect
25 for my teachers there at that school, because they didn't

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1 know what was going on or if they did, they had to hide it.
2 So for me being in the classroom was the escape. I learned
3 and I did the best I could, because in Harbor Springs the
4 good girls, sent us so many girls or boys to go skiing or
5 whatever, and that was my way out. So I perfected my
6 education. I was a chemical engineer in eleventh grade. In

7 twelfth grade I worked for a company called Dow Chemical in
8 Michigan. They used my intelligence for the paper coating
9 for a Playboy. So I knew then that it was only way out of
10 the house was to use the tuition waiver. The Michigan Indian
11 Tuition Waiver that supposed to support the Indian education
12 of any Native person within the State of Michigan. Any
13 Native person residing in Michigan could go to a
14 public-funded school and I heard that too. So this next
15 story is just a small snippet of our everyday lives. So
16 there are many stories. I have been asked to stop speaking,
17 and in closing I want to acknowledge the history of the
18 healing and in speaking the truth feels eerily as a
19 confessional, but I'm here today also as an advocate of the
20 coalition to stop violence against Native women and men. I
21 hold no grudges. I hold no fear. I walk in truth and I
22 encourage all of you to find your draw to medicine people and
23 your language is most important, because when I say (Native
24 language) all my ancestors are here and all the future is
25 there. This is a hard time but, yes, all of it needs to be

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1 addressed and I ask Madam Secretary, as a woman, as a sister,
2 as a representative, to honor all of us in this way and to
3 maybe next time have some medicine person available, because
4 I don't understand that kind of healing. So on behalf of the
5 Walker family, I thank you for your time. I wish you all the

6 best. I pray for you all every morning before the sun comes
7 up and I love you all, whether you like it or not. So there.

8 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Do we have any other
9 speakers who wish to speak this morning? Someone in the
10 center of the room in the back.

11 SPEAKER: Good morning. (Native language) Hi,
12 everyone, and good morning. I am here today to advocate and
13 speaker on behalf of our Native LGBTQ Trans populations. I
14 identify as a Native transwoman and indirectly have been
15 affected by boarding school processes and error. I, myself,
16 did not go to boarding school, but I had friends who are
17 Native LGBTQ who have shared stories of some of the
18 experiences that they have in boarding schools. I did ask a
19 couple of friends to be here today, one unfortunately
20 couldn't make it, but was going to send a letter, which I was
21 going to read to everybody, but it hasn't been done. And I
22 also had two others who were supposed to be here, but they're
23 not here, who had gone to boarding schools. So I felt that I
24 need to stand up and speak for our LGBTQ people who have gone
25 through boarding school throughout the country. A lot of the

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1 stories are similar with the violence and the trauma that
2 they have experienced, not just with boarding school, but
3 also with families, society. Statistics show that there has
4 been a lot of violence and also murders within our community.

5 Boarding schools statistics from K through 12th grade in a
6 survey called the U.S. Trans Survey, talks about our Native
7 Trans and our population that have experienced some of those
8 violences, even in school from kindergarten to twelfth grade,
9 such as sexual assault, unreported, talking about the
10 violence that happens like 90 percent of the time in going to
11 school. So some of the stories that I have heard from my
12 friends are just a few items that I want to share, of having
13 to redirect a route to go meet at the cafeteria or go to
14 class because rocks are being thrown at them or stuff is
15 being thrown at them or that they were threatened to get beat
16 up and slurs being said to them, like faggot, queer, homo,
17 you're disgusting, and having to deal with that time and time
18 again. So as a transperson, actually physically assaulted, a
19 lot of our brothers and sisters have gone through that in the
20 boarding school, and a lot of times don't include our LGBTQ
21 population and some of the discussions that we talk about in
22 Native populations. And sometimes I question why and it's
23 because of the colonization that's happening within our
24 communities. Religion plays a big factor on LGBTQ
25 populations. What we learn in religious sectors is that

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1 being gay is wrong, being trans is wrong and that we
2 shouldn't be like that. So with my brothers and sisters who
3 have gone to boarding school, some of them unfortunately are

4 not here anymore, they passed on due to alcoholism, drug use,
5 suicide and different avenues, so their voices I hope to be
6 heard too. I have a really good friend who passed away who
7 would tell me some of these stories of boarding school and
8 having to deal with some of the trauma. Even trans girls who
9 were asked not to wear makeup, to dress in the right clothing
10 and for somebody to feel pretty and dress up and being told
11 by an adult that, "you don't look good, you look ugly, you
12 shouldn't be wearing makeup." And having to deal with a lot
13 of that. When I became sober 28 years ago, I started working
14 in my community and hearing stories. I went to Wingate High
15 School, which is a boarding school, and worked with their
16 LGBTQ group. Ms. Mitchell was running the group and just
17 going there and seeing young LGBTQ people out and open in who
18 they were, but still hearing the stories of how they're being
19 treated in school, was horrific and it was ugly. And this
20 was like 20 years ago, still advocate. I always wanted to go
21 to boarding school, because a lot of my friends were LGBTQ
22 going to boarding schools. I feel that because of their
23 boarding school experiences they didn't want their kids to go
24 to boarding schools, so went to public school all of our
25 lives. I kind of felt a little upset about that, but now I

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1 kind of understand, as an adult. My dad has passed on. My
2 mom is still here. But talking about boarding school

3 experiences, they have shared some of their experiences from
4 boarding school, but not all of them, which kind of makes me
5 want to go and talk to my mom and ask her some questions, so
6 I'll probably do that today or tomorrow or when I go visit
7 her, but I'm sure I'm going to hear stories of how she was
8 treated, how my dad was treated and also talk about other
9 people who have been treated in the wrong way. So with our
10 Native LGBTQ population I'm hoping to reach out to our
11 population who have gone to boarding schools to get letters
12 to also share their stories publicly too, because their
13 voices are not being heard. So I just implore everybody to
14 always include our Native LGBTQ friends on the work that's
15 being done. I have been doing advocacy for awhile and have
16 been involved in a lot of the groups that around here and
17 being on national task forces and representing our Native
18 Trans population, and that's not going to stop. I have a
19 voice and will continue to use it. So I just wanted to share
20 that and I want to thank our Secretary for having this and
21 continuing this and all the work that you do in involving us.
22 Thank you.

23 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. We have
24 about 45 minutes until lunch break. Do we have anyone else
25 who wishes to speak this morning?

23

1 SPEAKER: (Native language) I'm sorry, I just got

2 here and walked up the hill and came right in and wanted to
3 share my story. My name is Geraldine and I am of the Nomad
4 Mexican clan. My paternal grandfather is the Folded Arms
5 People. I am originally from New Mexico. I make my home in
6 Albuquerque with my two child and my husband. I come today
7 to share about my family's story. I am the
8 great-granddaughter, his given name, English name was Tom.
9 His image is widely used as part of the first Indigenous used
10 to promote Carlisle Boarding School, Indian Boarding School
11 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. His image was used on a postcard
12 that was presented to Congress to talk about how the school
13 was doing and how well it was working. He was one of the
14 first Navajos sent to Carlisle. He was an older youth at
15 that time. I have this photo that was given to me when I
16 went to Carlisle as part of the 100th anniversary of the
17 school and I was able to speak at the National Indian
18 Boarding School Healing Coalition Conference. I was also
19 able to present to Historical Society in Carlisle and at that
20 time, this is when I was presented with the two images and
21 was able to get a copy of the group photo that was taken at
22 the bandstand on the grounds of the boarding school. I
23 wanted to speak on my family's behalf because I think a lot
24 of times his image is used often and there's no story that is
25 shared with it. So I stand before you as his voice, as he

1 was one who survived. I stand as well representing my
2 grandmother, whose necklaces I wear today, and I remember her
3 stories of when she was hidden when the Indian agents came
4 around and what her family did to save her and protect her
5 from the Indian agents, so I wear these necklaces on her
6 behalf. And to share stories. I brought my father's year
7 book when he went to Indian school. He also attended Fort
8 Wingate Boarding School and he graduated in 1962 and
9 eventually went to Haskell Indian Institute at that time, and
10 so I have his year book. I also brought another book and it
11 states the illustrated history of New Mexico and my
12 grandfather is on the front page. A resident of New Mexico
13 long before New Mexico became a state. He was born around
14 1862, I'm not sure he was part of the journey to Fort Sumner
15 or if he was born after, as the Navajos returned home. But
16 in 1882 is when he began his journey as a young man to
17 Carlisle. When speaking in Pennsylvania I was very fortunate
18 to meet with other descendents and we were able to talk about
19 our stories and share the stories from the different parts of
20 the United States and help their family members who were sent
21 to Carlisle. That made me strong and helped me to understand
22 how important it is for these survivors, the descendents to
23 share our story. About five years ago is when I made first
24 trip to Carlisle and ironically, when I came back that
25 Saturday, the following Sunday I actually got to meet with

1 Secretary Haaland at an event in the North Valley and I told
2 her -- I introduced myself to her and I said, "I just made
3 this trip." She embraced me and hugged me, it was so
4 meaningful and we talked and she said how important it was to
5 share the story, and I always remember that. And I also
6 think it's very important, as I mentioned, to put a voice to
7 my grandfather's image, because too often these black and
8 whites are kind of just figments of history, like these
9 people didn't exist or they have passed. And I stand here,
10 two generations from my grandfather. He was given the name
11 Tom, the last name that he received while being placed in the
12 Pennsylvania Countryside. There was two placements he had
13 where he learned farming and taking care of livestock. He
14 actually had two trips. The first one in 1882 to 1884 and
15 then he returned back to New Mexico, and then he went back to
16 Pennsylvania 1884 to 1886, so he traveled twice and he had
17 two placements. Upon his return he came back to work as an
18 Indian scout, was before Wingate Indian Agency. During his
19 time there he was able help translate and help to assist with
20 developing water systems in the McKinley County area and on
21 the Navajo Reservation. He had six children. My grandfather
22 was the first born, his name was Tom and his Indian name was.
23 The last surviving children Tom passed last winter and the
24 surviving child, her name was Betty, she resided in Tohatchi

25 until her passing. My uncle Michael serves on the

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1 administration. My other grandfather Tom C served as a
2 Tribal Council delegate in the 1960s. For a number of years
3 he worked as a Chapter official with the Coyote Canyon
4 Chapter House and I was very fortunate to grow up knowing all
5 of my grandmothers and grandfathers. During that time they
6 didn't really speak of their father, but it wasn't until I
7 went to college that my grandfather Tom C pulled me aside and
8 he sat down with me and he pulled out the postcard of this
9 image and then he said, "I want to share this story with
10 you." I didn't know the image right away, and he said, "this
11 is my father." And so he told me the story. Back then we
12 didn't have the Internet. We didn't even have access to
13 libraries at that time, so it was hard to know and do any
14 research, because I went to school and went to college and
15 soon after the Internet was developed and we could access
16 information at our fingertips. I was able to identify and
17 look at more information. And then it was actually with the
18 Internet is how I was able to make those connections back to
19 Carlisle. I worked at an agency, a non-profit agency, in
20 Albuquerque and had a coworker who is Oklahoma Native, she on
21 her Facebook post had indicated that a basket weaver was
22 looking for family members of Tom. I responded quickly, and
23 she said that she was looking to honor the Carlisle Boarding

24 School students and so she asked for information. At that
25 time I wasn't sure how my family would feel, because as many

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1 of their elders remained, I wanted to be respectful of them.
2 And I had asked if we could share this story and our family
3 history and they agreed and we shared our story. So she was
4 able to make a basket that was used and presented and remains
5 in Carlisle, so that opened the door wide open. So from that
6 I began that journey by offering prayers, meditating, and
7 asking ancestors and elders for the guidance to do this
8 journey and share our story in a way that respects our
9 family. And that was five years ago. I've been collecting
10 different information. I actually have an Instagram page
11 where I do document different information that I find online.
12 I have been collecting different books. I have presented
13 information to some of the local schools, you know, keeping
14 his memory alive and sharing his story. For our family we
15 have that long history, as I mentioned, working as
16 interpreters. My father worked as an interpreter with the
17 Gallup Indian Medical Center, so he drove the nurse to the
18 remote areas on the Navajo Reservation. My grandfather, Tom
19 C, as I mentioned, a community leader. And then I am the
20 first generation college student, work in the field of
21 behavioral health and mental health. I see how important it
22 is with the storytelling as a way of healing, because that's

23 how I have been able to do that for myself and for my family,
24 as well as to keep that story going and telling the truth
25 when often it's a shameful truth and I think that's why

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1 family was reluctant to speak about it. But this is a time
2 for healing and it's important that it comes from the
3 families. They had digitized a lot of images and I still
4 keep close connection with the curator there and he share
5 information when they find new information. I am always on
6 the lookout for the items that he wore, his clothing, when he
7 was first sent, I look on auction sites antique stores,
8 anything, because I am not sure what happened to his items
9 and I know that they still are out there, I feel that they
10 are. But I just wanted to take this opportunity to share
11 that story. I am available to talk. I do have more
12 information, I do have information from the U.S. Census and
13 learning of how our last name changed and that was done
14 during the U.S. Census and that name transitioned. The
15 history of New Mexico. My cousin is a former Ms. Indian
16 World. I come from a family if rodeo athletes, my brother,
17 myself, my uncles participated in rodeo. And I think about
18 how we were able to utilize those skills. Great-grandfather
19 was a livestock owner and we grew up with horses and cattle.
20 So that hardship that he endured by being forced to leave, he
21 brought back and we have developed strengths from him. My

22 brother and my uncles were very fortunate to represent the
23 State of New Mexico at the National High School finals rodeo
24 on two separate occasions. So there was strength, even
25 through those hardships. And I would like everyone to also

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1 understand that with those stories of pain, there's also the
2 light and blessings and that we can be appreciative of it as
3 we learn in our healing and our stories. Thank you.

4 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. I think we
5 had a gentleman in the back who wished to speak next. Thank
6 you for sharing your stories.

7 SPEAKER: Thank you very much for having this
8 conference. My son told me about it this morning. He called
9 me and he said, "dad, dad, dad, there's a conference at the
10 Isleta about trauma from boarding schools, "and I said, "oh,
11 yeah, I'll make it, I'll get there as quick as I can,"
12 because we're a boarding school family. I went to boarding
13 school, my brothers and my sister went to boarding schools at
14 St. Catherine's in Santa Fe. And we had cousins that went to
15 boarding school at St. Michael in Arizona. I even have a
16 close relative of mine is a sister. And going on relations,
17 we are related to Deb Haaland. Deb Haaland great-grandfather
18 and my grandfather are brothers from Jemez. I was raised
19 with my grandpa being head of the Eagle Society and my mom
20 was from Acoma and my grandpa from Acoma was head of society.

21 We were taught really deep religious ways of the pueblos and
22 I think that's what shielded me from abuse or anything of
23 that nature, but my younger brother wasn't so fortunate.
24 When he was at St. Catherine's he was experiencing -- were
25 allowed to take care of boys dorm, before that it was

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1 laypersons that took care of the boys dormitory, but then the
2 Franciscans made a contract or whatever were allowed to take
3 care of the dorm and also to teach classes at St. Catherine.
4 My brother witnessed an assault of his friend in the showers
5 and he went in there and fought one of the clergymen and
6 priest, and he was expelled and that trauma -- he had a hard
7 life, he had substance abuse, alcohol, he couldn't nurture
8 family situations and he finally succumbed to liver damage
9 and passed away in Santa Fe. I'm a city bus driver. I've
10 been driving for many years. Albuquerque is a border town.
11 Right now if you go up and down Central you'll see the
12 majority of the ones are really at their end of the life just
13 about are Native Americans. I think of this trauma that
14 we're all going through as being passed down from generation
15 to generation and some of the people that have been
16 traumatized, they climb up, a lot of them they climb up and
17 it's just like when our soldiers, some of our soldiers come
18 back from war, they get that shell-shock they used to call
19 and PTSD, it's the same thing, but sometimes, you know, we

20 have to let them out and we have to have our families
21 involved, like some of these speakers have said, and that I
22 think will keep our youngsters on the right road and they
23 will know that there is trauma and there are ways to fight it
24 off. And I think Native religion and Native food is the
25 answer. You got to stress that, because -- we recently went

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1 through a pandemic and I've learned that if you eat your
2 Native food, you can survive that pandemic a lot easier than
3 just the shots or whatever. And like I said, I pray for
4 everyone in a Native way. Our ways, we pray for our family,
5 for the people in the village and for the whole world, for
6 the whole world for healing in a good way, so everybody will
7 have a good road, a good life and that's what I bring to all.
8 Like I said, I pray for you all. I pray for all of us to
9 heal and I pray for my brothers who are in Albuquerque who
10 are struggling on the streets, I shed a tear when I see them.
11 I've driven long enough to see them coming as teenagers,
12 young men and women trying to seek a life here in Albuquerque
13 in a border town and then they can't make it so they get
14 their friends, you know, free booze, free drugs and before
15 you know it they are so down and out and before you know it
16 they're just about at their death bed just about. It's
17 heart-wrenching. Thank you.

18 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you very much.

19 We have time for one, maybe two more speakers before we take
20 a lunch break. Is there anyone else who wishes to speak this
21 morning? The gentleman back here, thank you.

22 SPEAKER: Good morning, sir, Madam Secretary, Mr.
23 Assistant Secretary, thank you for being here. And,
24 Secretary, it's always good to have you home here in New
25 Mexico, always appreciate your leadership. I'm glad that

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1 we're having this conversation here. I am a member of the
2 Navajo Nation. I am also a school board vice president for
3 the Navajo Preparatory School, and just wanted to share a few
4 stories. It's really humbling to really hear some of these
5 past stories. Really some of these intergenerational
6 stories. I think I'll share just a few things. I went to a
7 residential school. My experiences were a little different.
8 Maybe similar in some instances in the sense that it was
9 structured like a boarding school. But I think going to
10 school, spending four years in a residential school that was
11 built in the thirties was a mission school, that was how
12 place came to be. I didn't really think much of it until I
13 went to boarding schools, spent four years there and I
14 started to think about some of the stories that my own family
15 shared. For example, my grandmother was a survivor of a
16 boarding school. There's goods and bads about it. I think
17 that she learned to -- she was a very strong woman. She's 95

18 years old November, next month. But she learned to read and
19 write, but she also learned how to converse in English and
20 speak with her grandchildren and speak with others. But I
21 think on the traumatic side she also experienced -- she
22 doesn't talk about it, but I know that she ran away from her
23 boarding school and walked home and that was probably about
24 30, 35-mile trek and she walked home. It must have been so
25 traumatic for her that she decided to just leave school and

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1 return home, but she's a very strong woman and I think some
2 of my values come from that. My stepdad also went to a
3 boarding school in Arizona and he mentioned, and I think this
4 is common among a lot of folks when they speak their own
5 languages, they used to wash his mouth out with soap when he
6 spoke Navajo, but as a way to deal with the trauma he would
7 -- he still jokes about it. That's how he dealt with the
8 trauma. He also mentioned how mean the staff used to be.
9 He's a strong individual. I think that a lot of my values
10 come from that. I think maybe some of those experiences
11 helped him later on when his own family was displaced over
12 the dispute over land between our Navajo and Hopi relatives.
13 But those are some stories. I know there's some really deep
14 stories. I can only listen and have much respect for those
15 who are still with us to share their stories, because those
16 stories make us stronger. Again when I was at my boarding

17 school I always thought about the history of my own people
18 that were there. Back in the twenties and thirties Navajo
19 moms and dads used to bring in their wagons and drop the kids
20 off there and they wouldn't see them for years and I think it
21 had a really dark history there, but today we're taking that
22 opportunity at our school, just like other schools. I know
23 that Santa Fe Indian School is doing the same thing where we
24 are taking ownership of our -- really taking that moment to
25 really learn about who we are, as well as learn about these

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1 tragedies that our relatives dealt with and really taking
2 that moment to really understand the relationship between our
3 Native Nations and the federal government. In fact, we
4 partnered with the University of New Mexico last year with
5 the Native American Studies Department to put a course
6 together. The Department of Interior and the Secretary were
7 able to bring this conversation forward, because a lot of our
8 youth are learning about our past and I think it's so
9 important. I think that makes our Nation stronger. Just
10 wanted to share that. Thank you so much, appreciate it.

11 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. Is there
12 anyone else here this morning who would like to share their
13 story or their family's stories this morning? I know that we
14 have got folks from different press outlets here today, so if
15 you're waiting for them to leave, we're going to go into a

16 lunch break starting in a few minutes. The Pueblo of Isleta
17 has graciously agreed to help feed all of us today. We'll
18 have a brief meet and greet with the Secretary and
19 opportunities for photos if some of you would like, then we
20 can reconvene in the afternoon and continue to hear from
21 folks who want to speak and have been waiting to speak for
22 the press to leave. I'll put out a final call for speakers
23 this morning before lunch break. Seeing none, we'll take a
24 break for lunch. Thank you.

25 (Lunch break)

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1 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: We have excused
2 members of the press from the meeting today, so if anybody
3 who has been waiting to share comments or stories until
4 afterwards, you can do so. Now we're going to resume. We're
5 going to go until the late afternoon or earlier, depending on
6 the number of comments. We'll turn it over to you now.
7 We'll open the floor back up. Simply raise your hand and
8 we'll find you with our micrunners.

9 SPEAKER: Good afternoon. I'm from the Tribe Isleta
10 and both my parents were products of boarding schools. My
11 dad went to school at Albuquerque Indian School and my mother
12 went to the Catholic schools, Our Lady of Sorrows in
13 Bernalillo and St. Catherine's in Santa Fe. According to
14 their stories, their experiences were similar. My dad said

15 they were regimented on uniforms, they made them march. And
16 I guess the only time they went home was when they were
17 allowed to go home. They went to school in a horse and
18 wagon. My mother said they were transported to school with a
19 horse wagon also. My dad didn't really talk a lot about the
20 abuses or anything like that. I can't remember hearing
21 anything, except the regimentation, you know, of marching and
22 wearing uniforms and stuff. But my mother had stories about
23 being in school at Bernalillo. She said the nuns were very
24 mean, especially if they knew their parents went to school
25 there. They would hit them with rulers and just really treat

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1 them mean and because of that her dad sent her to St.
2 Catherine's. At St. Catherine's she said they were treated
3 better. They slept on straw mats and were -- I guess they
4 had to do assignments, you know, work in the school cleaning
5 and stuff like that, but she said the experiences there were
6 better. I'm a product of the Albuquerque Indian School and
7 graduated there. I was there six years and I didn't
8 experience a lot of hardships. The only thing was when I
9 completed elementary school we all thought we were supposed
10 to go to the Indian School, I didn't know why, but everybody
11 went from -- most of the kids from Isleta anyway. I learned
12 how to become independent, learned how to do my laundry,
13 learned how to iron, even sometimes we burnt our clothes, but

14 that was okay. There were a lot of rules that we had to
15 abide by. We were allowed to go home if our parents came to
16 pick us up. Holidays like Thanksgiving or Christmas, and we
17 were home during the summertime. We had to do chores and
18 everything was on a schedule. So if you went off schedule
19 then you were punished. You know, you weren't allowed to do
20 stuff. But my experience was not as bad as what my parents
21 experienced. Thank you.

22 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you very much
23 for sharing.

24 SPEAKER: Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you,
25 Madam Secretary and Mr. Newland for convening this hearing

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1 today, or this session. My name is Terry Sloan. I'm Hopi.
2 I am the City of Albuquerque's Intergovernmental liaison.
3 And I want to tell you a different story, because my mother
4 attended the Albuquerque Indian School and she actually has
5 fond memories of the school. She learned a lot. She father,
6 my Hopi grandfather, actually wanted to send her here because
7 he thought that she would get a better education here in
8 Albuquerque, so that's why he sent her all the way from Hopi
9 to attend Albuquerque Indian School. But again, she didn't
10 suffer the type of trauma that we hear today that is
11 unfortunate and very devastating to our other relatives here
12 in the audience today. There's also a different side that

13 occurred also at the Albuquerque Indian School here. I am
14 also spearheading the work for the City of Albuquerque in
15 regards to the 4H part where there is a cemetery where the
16 Indian School students are buried here. So far we have come
17 a long way and we are looking to build a monument for the
18 students here in the City of Albuquerque. If anybody has any
19 input about that, please let me know. Again, my name is
20 Terry Sloan and I can be reached at the City of Albuquerque.
21 Again, my mom has great stories. She actually became like a
22 gang member, or a gang leader for the women of the school.
23 She had a following of students that she walked around with
24 and then she ultimately got a good education. Teacher at
25 APS. She also got her Masters in Education and she graduated

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1 from the University of New Mexico. Interesting story on this
2 side too is that at another Indian Boarding School she met my
3 father in Flagstaff, at the Flagstaff dorms, so that's how
4 they met there and from there they got married. So that's
5 it. Thank you very much.

6 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you, Terry.
7 Thank you for sharing that.

8 SPEAKER: My Tribal leaders, with respect I speak on
9 behalf of Santa Fe Indian School. Thank you, Secretary
10 Haaland, for your initiative, it brings my heart some peace
11 in knowing that we have somebody leading this effort. We

12 know historical trauma, the results of forced assimilation,
13 we heard and read as educators the horror stories that our
14 ancestors lived. It's really important that New Mexico is
15 heard and I think that because we all in the room, including
16 our Governors here, thank you for coming, Tribal leadership.
17 They have been very supportive in Indian education and moving
18 our initiatives forward, because we know and value education
19 as a means to success, right, in life. We at Santa Fe Indian
20 School want to affirm our support of Secretary Haaland and
21 your initiative and wanting to work with your office to find
22 some remedies to some of the tragic and historical traumas of
23 the past, but looking to our partners and colleagues, to say
24 and to validate the great strides that have been made over
25 time and I can speak to my grandparents' experience at St.

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1 Catherine's Indian School in Santa Fe, my experience at Santa
2 Fe Indian School as a tribally-controlled school and I can
3 hear and tell those stories in ways that would enlighten
4 everybody to a different place of experience far from what we
5 know occurred in the early boarding school eras. At Santa Fe
6 Indian School today we work really hard to embrace culture,
7 language and tradition integrating culturally relevant and
8 responsive curriculum, uplifting and providing our students
9 with a holistic approach to education, one that speaks to a
10 response that's needed across our country in all of our

11 tribally-controlled schools and bureau-operated schools, the
12 federal government has an obligation to provide a quality of
13 education that is going to uplift us and support our tribal
14 communities, our homes and our families and to give us hope
15 for the future. I appreciate you, Secretary Haaland, and
16 your love for our children. It is most appreciated, not only
17 by us educators, but our tribal leaders and all New Mexico
18 tribes. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. We're here
19 to support you and work together so that we can continue to
20 provide our students with the best opportunities and the most
21 successful futures that can be afforded.

22 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. Is there
23 anybody else here who wishes to speak this afternoon?
24 Looking around, it's okay if you -- in the back of the room.

25 SPEAKER: Hello. I am Linda Frank and I am Navajo

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1 Tribe. I'm here with the mental health staff, but I've just
2 been sitting there listening, so thank you to those who
3 shared their story. I just kind of want to say something
4 about speaking to my heart. My family like everyone else's
5 family had attended boarding school. I don't know what,
6 when, where or how, but some of the stories are not told in
7 our family because as Navajo people and Navajo traditions we
8 don't really talk about those kinds of stories because we
9 don't want to bring that kind of energy into our home, to our

10 communities. But I want to say something about historical
11 trauma and trauma that still affects us today. So my
12 grandfather, my paternal grandfather, went to a boarding
13 school and his name was changed. So like many boarding
14 school survivors, they talk about name change. My
15 grandfather's last name was Big Man. It was a Navajo name
16 that was formed into an English name, Ben Big Man. So his
17 name became Ben Big Man. And when he became Ben Big Man he
18 went to boarding school, they gave him that name. And
19 somewhere along the line they changed his last name to Frank,
20 which is last name. So with that I stand here and say, you
21 know, we teach our kids, we teach our children, who they are,
22 where they come from, why their last name is that. It's easy
23 to say, you know, the Yazzies, the Begays, all these Navajo
24 common names, but as a Frank I stand here, my dad was given
25 that last name, Frank. I was given that last name, Frank. I

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1 have a nephew that -- he's 12 years old, his last name is
2 Frank. So often I meet other Navajo people and they say,
3 "are you related to this person," "no, I'm not." My last
4 name was given to me, to my family, from the boarding school
5 ear. And then you kind of stand here and say, it's kind of
6 confusing to me, because as a Navajo woman, I'm supposed to
7 pass these teachings, from my son comes from, this is who
8 your people are, this is where you family comes from and I

9 stand here kind of confused to say, "my last name is Frank,
10 from the Big Man." My other Big Man families, they're all
11 deceased now. So there's nobody named Big Man. So I stand
12 here like, I'm just going to hold on to this last name. And
13 for some reason, you know -- I'm married and I didn't take
14 his last name and I stood my ground and I said, I'm going to
15 always be a Frank and maybe that's the reason that I hold on
16 to this kind of lost effort, this lost teaching, this lost
17 identify and this new way of just changing people's names
18 from this boarding school era. So where do I go with that?
19 I stand here today in 2023 to say, "I'm a Frank, from the
20 boarding school era." And this is trauma to me. This is my
21 way of life now. I'm a psychotherapist, so we're like trying
22 to break these trauma trails and, you know, heal. But I
23 stand here and hold on to this name, where does that lead me?
24 And I think this is important for you guys to hear that, even
25 just a name, a symbol of saying, this is what the boarding

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1 school did to us. My last name -- I vow to stay with Frank
2 until my time to go to heaven. So, you know, with that I
3 just want to share. Yes, it's about the abuse. Yes, it's
4 about the emotional time, but also with the last name. It's
5 a different twist, but it's real, I'm here to tell my story
6 and share the story of where my last name comes from. Thank
7 you.

8 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. Someone up
9 here in the front.

10 SPEAKER: Good afternoon. I'm from the Pueblo of
11 Cochiti and I represent the National Native American Boarding
12 School Healing Coalition. I have been a part of the team
13 since 2018 as a board member. I just wanted to echo the same
14 sentiments that my sister, Superintendent Abeyta just shared,
15 and I think that that reclamation of our children through
16 education and language, the tribally-controlled Indian
17 boarding schools is really the prime example and the best
18 thing we can be doing for our children moving forward, as
19 we're also healing, to work among our elders as well. I'm a
20 community member, weaving through this work, this work being
21 my hard work and also realizing that daily we're experiencing
22 these same kinds of traumas played out in our communities as
23 a result of boarding school, the shaming, the physical,
24 mental, sexual abuses. We know that this is not just an
25 issue nationally or on this continent, but it's also a global

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1 issue. So I'm just very grateful to the Department of
2 Interior for continuing to support us in our work and also to
3 the National Endowment of Humanities for continued
4 partnership. And I think that those are just handful of
5 example of what can happen if we work together in a
6 collaborative way to maximize our resources and to bring that

7 healing to our communities. And I also wanted to mention
8 that Superintendent Abeyta is the first female Pueblo
9 Superintendent and I think that that just resounds in so many
10 ways. So many blessings to all of you today and thank you.

11 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you for that.
12 Thank you for your work. Are there any other speakers today?
13 I can put out a last call for speakers today.

14 SPEAKER: Good afternoon, Madam Secretary, Mr.
15 Chairman, Governors. Matthew 22, 37-40, Jesus said you shall
16 love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your
17 soul and with all your mind. You shall love your neighbors,
18 yourself. That was the devotion that day at the boarding
19 school I went to. It was compelling enough for me to go to
20 the dorm parent and tell him that I was gay. He chastised
21 me. It shouldn't be that way. It was wrong to be that way.
22 But that day he spoke of a love, Matthew 22. That was my
23 experience with boarding school. I'm not blaming you. I
24 don't blame anybody for this, but I do know I had that
25 experience, but you know what it changed me, forced me to

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1 take that experience and be stronger about who I was. Being
2 gay and being from a family that care more about me than this
3 school did. Spent another three years at the school knowing
4 full well I wasn't going to be accepted and wasn't going to
5 be taken seriously. Head of the class, 4.2, whatever the

6 numbers were. And then I fell into depression, I did things
7 and I left the school, went into public school and I felt
8 better there, felt more accepted. I had peers there that I
9 knew I was liked, they were like me. The boarding school
10 didn't do much to make me feel like I was a part of something
11 real or important, it just put me in the corner, set me aside
12 and told me I wasn't accepted. We've all had those stories,
13 whether it's just being Indian, Navajo, Apache, you were set
14 aside. Thank you for your work and dispelling that, taking
15 that away and making all of us feel we have an importance on
16 this planet and this world. Secretary, you carry a big
17 voice, thank you for that. Thank you for being our voice.
18 Saw you sitting in the big chair, being speaker that day in
19 the House, he was proud. I am proud now, because you've
20 given me a voice, I've been hold it inside for a long time.
21 It took me a while to accept, as it was meant when Jesus
22 came. I've tried to foster that, not walls, but bridges, to
23 help, to heal and more importantly, to love. We thank you
24 for the love that you display here and for the love that
25 exits at these tables. We all love each other, but we can't

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1 it, that's just how we've been built. We can't kiss each
2 other because that's what we don't do. We hug, sometimes we
3 wave, sometimes we just sit at home and pray and have faith.
4 So it's taken years to get to this point. We need more help.

5 We need more resources. Not resources that don't capture
6 what we have been through. We just need more resources to
7 build a better way to get beyond this. We've changed in the
8 last 10, 20 years, but we need more leadership like you.
9 Secretary Newland, you're great at what you do, thank you for
10 doing so. The folks at BI, it takes a lot to get where we're
11 going. It's going to take a lot more. They don't like us in
12 D.C., we know that. We're going to have a hard time trying
13 to get over that, but today we're about family, today we're
14 about caring for each other. So thank you for taking that
15 step and for being a part of this and thank you for allowing
16 me to say what I needed to say, thank you.

17 SPEAKER: Hello everyone, my name is Ginger. I was
18 actually an exchange student at Phoenix Indian High School.
19 I'm not Native, I'm a white girl, Polish. I graduated from
20 Phoenix Indian in 1971. And the only reason I am speaking at
21 all is because I just want to give some information to you,
22 for those of you that may want to get ahold of your school
23 records that have information regarding your families, that
24 you may not know or your parents or your grandparents that
25 went to boarding school, have records, they may have records

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1 in their National Archives in various facilities around the
2 country and there may be information in there that may be
3 helpful to you. It may take a little bit of research for you

4 to find where exactly they're being held, because sometimes
5 they're not in the area where you actually, you know, live.
6 They might be a little bit further away, but I was able to
7 get my school records from Phoenix Indian School many years
8 ago, they're in Southern California in the National Archives
9 there. They were in Riverside, but that facility moved to
10 another place not too far in Perris, California. And I also
11 got my Navajo sister's records for her from 1971 from
12 graduating from Phoenix Indian. This is just -- it has
13 nothing to do with me, but my experience. But I just wanted
14 to give you that information in case anyone is interested in
15 searching for their physical records. Actually what this
16 woman was speaking of here as far as the name, your last
17 name, this may be an issue also. I wasn't really thinking
18 about that, but I know names were changed and so you may have
19 to consider that when you're looking for your relatives.
20 That's all I have to say. I'm very happy to be here today.
21 I actually came from South Carolina after my brother's
22 funeral. I didn't know that this was happening today, so I'm
23 a little bit frazzled here, but I'm so glad I came and
24 thankful for everybody that did come and told their stories
25 and thankful to Deb Haaland and Mr. Newland for being here

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1 and doing this. I have family up in Montana so I'm planning
2 on going to Bozeman next Sunday, so I appreciate everybody

3 working on this right now. Thank you.

4 SPEAKER: Good afternoon, Secretary Deb Haaland.

5 Thank you for coming back to New Mexico and for having this
6 session here in my own community, the Pueblo of Isleta. My
7 name is Tiffany. I am the policy and advocacy director for
8 the coalition to stop violence against Native women and our
9 mission is to tackle ending the cycle of violence within our
10 tribal communities. Here in New Mexico we serve the Four
11 Corners area and 18 Pueblos here in New Mexico, our Apache
12 Nations, the Navajo Nation and our sister tribes in El Paso,
13 Texas. I just want to say that I think we also have to
14 acknowledge the survivors who are not here, the children who
15 didn't make it, and the stories that were untold. As I was
16 sitting here with one of the survivors from my community and
17 my family, my aunt who is here to support, we were having
18 conversations about the stories we weren't ready to tell and
19 how those stories never made it to my generation. My
20 grandpa, he was a traditional person here in our pueblo and
21 he has been passed since 2008 and I never known that he was a
22 survivor of the Indian Boarding School here in New Mexico.
23 And that trauma, it exists. Perpetration is so prevalent in
24 our communities. I am a survivor of sexual violence, I am a
25 survivor of domestic violence and I often wonder, where did

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1 that come from, where was that learned and why is it still

2 happening in our communities. And I just want to acknowledge
3 that there's stories here that were never told. The families
4 of decedents that never even been told those stories and how
5 it's impacted and affected them. And I think it's important
6 to also acknowledge the people who are no longer here, my
7 grandpa, he died and he's not here to tell his story and why
8 that trauma is so prevalent in our community and our family.
9 I think our people lost our way. Our men have lost their
10 goals in our communities and I hope that this session and
11 these sessions that have been happening, bring us some
12 insight in how we move forward from here and how we heal.
13 So, Secretary Haaland, again thank you for being that person,
14 that voice for us, I appreciate you and everyone here who has
15 been very courageous to speak up and share on behalf of your
16 families, your communities, your people.

17 SPEAKER: I just want to share one last story. So
18 when the research done on my great-grandfather began, I would
19 say 20 years ago, 25, but it really took off as the years
20 progressed, but I wanted to share my healing journey and I
21 know that it needed to be done. I want to do it in a way
22 that was very respectful of my ancestors and my grandparents
23 and the family members who were survivors who were still on
24 this earth, and so I did the offerings. When I first went to
25 Carlisle I went with my aunt and we drove in near the college

1 and I said, "before we go we need to do the offering." There
2 was a corner field, this was in October, and I don't know
3 whose land it was, but we parked and we went walking right
4 into the middle. I said, "I think this the middle." We went
5 there, we put down the cornmeal and we prayed. Thinking
6 about all the families who were affected and the children,
7 and we just prayed, we cried, we were hugging in the middle
8 of the corn field in October hoping that we wouldn't be shot
9 at or anything. Then we went back and we went onto the
10 grounds. We went to the cemetery, we went to the barracks,
11 we took our tour. We were there for about four days and on
12 the last day as we were heading back to Harrisburg to catch
13 our flights we took a drive through the countryside and these
14 country roads, they were field with apple orchards and we
15 were just amazed, just flowing. And they had big bins on the
16 side filled with apples. And my aunt says, "oh, I bet those
17 apples taste good." I said, "yeah, maybe we should stop and
18 get some." She was like, no, no, no. And I stopped and I
19 said, "no." I said, our grandfather knew we would be coming
20 back, that we would need something to eat, that we would be
21 nourished, so we'll take the apples. We're not stealing,
22 we're taking back what was taken from us and we're going to
23 be strong because of this. She smiled. And I said, "we're
24 just going to take, you know the two apples." That was a
25 special moment that I had with her. And I think about that,

1 think about, you know, the stories that I had heard from
2 other individuals who made that journey and I pray daily for
3 that, for that connection and for that healing, for all the
4 families. When we were on the grounds of the college and we
5 were at the cemetery, it's just such a powerful moment. I
6 was not expecting to be emotional as I was. But I know now
7 even after all these years, you know, that was what was
8 prayed and offered years ago and that we need to continue
9 that and continue to tell our stories and it's going to be
10 our healing stories. Thank you.

11 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. Any
12 additional speakers today? Yes, here in the front.

13 SPEAKER: (Native language) Good afternoon,
14 everyone, Chairman, Governors, Secretary Haaland, Assistant
15 Secretary Newland. My name is Chino, I'm the Lieutenant
16 Governor for Pueblo of Acoma. I came here today to listen.
17 I didn't attend boarding school, but my grandmother went to
18 boarding school. She attended Albuquerque Indian School and
19 growing up she also talked to me in English, she never spoke
20 to me in our language. The whole family spoke and they
21 conversed with each other, but my grandparents raised me, so
22 I asked her, you know, "why don't you converse in our
23 language," and she said, "I want you to learn the English
24 language because that's what you are going to use in the

25 future and I want you to do the best you can in school." And

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1 I wanted to go to Santa Fe Indian School, but she didn't want
2 me to, from her experiences in boarding school at
3 Albuquerque. Our elders, they never brought up boarding
4 school, every now and then when they're joking around, I
5 guess just to kind of hide the abuse and trauma that they
6 dealt with. Some of the people here today and seeing it on
7 the Internet of, the effects it had to our Native people, I
8 had to speak up, because without my grandmother speaking to
9 me in our language, as I grew older it was hard to talk our
10 language, but listening to our elders in kiva settings and
11 meeting settings I learned more. In some eyes, peoples eyes,
12 I may be a fluent speaker, but to me I don't really consider
13 myself fluent, because there's a lot of old words that have
14 been lost, been forgotten, a lot of our ways, our culture,
15 traditional, some of them have been lost, but as Tribal
16 leaders when we are put in these positions we put our own
17 family back. And it's all about the people, land and animals
18 and praying for moisture. So we take the whole Tribe, all
19 the people, we say our prayers, take them under our arms, our
20 wings, as we carry them to the north, how the sun travels,
21 the sun starts heading back, until December when their term
22 is up, that's how we calculate our term, our year of carrying
23 our people. And as we're getting to December, I'm glad, I'm

24 happy, did you do this for my people, the land and animals.

25 But part of the reason I spoke up was to ask for continuation

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1 of funding for our schools and our language programs, because
2 they do work. And we've lost our language and it's not only
3 with our pueblo, but different pueblos and different tribes
4 throughout the Nation. So I ask for that continuation of
5 help. It's not going to be for us, it's for our children,
6 our grandchildren, the future. Being one of the tribes that
7 carry the canes, canes of power, we pray to them in the
8 morning, in the evening, for whenever time we go home and we
9 talk to them, because they're a living, breathing entity.

10 And with that, when I go home this evening I'm going to pray
11 for all the people that were affected by the boarding schools
12 and their families, may they find peace and continue to move
13 forward. We don't look backwards, it's always forward. So
14 with that I'm going to end right here. (Native language)

15 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: I think we've heard
16 from almost everyone. Chairman.

17 SPEAKER: Good afternoon. (Native language) Again,
18 good afternoon. My name is Mark Mitchell, former Governor
19 from the Pueblo of Tesuque and currently I'm the Chairman of
20 the All Pueblo Council of Governors, which collectively
21 represents all of the pueblos in the State of New Mexico and
22 our sister pueblo in El Paso, Texas. First and foremost, I

23 want to thank all of you that spoke. It's hard to do this,
24 to come up and talk. May the creator bless you on your roads
25 to healing. May the creator see to it that you live a long,

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1 healthy life when you see your children, grandchildren grow
2 up. In a leadership role it's pretty much the same and
3 sometimes we don't have the answers, so we have to look at
4 our staff. And staff, thank you for what you do,
5 whole-heartedly appreciate it, because it's you that are on
6 the frontlines, it's you that we turn to to seek your
7 guidance as a leader; that is, through our talks and
8 discussions where we find the answer, how we're going to move
9 forward. And in our council meetings, governors council
10 meetings, we always make sure that we talk to each other as
11 governors, support each other. But we always tell our
12 people, Native people, Indigenous people of the land, you are
13 the smartest people on the face of the earth, because you
14 live in two worlds and you have to speak your language,
15 that's the strength, that's your core. Pass your language on
16 to the unborn. Do not be afraid to talk. When you see each
17 other anywhere, talk in your language, hello, how are you.
18 Show your children that you know. Plant that seed, because
19 if you don't, we start separating and language is lost,
20 tradition is lost. So how can we move forward, how can we
21 call ourselves Natives, Indigenous people, if you don't do

22 that as parents. I ask all of you to do so in your own
23 language and support one another. And to those that spoke,
24 again may the creator bless your ways truthfully, honestly.
25 And to the hurt that might have been happening, the damage

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1 that was caused, the creator knows, in time. And also
2 remember that this form of government was never created for
3 us, that's why we have to always fight, that's why we have to
4 always go and ask the government. But don't stop, because
5 the moment you stop doing that, they're going to forget about
6 us. I tell leadership all the time, "remember, our ancestors
7 paid it forward in perpetuity." When Christopher Columbus
8 landed on the east coast 1492 and 1540 when the Spanish came
9 in through here, our people paid it forward in perpetuity and
10 they did it for us. I always tell the leadership that in
11 1680 we had the pueblo revolt. Again our leaders back then
12 physically stood up and they fought for us. They fought for
13 the unborn so that we don't lose the culture, we don't lose
14 the language and they did it for their unborn. And guess
15 what, we are their unborn. Now we pay it forward to our own
16 unborn, they're going to be coming. So it should behoove all
17 of us to make sure that these types of settings, we tell the
18 truth, this is what happened, and we learn from it to heal.
19 There's people here who are willing to help, don't be afraid
20 to ask for help, that's the way we heal. But again, thank

21 you for doing this, because you all need the help to, and
22 we're here to help. It's about asking for help, never being
23 too proud to say, I don't need it. Don't. We all need the
24 help. I need the help. So this is a good forum, this is
25 where the healing begins. But we always say in the governors

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1 meetings, remember your language, because that's where the
2 power is. The power of prayer, that's what one of the
3 governors would always tell us, "do not forget the power of
4 prayer." The spirits were called in today, they're here with
5 us, they're listening. And although it may not come right
6 away, continue to pray. Do not forget your culture, your
7 language, because here is where we're at. So be strong, have
8 faith and remember, you are the smartest people on the face
9 of the earth, do not be afraid to shine. (Native language)

10 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you, Chairman.
11 I think we heard from everyone here who wants to speak about
12 their families experiences with boarding schools or their
13 own, very grateful for those of you who have come out today
14 to speak or to support those who are speaking. This is
15 important that we hear from you as part of the work that we
16 are doing to tell this part of the history of the United
17 States and it's legacy for the Indian people today.

18 So with that, we're going to close today's session
19 with some closing thoughts from Secretary Haaland and then

20 Governor Zuni agreed to close us out with a prayer.

21 SECRETARY HAALAND: Thank you very much, Bryan. And
22 thank you all so much for being here today. Chairman
23 Mitchell, thank you for your wisdom, always appreciated very
24 much, and I am really happy to be back home.

25 Being in this job I have gotten to visit with a lot

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1 of tribes across the country. In fact, our last Road to
2 Healing was in Alaska and we were there at the Alaska Native
3 Heritage Center, it was a very heavy session, members in the
4 audience were crying from the start when the first person
5 shared, to the finish when the last person shared. After
6 that we got to participate in raising a totem pole for the
7 healing of the boarding school people and it was a very
8 joyous occasion and a lot of people came out for that.

9 So along with all the tears we also see a lot of
10 joy and I think that joy mostly comes from the fact that we
11 were all able to persevere through all of those really
12 terrible eras, starting with colonization 500 years ago.
13 What colonization didn't finish, the assimilation eras did,
14 including the boarding school assimilation era. And even
15 though so many of our people were forced off of our lands,
16 they never gave up. They hid what they needed to from the
17 people who would take things from them. They hid their
18 languages. They hid their customs, their traditions all over

19 the country. They hid all these things from the people who
20 would take them and were able to still teach those future
21 generations.

22 I'm proud to work for a department where we are
23 working really hard to incorporate indigenous knowledge into
24 the work that we do. I was recently near Sacramento at a
25 wildlife refuge there, it used to be a vineyard, grew grapes

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1 and had a vineyard there where they made wine and the owners
2 donated it to the Fish and Wildlife Service and now it's a
3 wildlife refuge and a lot of migratory birds come there. All
4 that area of California used to be wetlands. When the rivers
5 would flow and the rains came, the rivers would flood and all
6 that area was just water where a lot of birds and wildlife
7 lived.

8 Along with all of those eras that we're talking
9 about came the changing of our geography. The changing of
10 our ancestral homelands that our ancestors were so dedicated
11 to. But that particular wildlife refuge now, the tribes in
12 the area will come and harvest the reeds that they grow,
13 that's a native plant that they grow at the refuge, the
14 tribes will come and harvest the reed and that's a
15 traditional cultural ceremony that they are able to pass down
16 to the younger generations. So I see so many opportunities
17 for Native people to feed themselves again, to express their

18 love for the land and the communities that they have shared
19 for such a long time and I just feel like we're in an era now
20 where we're all trying to heal. So I'm grateful that all of
21 you are a part of that.

22 Both of my grandparents went to St. Catherine's in
23 Santa Fe. My grandmother talked about the priests coming
24 around the village and gathering the children and putting
25 them on a train and sending them to Santa Fe and it was not

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1 that far, but it was far for somebody who only had a horse
2 and wagon and a mode of transportation, so my
3 great-grandfather was only able to visit her twice during the
4 five years she was gone from the pueblo. And even though my
5 grandmother didn't really talk in any negative terms about
6 her experience there, it showed in our family. It showed in
7 my mother, the way she was. It showed in the way my mother
8 raised us. And it wasn't until we started this work that I
9 realized that my family was so negatively impacted by the
10 time that my grandmother spent at boarding school.

11 My grandfather died when I was about nine, so I
12 didn't really get an opportunity to speak with him about any
13 of that. I only got the good things from him. I only got
14 him teaching me how to farm in his corn field, so I only
15 remember these happy times with him. But when I think about
16 all of the things, the way I was raised and the stories I

17 heard about the way my grandmother raised my mother, that I
18 realized that the boarding school had a really profound and
19 troubling affect on our family. So I appreciate hearing all
20 of you so that I can come to terms with all of those things
21 myself and I thank you for sharing what you did with me,
22 because I think it helps all of us when we know that we're in
23 this together.

24 I want to give a special thanks to Jim for being
25 here today and also to Brian, because I can't help but think,

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1 the LGBTQ community has been targeted so terribly by our
2 politicians, I think they've been misunderstood in so many
3 ways by the general public, so we need members of the LGBTQ
4 community to always be in a space where they have an
5 opportunity to help us learn and understand, because of
6 colonization our communities welcomed everyone. Our
7 communities cared about every single person that was a part
8 of our community.

9 It wasn't until colonization, it wasn't until the
10 assimilation policies, it wasn't until boarding school that
11 we learned to hate people, that we learned violence, that we
12 learned all of these horrible things and that we learned
13 alcoholism and drug abuse and all of these things, we learned
14 all of those things, we didn't create them ourselves. And so
15 I think it's just incredibly important that we are a

16 welcoming community again, that we welcome everyone, that we
17 care about everybody, that we accept the LGBTQ community as
18 part of who we are. And so I really appreciate you for being
19 here and speaking up about that, it's incredibly important to
20 the work that all of us do.

21 So thank you all again for being here. My mom
22 spent some of her last days here at Isleta at the assisted
23 living home, which is right down the road here, and the staff
24 who were largely from Isleta Pueblo took such good care of
25 her and I am always incredibly grateful for this community

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1 for taking care of my mom. Additionally, some of our in-laws
2 are from Isleta, so I feel like we are all close and I'm
3 grateful to be here in this pueblo again. I've been coming
4 here since I was a child and I feel much at home here. So I
5 want to thank all of you who are from Isleta for welcoming us
6 here. Thank you all again.

7 And I will welcome Governor Zuni to help us close.

8 SPEAKER: Again I want to thank each and every one
9 of you for attending today, it's a really great session. I
10 heard a lot of comments. And I notice there's a lot of young
11 people here, take that to heart, it's history, what happened
12 years ago, hope it never happens again. It always nice to
13 have the younger people here and I encourage them, the
14 parents that are here, the grandparents, to bring their young

15 child to some of these conferences so they will know the
16 history and everything and the statements that you guys made,
17 really appreciate it and the comments that were made. Thank
18 you so much for your comments, I really appreciate it.

19 And as you well know, traditionally what I have
20 taken on, I can't take it with me, my traditions, my customs,
21 my language. I have to leave it here with our younger
22 people, I have to leave it here, that's why we encourage our
23 language, our customs, our traditions to keep on going for
24 the rest of our lives for our younger people. And the
25 younger people that are here right now, always remember, one

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1 of these years you will be standing here, you will be in
2 charge of programs and everything, so you have to take it
3 into your heart and keep on going, because you will be the
4 future.

5 Again, thank you, Secretary Haaland, for having
6 this and we hope that it keeps on going. And to have a
7 satisfaction in our hearts of what our grandparents went
8 through, what our parents went through, what our family
9 members went through going through the boarding schools and
10 everything, that's a healing process, to disclose all the
11 things that have happened. I appreciate it and thank you for
12 having it here. (Native language)

13 (Meeting concluded at 2:16 p.m.)

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1 COURT REPORTER ATTESTATION

2 I, Kim Kay Shollenbarger, Court Reporter, attest
3 that the foregoing proceedings are a transcript of those
4 proceedings that were reduced to printed form by me to the
5 best of my ability.

6 I FURTHER attest that I am neither employed by nor
7 related to any of the parties in this proceeding and that I
8 have no interest in the final disposition of this proceeding.

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<%28828,Signature%>
Kim Kay Shollenbarger
Court Reporter

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