

1 (WHEREUPON, multiple unidentified speakers spoke from
2 the audience. Each speaker is delineated as
3 "SPEAKER")

4 MR. DANIEL: Good morning, (Speaking in Native
5 tongue). It's good to see everybody this morning so
6 we'll just welcome you. My name is Tim Daniel. I'm
7 with the Kiowa Tribe and it's an honor. I'm going to
8 open up with a prayer. So let's just bow your head
9 for prayer this morning. So we'll all pray and bow
10 our heads and let's pray. (Speaking in Native tongue)
11 So, God, we just come to you and admit to beyond
12 anything. Heavenly father, we thank you for this day.
13 And, God, we are coming to you. And we ask you to be
14 with our people. We're asking you to be with our
15 relatives. We're asking you to be with our loved
16 ones. God, we are still here because of you, and we
17 are a humble people, father, because you're wonderful
18 and you do all things so well, Lord. And we are going
19 to continue to pray to you in the name of Christ.
20 Amen.

21 MS. WILSON: Good morning. Thank you for being
22 here. I am Amber Wilson, I'm from the Caddo Nation
23 and I'm the principal here at Riverside Indian School.
24 I would like to welcome members of the community,
25 tribal leaders, federal agency partners, and tribal

1 partners. On behalf of the Bureau of Indian
2 Education, Bureau of schools, Hankie Ortiz, Associate
3 Deputy director, Tony Dearman, Director, we extend a
4 warm welcome to Deb Haaland, Secretary of the
5 Department of the Interior and Assistant Secretary of
6 Indian Affairs, Bryan Newland. Former Congresswoman
7 Secretary, Deb Haaland, made history when she became
8 the first Native American to serve as a Cabinet
9 Secretary for the Department of the Interior. She is
10 a member of the Pueblo Laguna. Secretary Haaland,
11 thank you for making Riverside your first stop on your
12 road to heal tour. Also with us today is Bryan
13 Newland, Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs. He is
14 a citizen of the Bay Mills community in Chippewa where
15 he served as Chief Judge of the tribal president.

16 We thank you both for very -- being here. And at
17 this time, I will turn it over to Mr. Newland.

18 MS. HAALAND: Thank you very much, madam
19 principal. Good morning everyone. Really honored to
20 be here with all of you today. Before I start my
21 remarks, I just want to acknowledge my former
22 colleague, Kendra Horn, who's with us this morning.
23 Thank you so much for being here. I had the honor of
24 serving with her in Congress and she was an amazing
25 representative for all of you so I'm happy you're

1 here, thank you.

2 And happy to see so many of you, friends and
3 family. Yesterday, I was in Yellowstone and I
4 visited -- they have a Indian heritage center there --
5 American Indian heritage. And the person who's there,
6 Kelly Lookinghorse, Lakota said that he had been
7 adopted by a family in Laguna. I said "Well, we're
8 relatives then" and so I'm sure that I have more
9 relatives in this audience than I realize at the
10 moment but hello everyone. And I see that there's
11 Laguna in here represented here at Riverside, so hello
12 relatives as well. (Speaking in Native Tongue)
13 Greetings and good morning to everyone. Thank you for
14 the beautiful blessing and for the songs as we embark
15 on this journey together. It's an honor to join all
16 of you on the ancestral homelands of the Wichita,
17 Caddo, Delaware, Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache people.

18 I'm only going to speak briefly because I really
19 am here to listen to all of you. Federal Indian
20 boarding school policies have touched every indigenous
21 person I know. Some are survivors. Some are
22 descendents, but we all carry the trauma in our
23 hearts. My ancestors endured the horrors of the
24 Indian boarding school assimilation policies carried
25 out by the State Department that I now lead.

1 This is the first time in history that Cabinet
2 Secretary comes to the table with this shared trauma
3 and it's not lost on me. I'm determined to use this
4 position for the good. I launched the Federal Indian
5 Boarding School Initiative last year to undertake the
6 comprehensive effort to recognize the legacy of
7 boarding school policies with the goal of addressing
8 their intergenerational impacts and to shed light on
9 the traumas of the past. To do that, we need to tell
10 our stories. Today is part of that journey. Oklahoma
11 is our first stop on the road to healing which will be
12 a yearlong tour across the country to provide
13 indigenous survivors of the Federal Indian boarding
14 school system and their decedents an opportunity to
15 share their experiences.

16 Through this effort, we want to not only create a
17 platform for people to share, we also help connect
18 communities with trauma and from support and
19 facilitate the collection of a permanent oral history.
20 I want you all to know that I am with you on this
21 journey and I am here to listen. I will listen with
22 you. I will grieve with you, I will weep, and I will
23 feel your pain. As we mourn what we have lost, please
24 know that we still have so much to gain. The healing
25 that can help our communities will not be done

1 overnight, but it will be done. This is one step
2 among many that we will take to strengthen and rebuild
3 the bones of the Native communities that the Federal
4 Indian boarding schools set out to break. Those debts
5 have the potential to alter the course of our future.
6 I'm grateful to each of you for stepping forward to
7 share your stories. I know it's not an easy task.

8 I'll now turn the floor over to my dear friend
9 and colleague, Secretary Bryan Newland. Before I do
10 that, I just want to acknowledge all the incredible
11 hard work that Bryan and his team have done. Some of
12 those folks are here with us today. They worked
13 through their own trauma to produce the first report
14 that you saw. They worked through their own trauma to
15 realize the work that we have to do. And so, I
16 acknowledge that team and -- in just putting
17 everything aside to do what's best for our
18 communities. And so, thank you, Bryan.

19 MR. NEWLAND: (Speaking Native tongue) Madam
20 Secretary, (speaking Native tongue) my name is Bryan
21 Newland or also known as (Incomprehensible) and I had
22 the privilege of serving as Assistant Secretary for
23 Indian Affairs under the incredible and courageous
24 leadership of Secretary Haaland. I want to thank our
25 Riverside Indian School team. If you're a BIE

1 employee, please raise your hand very briefly for -- I
2 want to make sure that we acknowledge you and thank
3 you for all the work that you did to put this together
4 today. I want to say (Speaking in Native tongue) for
5 taking time out of your weekend and summer to join us
6 here today. Many of you have traveled a long ways,
7 both in physical distance and also in time to be here
8 with us today. I'm very grateful that you have shared
9 your time with us here on the Washita River, which is
10 the place -- special that gives this school its name.
11 Today, the Riverside Indian School is known for
12 providing a quality and culturally aware education to
13 young people from across Indian Country. You can see
14 the sign back here where all the students come from.
15 But as the nation's oldest federally operated Indian
16 boarding school, Riverside is also a reminder of a
17 painful time in our history. As we keep investigating
18 the Federal Indian boarding school system and learning
19 about your experiences at specific schools and the
20 overall system, it will paint a picture -- a history
21 that records and documents simply can't do for the
22 rest of the American people. In addition to hearing
23 from you, our next step to identifying marked and
24 unmarked burial sites and cemeteries and determining
25 the total amount of funding that the federal

1 government spent on the boarding school system.
2 Please raise other considerations as you're speaking
3 today that you think we should take into account as
4 we're continuing our work based on your experiences.

5 I also want to acknowledge our colleagues from
6 the U.S. department of Health and Human Services who
7 are supporting this event today. We have with us the
8 acting Director of Indian Health Service, Elizabeth
9 Fowler. I don't know if Ms. Fowler is here in the
10 group with us at the moment. We also have Captain
11 Karen Hearod, who is the Director of Tribal Affairs
12 and Policy at SAMHSA. They're here to support our
13 work and this really difficult conversation and I want
14 to say thank you to them for joining us. We also
15 appreciate the many tribal leaders who are here today
16 on behalf of their people and their survivors in their
17 communities. We know how busy it is and how hard it
18 is to lead a tribal nation so we're grateful for you
19 taking time with us today.

20 So I want to make sure to raise a few points for
21 our conversation today. This listening session is
22 focused on people who survived their experience at
23 federal Indian boarding schools and their families.
24 And we want to make sure that we're hearing directly
25 from them about their experience about your

1 experiences here today. So I'm going to -- we're
2 going to just rely on everybody's respect and refer to
3 boarding school survivors and their -- and their
4 relatives to take the microphone today. Other folks
5 who wished to provide us with a statement, including
6 tribal leaders, can do so by sending us written
7 statements to the e-mail address provided on the
8 information sheet that you have as part of this event.

9 And we appreciate everybody providing space for
10 the survivors and families to share their stories. So
11 those of you who want to share today just -- we're
12 just going to ask you to raise your hand. We have
13 folks here who will bring a mic to you. We'll simply
14 first ask that you state your name, your tribal
15 affiliation, and the name of the boarding school or
16 schools that you attended. Before we open it up, I
17 also want to just note that we do have members of the
18 press here who are with us today for the first hour of
19 this event. Give them the interest of the American
20 people and the historic nature of this work. We
21 wanted to make sure that at least a portion of our
22 conversation was open. But after one hour, we're
23 going to take a brief break. Members of the media
24 will be respectfully escorted out of this room to
25 allow space for those of you who don't wish to share

1 your stories in front of the news cameras. We will,
2 however, have a court reporter here transcribing the
3 conversation today and under federal law, we may have
4 to release the transcript if we're asked to do so.

5 We know that this is a difficult conversation and
6 that for many of you, sharing your experiences will be
7 painful. We do have people here site through our
8 partnership with the Indian Health Service and SAMHSA
9 to provide support if you need it during our session
10 today. So if -- if, you are retraumatized or
11 triggered or just having a difficult time, you can go
12 to the back right through those doors and our team
13 will help guide you to counselors and therapists that
14 we have on site and we will also make sure that we
15 work with you and your families to connect you with
16 follow up support if needed.

17 We'll also ask you to simply be respectful of
18 yourself, be gentle and kind with yourself, care for
19 yourself. We have water here if needed and you're
20 certainly welcome to get up and leave the room for
21 brief periods of time if you need to do so. We want
22 to make sure that you are taking care of yourself and
23 that we're all supporting you.

24 And lastly, the survivors of these boarding
25 schools and their families and of this -- the

1 secretary and I just want to thank you for your
2 courage to come here today and share your stories with
3 us. We want you to know that you're not alone. We're
4 all here alongside you to lift you up, to support you,
5 to tell your story to the American people, and most
6 importantly to help you and your communities and your
7 families to heal.

8 So with that, we're going to open the floor up.
9 We have an open-ended agenda today and we'll stay --
10 you know -- a good portion of the day so long as
11 people wish to continue sharing their stories and from
12 time to time, we'll take breaks if needed and I may
13 call for a break if the Secretary or I need a moment
14 to take for yourselves, but, we're here to listen so we
15 just thank you and we'll go to our first speaker.

16 SPEAKER: My name is Ray Doyah D-O-Y-A-H. I come
17 from the Kiowa Tribe. I was raised near Carnegie,
18 Oklahoma on my great-grandmother's tribe in Lawton.
19 And I wrote this. I attended Riverside Indian School
20 in the 50s for a year when I was in the second grade
21 and I have asked -- I was asked by my veteran's coping
22 class LCSW argument from -- to write about my boarding
23 school experience. And I told her I couldn't remember
24 anything of the whole year because so -- because I was
25 so traumatized that I don't remember or can't recall

1 the whole year except I've managed to put it in the
2 form of a poem titled "I don't remember any boarding
3 school."

4 My mother had a -- has a good memory of her days
5 at Riverside Indian School, and when I talked to Kiowa
6 elders about their boarding school experience as part
7 of a hot meals program in 1987, the experiences
8 related to me were 50 percent good and 50 percent bad.

9 So I survived and I'm thankful and here's another
10 book of my poem -- a writer and I live in Anadarko
11 with my wife Jo here. So thank you for this
12 opportunity, and thank you for coming to Anadarko and
13 being with us on your journey. Thank you. Aho.

14 SPEAKER: My name is Donald Neconie and I am a
15 Kiowa from here in Anadarko. My journey here began in
16 1938. I'm 84 years old. I'm a Marine Corps veteran.

17 Actually, my story begins in St. Patrick's
18 Mission which is south of here. When I started
19 school, my father and mother Oscar and took me by my
20 right hand and dropped me off at St. Patrick's and the
21 moment I landed there, they took me downstairs, took
22 all my clothes off and threw a bunch of green stuff
23 all over me and it stung like hell. It stung my eyes.
24 It stung all over me, and when they put the water on
25 me, it stung even worse. They did not care. They did

1 not, they just said, "If you cry, we will whip you."
2 And I said "That's okay," because I started crying and
3 they whipped me and they whipped me and they whipped
4 and they whipped me into shape, by that I mean I had
5 to learn it their way. Their ways.

6 I used to talk Kiowa. I understood it. But
7 after what they did to me, every time I tried to talk
8 Kiowa, they put lye in my mouth. And they washed my
9 mouth. And when I got out of St. Patrick's Mission, I
10 thought it was over. But then, I landed at Riverside,
11 here. And it started all over again. The same way.
12 They put the lye on me. They took the -- they took me
13 down the stairs. They deloused me. They washed my
14 mouth out with lye to make my stop talking Kiowa. And
15 it was 12 years of hell.

16 I landed here in 1948. I didn't leave until in
17 1950 -- 58, 58. Sorry, 1950, and I started here in
18 1946. I'm sorry. The days mix up. But those days I
19 remember going home only twice. I spent 12 years in
20 this hellhole and that part was like hell. In Kiowa
21 lodge, it was bad. There were -- we had one matron
22 for 100 students. 50 girls, 50 boys. Girls on the
23 other side and boys on the other side. Ms. Wither was
24 the only matron in charge of us. And when she saw
25 that we were doing something wrong, we were herded

1 downstairs by Mr. Eshman. Paddle board, eight feet
2 long, about six feet long. It was so many inches wide
3 and so many inches thick. And he pulled down our
4 clothes and he whipped us, repeated beating -- during
5 the daytime when we would walk and some getting ahead
6 of us would walk and his coveralls would get stuck in
7 his back because the blood would drain from his butt.
8 We were almost all that way.

9 And when we went to the dungeon, we called it the
10 dungeon. In the morning, there was a man by the name
11 of (Incomprehensible), he was cross-eyed. And when we
12 sat down, we had to put our chins inside of our neck
13 and our legs would have to be underneath that chair
14 and he -- the boys would come and kick, kick, kick,
15 kick. And if your legs are touching that and if your
16 legs drop kick. And if you fought back,
17 (Incomprehensible) would hit you right in the chest.
18 Sometimes, he would hit you in the face. But you
19 couldn't cry. You did not cry because if you cried,
20 you got it even worse.

21 So I'm not going to talk about anything to sugar
22 coat this Riverside Indian School, it may be good now,
23 but it wasn't back then. When they tore down Kiowa
24 lodge, I stood by and I cheered. I laughed when they
25 tore it down. Then, they put (Incomprehensible).

1 What a relief. I got put into a college -- place
2 where I was treated like a human being. From my time
3 on, I was treated like a human being, but prior to
4 that, I was not. We were sodomized. Men, girls,
5 boys, we were sodomized. And people knew that was
6 going on and did nothing to stop it. When the
7 authorities came, and they said to put us in jail.
8 They didn't put the people that did that to us, they
9 put -- they didn't put them in jail. They didn't do
10 anything to the people and we went through hell again
11 because we were told that if you told anybody, you
12 would get the hell beat out of you. That went on for
13 almost until we were grown. Until about the 10th or
14 11th grade. Then, it stopped for some reason. But I
15 still feel that pain. I still feel it. What this
16 school did to me and I'm not ready to forgive this
17 school for what it did for anything. And I don't care
18 how much money it takes, I will never, ever forgive
19 this school for what it did to me.

20 The only good thing that happened to me when I
21 was a veteran, when I joined the Marine Corps, when I
22 got through with the courage from the Marine Corps,
23 little sergeant came up to me and he said, "Why was it
24 so easy for you, all seven, to get through this
25 training so easily?" I said "Sir, if you went to

1 school where I went to school, you got the hell beat
2 out of you. You got things that you wouldn't even
3 talk about with your own family. You'd make it
4 through too" and I was 1 of 11 children that went
5 through this school, I was the only one that
6 graduated.

7 In 1958, the day I graduated, seven days later, I
8 was on my way to the Marine Corps. I spent 12 years --
9 4 years in the Marine Corps and finally graduated.
10 I'm happily married now. I have four children. I
11 have grandchildren. But I would never send them to
12 this school until this school is ready to say they're
13 sorry to us. To us that went through this with me.
14 Some of them, they're not even here now. Mostly
15 Navajo, mostly Kiowa. I don't know what other tribes
16 were here. But I know there were a lot of Navajos I
17 graduated with. So I know that they are hurting.
18 They hurt. But they're not here anymore. If they're
19 here, they're barely living. I'm glad I'm living and
20 I'm glad I have a family because I tell them this
21 every time that I get the chance to tell them. Thank
22 you much very much.

23 SPEAKER: My name is Brought (Incomprehensible) I
24 am a Standing Rock Sioux, it's B-R-O-U-G-H-T. I'm an
25 Indian boarding school survivor. I attended the

1 Pierre Indian School and the Eagle Butte Indian School
2 in South Dakota.

3 I started when I was about 6 years old and I was
4 there until I aged out of the 6th grade. I was
5 orphaned when I was 4. My mother was murdered. And
6 so, I was passed around in foster homes by most of my
7 relatives. I ended up in Little Eagle, South Dakota
8 with my grandma and grandpa which I attended a day
9 school. And I was sitting in school one morning and
10 two white men grabbed each of my arms, took me out to
11 a car. From the ride, I don't remember. But the next
12 thing I know, I was at Pierre Indian School in Pierre,
13 South Dakota where they walked me up some stairs, took
14 me into the door into a small room which looked like a
15 laundry room where they stripped me down, they cut my
16 hair off, and they poured liquid in my hair and then
17 they gave me some liquid stuff in my hand and told me
18 to go to showers. When I got out, they issued me
19 towels, sheets and told me I was no longer allowed to
20 use my name. I was given a number and my number was
21 199 and I used that throughout the duration of being
22 at Pierre Indian School.

23 We were not allowed to speak unless spoken to. I
24 was punished a lot because I did talk. We were not
25 allowed to talk our language or speak our language

1 which I also got punished for that. I was often
2 brought out into the hallways and they put a brick in
3 each one of my hands and make me kneel there until
4 they were satisfied and I would start to slouch down
5 and they'd come by and smack me with a ruler and tell
6 me to straighten up. And so, I would be kneeling out
7 there for hours.

8 Once, they took me down into the basement. It
9 was when I first got there when I was stripped down, I
10 was asking for my clothing back. And they told me I
11 was going to sit there downstairs on the cement bench
12 until I complied with what they wanted me to do and I
13 stayed down there until it was nighttime. They
14 brought me upstairs, handed me a night gown and told
15 me to go to bed. They took me -- in the morning, they
16 took me to the church and asked for me if I was
17 Catholic or Episcopal and I said I thought they were
18 the same. I didn't know. They put a metal cross in
19 my hand and told me I was going to be an Episcopalian
20 and to go pray for forgiveness for who I was. And
21 then I -- once I got into 5th -- 6th grade -- 5th
22 grade, and they transferred me out. Pierre Indian
23 school wouldn't take me anymore. They considered me
24 at being unruly, so they sent me to Eagle Butte
25 Boarding School.

1 We had beatings and the punishments, I went
2 through a towel line once because of a friend of mine;
3 she was caught going AWOL. They would have us -- they
4 would come through dormitories ringing bells, hand
5 bells. We'd have to -- we'd have hand towels, take
6 them down to the washroom and wet them in hot water
7 and I would see some girls taking open safety pins and
8 just sticking them on the ends of their towels. They
9 took my friend, Lucy, and her friend and they lined
10 all of us girls up in two different -- separate lines
11 and they'd start sending the girls down the line and
12 have them whip them with these wet towels. If you
13 didn't do what they wanted, then they would send you
14 down also, which they did to me because my friend,
15 Lucy, takes it the worst. And I couldn't hit her.
16 And so, they ripped my clothes off at the end and sat
17 me down right here after the girls.

18 And it was things like this that we all went
19 through. You know. Cutting your hair off and
20 throwing it in your face, putting head lice, and
21 treating you bad -- terrible. And I didn't start
22 talking about this until about two years ago. I've
23 been in counseling since I was age 22. I've gone
24 through, I think, seven different programs that the
25 Bureau of Indian Affairs have set up for Indian

1 people. I've gone through all of them. My last one
2 was where the Indian education program which I went
3 through in -- from South Dakota, they sent me to
4 Dallas, Texas to go to college. And what they did to
5 us makes you feel so inferior that you don't feel
6 worthy of anything. I didn't even think I was worthy
7 of going to college and I was there for four months
8 and I had to go back home and see a (Incomprehensible)
9 man to talk to him about what I was feeling. And when
10 I went home to South Dakota, he was already expecting
11 me. He told me he was waiting and we talked and we
12 had a ceremony and I went back and he completed my
13 education out and became a lab technologist. But it's
14 things like this, like I said, to this date, I have
15 counseling twice a week and you never get past this.
16 You never forget it. What they did to us was
17 terrible. I don't know how we survived, but I -- I
18 always tell myself, tell my children, those who didn't
19 get to come home, it's time to bring them home, thank
20 you.

21 SPEAKER: Good morning everyone, my name is
22 Dolores (Incomprehensible). I'm half Kiowa and half
23 Comanche, and I attended a boarding school in Lawton,
24 Oklahoma. Fort Sill Boarding School. Lawton is a
25 farming town and it's -- whatever you believe in,

1 there's a boarding school right there in the middle.
2 And when they put us there, we had to stay there. But
3 I just want to say a few things and what I do now that
4 helps me is to write. I write about
5 the (Incomprehensible) I write about the -- and a lot
6 of those teachers were -- and I have my master's
7 degree and I've worked at -- mostly with Indians and
8 school age, high school, college. And I had Indian
9 students who -- we only had listened to me and a lot
10 of them are in college and a lot of them are teaching.
11 Well, probably a lot of them are here and some of them
12 speaking. But I've always wanted to do, like a --
13 like he says, we need to tell. We need to tell what
14 happened. But what they do now, is they'll call the
15 State Department they'll say, Dolores, can you talk to
16 this -- this -- this one was -- wanted me to talk at,
17 it was an American Indian conference in Seattle. And
18 they said, "Talk to them about boarding school,
19 Dolores." I said, "Okay. I can do that." So when it
20 got to be time for the conference, they said, "Okay,
21 Dolores, do you have all of your -- everything set
22 up?" I said, "Yes, I did." So I sat down sat down on
23 the computer and I started typing. And all of the
24 sudden, I started crying and I couldn't stop because
25 she said everything's better coming out. When I

1 attended the Fort Sill school then I started thinking
2 of my family. There were eight girls and four boys --
3 I'm sorry. Eight girls and four boys. And I don't
4 know why I was selected to go. But I didn't know. I
5 didn't even know what my name was. I knew my
6 nickname, but my sister had to teach me what my name
7 was, so I kept going to school with that name. But
8 they called me a nickname. But, when I went to Fort
9 Sill Indian School, we lived in the dorm. It was a
10 big room -- it seemed like it was big but I know it
11 wasn't. And there were rows and rows of those -- what
12 do you call them? They had beds on top of another.
13 And we were there and a of times, all I had was a
14 sheet. But sometimes, when I think mostly it's really
15 hard to realize. But, anyway, the school in Oklahoma
16 City asked me to write this. And so, I did. And I
17 want to read it to you. This -- there's two pages.
18 And so, there are certain smells and sounds that
19 stimulate my memory and instantly, government boarding
20 school, where I spent my early years. Today, I caught
21 the scent of sawdust and it reminded me of the wooden
22 floors of the school where I spent my formative school
23 years. The janitor -- the janitor would throw the
24 dust on to floor and then drag the dust mop back and
25 forth across the wooden floors. I was only 5 years

1 old when I enrolled at Fort Sill Indian School. There
2 were eight girls and three boys in my family. And I
3 was, of course, the youngest. My father was seriously
4 ill for several months, so I decided that some of us
5 would attend a boarding school. (Incomprehensible) I
6 never knew why I was selected to go. Many times
7 throughout my lifetime, I have wanted to ask my mother
8 before she died, but I was afraid to. Realistically,
9 I knew that I had food to eat and I had a place to
10 sleep. Emotionally, I felt abandoned, like I was
11 being punished for some reason. I knew that -- I know
12 now that these were normal feelings, but even so, I
13 still wondered why.

14 I remember my dad taking us to the school. It
15 was very traumatic being there. Even though some of
16 my older sisters were there, I was very lonely. The
17 first experiences with being taken into the
18 cloakroom -- what is a cloak? Who knows what a cloak
19 is? They say go to the cloakroom. It was a linen
20 closet with a high ceiling. We were lined up and
21 taken one by one into the room. They set us up on a
22 high stool -- high stool chair. They took their
23 scissors, and cut off our hair, and filled heads with
24 DDT. This was later banned by the U.S. government as
25 a dangerous pesticide. We looked like little gray

1 haired women. They dressed us up in flower satin
2 dresses and black shoes. We were given a toothbrush,
3 tooth powder, and Vaseline for our skin. We slept in
4 dormitory rooms in bunk beds. I remember rows and
5 rows and rows of beds. I didn't know my English name
6 before I went to the classroom and my sister tried to
7 teach me how to pronounce it. The only name I ever
8 answered to was my nickname given to me there at home.
9 I remember how the other children would make fun of my
10 last name. My name was (Speaking Native tongue) and
11 in Comanche, the word for begin is (Speaking Native
12 tongue) Dolores (Speaking Native tongue).

13 In spite of the difficulties, I managed to
14 survive and became an honor student. Even though I
15 was still teased and taunted by the other children --
16 were excelling and made me feel proud to be doing so
17 well at school. And I knew I would be a survivor.
18 This is what I wrote for the State Department when
19 they wanted me to go to Seattle and read. And I said
20 I can't read it. I can't. They said you have to
21 because this is what you're feeling and this is what
22 happened. So I did go and I read it. One of my
23 friends was there with me and I was able to read it.

24 But these are some emotions that we all have when
25 we go to a boarding school. And I think that the most

1 traumatic about reading this is they cut off my hair.
2 That's why I let my hair long. How many of you went
3 to school and had your hair cut off by those people
4 and put DDT pesticide in your hair?

5 But that's what was -- was happening to me. So
6 what I decided to do when I was at Fort Sill, I was --
7 oh, well, another thing that happened was that when I
8 was in the 6th grade, yes, 7th grade, the girls --
9 they're older girls. They were from out of -- out of
10 state too. And they would get jealous whenever you
11 did something if you had been given a compliment. So
12 one time, they took me upstairs to the dorm. There
13 were five of them. I said -- they always have a Fort
14 Sill Indian School reunion, and every time I said, oh
15 you're going to the reunion, I'm going to look for
16 those girls I don't care for -- in a high chair, in a
17 wheelchair, whatever, they beat the heck out of me.
18 But anyway, they -- they did beat me up and -- and my
19 mother came and took me out of there, and that was the
20 last time I was at Fort Sill Indian School.

21 And another that I will all white school. And
22 there was 12 -- well, not all white, but mostly white.
23 There was -- I was in the 7th grade and there was 12
24 Indians students in my class. And, you know, things
25 were different there but they were -- still had

1 similar problems because every time I'd come back to
2 the 8th grade, 9th grade, 10th, 11th, there would be
3 no more students -- no more Indian students. And when
4 I became a senior, there were no Indian students in my
5 class -- the senior class and I was the only one to
6 finish. So all these things and all, you know, the
7 years that gone through my mind, what can I do? Why
8 are these things happening to me? How can I help? So
9 that's -- we couldn't go to college because there were
10 no grants at the time and no family -- in November,
11 I'll be 79 years old, there's a reason for me to write
12 a whole letter so I can tell everybody. But, anyway,
13 I -- I'm determined to help as many young people that
14 I can to be successful. I don't care who they are.
15 And even if they've gotten out of school, we still
16 need to encourage them to go back to school. They
17 said, "Hey, they're not able to." So when I
18 graduated, I was very pleased to be able to be go to
19 college. So -- how many of you know where Durant,
20 Oklahoma is? There used to be this Oklahoma
21 Presbyterian college. But, I went down there, it
22 was -- it had closed. And they opened it up as a dorm
23 so I was able to go there and stay there in the dorm
24 and work study and we didn't have grants. And then,
25 finally, when I did get to move up to Junior, I talked

1 to the BIA and I asked her to see if I could apply for
2 the scholarship, and they said, no, you went to
3 Haskell for two years. You already paid enough for
4 you.

5 So I went to the college and worked in an office
6 and was able to finance my -- except my husband and I
7 went there. He also -- he didn't go to boarding
8 school, but he was raised by his grandmother who was
9 full blood Kiowa. And she was a -- what was it they
10 said, real grandma. He called her that. We were kind
11 of on the same -- same path. He also graduated and we
12 were pleased about. We both got a master's. He got
13 his -- superintendent and principal. But he died
14 before Christmas from covid. And we were married for
15 54 years and that's -- people would say, "How come you
16 went to Haskell?" They would ask him about Haskell.
17 He said I have to meet Dee.

18 So anyway, I don't want to take up too much time.
19 But I really want to talk to any of you, especially
20 those of you -- I used to teach here, I was the high
21 school counselor here 14 years ago and I was here
22 14 years. This place is beautiful. You should have
23 seen how it was when they were tearing down the
24 buildings; y'all careful now. You might find some A
25 holes in this building. But, you know, my mother

1 couldn't afford children. And when you -- when they
2 start talking to you about school, encourage them to
3 listen. And if you want to, have them call me and I
4 would happily, because there's scholarships available.
5 My grandchildren -- I have four granddaughters. One
6 is graduating from Fort Lewis she wants to be a
7 medical examiner. She got a major and I'm helping to
8 get her a scholarship. How many of you know about the
9 Cobell scholarship? Well, Ms. Cobell, she had -- she
10 was the one that won our -- won our scholarship. How
11 many have ever been, raise your hand. Everybody.
12 But, you know, kids don't know that, about all the
13 scholarships that are available. And you need to ask
14 them, you know, if there's any scholarships they want
15 to look at. Well, ask them what about college, and,
16 like I said, everybody -- I think people are
17 (Incomprehensible) because they always call them.

18 But I really do appreciate our secretary. How
19 many of you saw her and heard about her when she was
20 named secretary? Raise your hand and give her the
21 applause that she deserves. I have something I want
22 to give her. This is very special. This it is lost
23 it; so I'll let someone else too -- have this.

24 SPEAKER: Hello, (Speaking Native tongue) good
25 day. My name is White Butterfly Woman, Ronda

1 Roundtree. I'm from the Standing Rock Tribe in North
2 and South Dakota. My mother, Sharon Goodhouse. We
3 are from Wakpala, South Dakota. She is a St. Joseph
4 Chamberlain Boarding School survivor. I have her on
5 the phone. She'd like to tell you her story.

6 Speaker: (Speaking Native tongue) My name is
7 Sharon Goodhouse. My Indian name is (Speaking Native
8 tongue) and I am from the Wakpala district of the
9 Standing rocks.

10 And I just want to share my story and it's the
11 truth. I went to the Chamberlain, St. Joseph Catholic
12 School for three years. And during those three years,
13 I saw a lot of abuse and my two sisters and I -- we
14 were standing at a fence, watching the pigs. And as
15 far as I can see, nothing was done wrong or anything
16 so he told us all to go back to the dormitories. So
17 we did. And that night, after supper, when everyone
18 was in bed, they were all sleeping -- we're sleeping
19 and I heard some screaming and crying. So I woke and
20 I looked and they were whipping my two sisters. And
21 so, I couldn't understand why. But I saw that that
22 really, really whipping my sister hard. So she was
23 screaming. So I jumped out of bed jumped up at -- and
24 that and I pulled her off and -- and the other one
25 helped -- helped the other one get me off of her. So

1 they put me back in my bed and they whipped me too.
2 So that was all uncalled for and later, the next day,
3 then we heard that it was because we were at the
4 fence, and we weren't -- we weren't supposed to be
5 that close to the animals. They never told us that,
6 but they hit us for it. And they whipped -- they
7 smiled, they hit us hard. We had bruises on ourselves
8 from their belts. And at different times, there -- we
9 weren't the only ones that got whipped. The other
10 ones got whipped. And at one time too, I saw that
11 they punished -- they were punishing three girls and
12 what -- for what, we don't know. We weren't allowed
13 to have friendships. We were just -- so, anyway, we
14 saw that -- mopping the floors, supposed to be mopping
15 the floor with a rag and water and a toothbrush. They
16 used the toothbrush to scrub the floor and it had a
17 big floor to do. And they had water, no -- no,
18 nothing in the water, just the water and a rag, and
19 that's what we had to use. We saw that.

20 And then, other things that I saw, I saw when
21 kids would run away from the school. We were so far
22 away that back in those days that when they would run
23 away, they would have long ways to go before they saw
24 or got picked up by cars or whatever. Anyway, and
25 when they caught and they brought them back, then,

1 they would take the girls to the chair and had they
2 would shave the boys bald-headed. That was in hopes
3 that they wouldn't do it anymore. And this one girl,
4 she was from California, I believe. And she didn't
5 want them to cut her hair because back in those days,
6 we all had to wear braids. And so, she didn't want
7 them to cut her hair, so she was fighting with
8 the nuns to keep her hair. And then, they just
9 chopped her hair one morning. So they cut a piece of
10 her earlobe off. And so, the girl was just screaming
11 and blood and everything was all over, but that didn't
12 stop them. They finished cutting her hair and they
13 took her off to the infirmary.

14 But I saw those kind of things too. And we were
15 given two tin plates -- I don't know what they -- to
16 me, they were tin plates with a blanket then, on top
17 of it. And a -- and a spoon to use and a tin cup for
18 milk. And sometimes, we'll get a half a glass of that
19 to drink. And then, we never got special portions or
20 extra portions. We got a big spoon full of
21 whatever -- let's say we were having for goulash.
22 Well, they would give us a big spoon of goulash and a
23 couple tablespoons of some kind of vegetable to go
24 with it and our milk and one slice of bread. And
25 then, for dinner we didn't get nothing else. That was

1 all of our meals. Mostly, all the time, our breakfast
2 was eat oatmeal. And that was it. We never got no
3 toast or nothing else.

4 So we saw a lot of abuse and I believe it has
5 affected all of us, and I am very glad to hear of all
6 the -- truly that was done because and in -- our in
7 our way, we're calling the spirits. We need the
8 spirits and I believe that all the children that were
9 killed and all of these places that they're finding
10 now, all these Indian children, 2 or 3 hundred in one
11 grave. So what really did happen to them? Will we
12 ever know? But the spirits know. So I'm glad when I
13 hear that when we -- when we're killed, that what it
14 means to us.

15 I'm glad that there's little ones that all lost
16 their lives, that they know that we're doing
17 something, that we're thinking of them. Anyway, and
18 that we will be praying for all of them. Thank you
19 for your time.

20 SPEAKER: (Speaking Native tongue) My name is Ben
21 Barnes. I am chief of the Shawnee Tribe. I'm also a
22 member of the ceremonial community. There are four of
23 us left here in Oklahoma, for -- I want to thank the
24 Secretary and Assistant Secretary for coming to our
25 corner of Indian Country this morning. I come bearing

1 testimony of my tribal citizens that could not be here
2 this morning.

3 For more than 182 years, boarding schools was the
4 chosen weapon to destroy our culture, destroy our
5 land, and try to destroy our religion. They failed.
6 Not too far west from here are the 3 Shawnee
7 ceremonial grounds. My own Shawnee ceremonial ground
8 is just North of Tulsa. In spite of this, my tribe
9 has expended considerable effort in trying to tackle
10 boarding school legacy of my people. For last two
11 years, we've been engaged in Shawnee Indian Mission
12 and Manual Labor School in Kansas City, Kansas. But
13 that was not the only one. There was a Shawnee
14 Baptist Mission in Kansas City, and the Shawnee and
15 Quaker Mission in Kansas City. Three separate
16 missions has tried to destroy our people, destroy our
17 cultural, destroy our language, destroy our religion,
18 and destroy our way of life.

19 Those weren't the first ones. As early as the
20 Choctaw came, Shawnee citizens were removed from their
21 families and taken to these places to steal from us
22 the legacy of our ancestors. And -- and most recently
23 based on Carlisle, and more recently, the Riverside
24 and Chilocco. These institutions took our tribal
25 communities, the future of our youngest and brightest.

1 These places that was used to do this to indigenous
2 nations, one of the things that we've come to learn as
3 we explore our legacy in boarding school is where
4 state and federal lands are owned where boarding
5 schools now reside in. Those lands need to revert
6 back to the tribal nations to the direct
7 administration. Those places need to resanctify the
8 constitution.

9 For my citizen that couldn't be here today, she
10 lives in Salina, Kansas. She went to Chilocco school
11 system it was there she -- she learned what it was the
12 like to have to be quiet, to learn to speak up. The
13 word sexual assault was unknown. She didn't know what
14 that was. But she knew what it was when they did it
15 to her. When she looked out the school windows and
16 saw the cemetery outside of her school. And I'd like
17 to point out, why is it only Indian boarding schools
18 have cemeteries? It was indicated to her or directly
19 threatened to her, that if she was to speak about the
20 sexual assault perpetrated on her, that she would find
21 herself in that cemetery.

22 When she did speak up, after not being able to
23 keep quiet any longer, they drugged her up and
24 institutionalized her, sent her to the mental ward,
25 and they tried to do a tubal ligation on her.

1 Ultimately, it led to issues of personal life, when
2 they took the child -- first child away from her, who
3 only she recently started seeing in the last two
4 years.

5 The legacy of boarding schools and removal from
6 families is real, present, and existential. The time
7 for truth telling, reconciliation, and healing is now.
8 What I'd like to urge you, madam Secretary and
9 Assistant Secretary Newland, coming just to Riverside
10 and other schools is not going to be enough. For my
11 citizen who lives in Salina, Kansas, there needs to be
12 a national system for them to bear testimony and send
13 testimonies in it. That needs to be encouraged. That
14 needs to be the norm because for a lot of our people,
15 they don't want to be anywhere close to the site of
16 their rape. And I apologize for that word. I
17 apologize for that word, but that's what it was.

18 So, please, I urge you, for all Indian Country,
19 the time is now. We're settled and ready to do
20 something. It's time. We're here for truth, healing,
21 and reconciliation. (Speaking Native tongue) Thank you
22 very much.

23 SPEAKER: I just have a short story about --
24 about my grandfather that was taken to Haskell. And
25 he lived in Fort Cobb, which is about 10 miles -- 15

1 miles west of here. And they said -- they said
2 that -- I talked to my mother and my aunt -- and so,
3 and other people. And they had a big yellow bus that
4 would go around to all our homes in Anadarko area,
5 Gracemont and Fort Cobb, and other cities. And every
6 time that they -- people told other people that the
7 big yellow bus they have seen coming around their
8 homes, and they would -- some of them would hide their
9 children. My grandfather was, like, 5 or 6 years old.
10 I can't imagine him being taken to Haskell at that
11 age. And he went with his sister which would -- she
12 was about a year or so younger and another brother. I
13 never did really get to know the brother's name, or if
14 I did, I've forgotten it. But they all went to
15 Haskell. But the brother, the younger brother, did
16 not come back. And I have a friend that -- from a
17 university in Texas was sharing stories on the graves
18 there at Haskell. And the last I heard from him, he's
19 still working on it. So the brother must have been
20 about 3 or 4. And I can't imagine somebody taking
21 your child at 3 or 4. And then, my grandmother, his
22 wife, Annie Dodd, her mother would always hide her.
23 Her mother was like a medicine woman and she hid. And
24 she knew when that bus was coming and she would hide
25 her daughter. And they -- they never got my

1 grandmother. But when she would go to the stores,
2 now, she would go to the stores and she would do like
3 this on what she wanted because she couldn't -- she
4 couldn't say the word.

5 And her brothers would tease her and say that's
6 because you didn't go to school. Now, you have to
7 point out your food. But my grandfather, when he came
8 back to Fort Cobb he -- he -- he was a farmer for
9 cattle -- for farmers. And he never really talked
10 about it, you know how veterans are from the army,
11 they don't talk about that. Well, my grandfather
12 never really talked about it. And my father went to
13 Riverside my father was at Riverside because he lived
14 right over there across from that Riverside Lake and
15 he went over there. And people have told me that my
16 father ran off from this school a number of times.
17 But they always had a bus or something ready and
18 they'd go to his home and -- and -- and bring him
19 back. As soon as he arrived home, they'd bring him
20 back. But they never really told me any, really,
21 stories to us. And my mother, if she -- if she knew
22 the story, they don't talk about it. My father never
23 did and my mother never.

24 My mother went to St. Patrick's, which is, you
25 know, born out of town. My mother went to a Catholic

1 school and -- and I taught here at Riverside for 19
2 plus years. And I -- and I -- you know, when you get
3 old, you -- you lose your -- you lose your -- what
4 you're talking about. But the -- the most dangerous
5 part I ever saw was in the -- in the dorms, not in the
6 school, but in the dorms. But they were -- they were
7 not too many -- not safe. But I retired out of
8 Riverside.

9 I -- I had another story about him but I can't
10 think of it. I -- I taught at other schools in
11 Oklahoma and the classrooms were the safest place in
12 the -- in the school, the classrooms. Especially
13 coming -- visiting all the time, I probably had some
14 students here. I had another story about my
15 grandfather. I can't -- I can't bring it up. I
16 received my -- my -- I went to Anadarko Public
17 Schools. Our father took us to those schools. We --
18 all -- all my family, nine children, we all graduated
19 from Anadarko Public Schools. And then, I -- I went
20 on to teach other areas. I got a doctorate in -- I'm
21 sorry. I'm old. I got my doctorate and unfortunately
22 I hear and about the same time, I don't hear well at
23 all and that has really stopped my teaching, other
24 than my own kids. Thank you.

25 MR. NEWLAND: We're going to hear from one -- one

1 more and we're going to take a break.

2 SPEAKER: All right. I'm right here to your
3 right. Hello.

4 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you. We have -- sorry for
5 interrupting. I want to thank the -- the -- everybody
6 who is here, their experience and their stories so
7 far. We'll hear from one more before we take a break.
8 And then, we'll ask our friends from the press area to
9 leave, and we will continue. But I just want to --
10 we're going to stay beyond that. This isn't the end
11 of the event. We have a lady here who's had her hand
12 up. Right here. I'm sorry. We've got -- we've got a
13 woman here with the microphone. I'm sorry.

14 SPEAKER: (Speaking in Native tongue) I introduced
15 myself to you in my native tongue because I am very
16 proud that I can still speak it. I entered the
17 boarding school system 56 years ago. And I could have
18 lost my language. I retained it because my mother
19 never spoke English. And as I grew older, I had to
20 translate for her. I was 5 years old, did not speak a
21 word of English when I was put into the lower
22 (Incomprehensible) boarding school on the Navajo
23 reservation.

24 As soon as I entered the building, I was taken to
25 the community bathroom. We had to strip our clothes,

1 went into the shower, and given a bar of lye soap, and
2 we had to start taking a shower with people watching
3 us. In our home, we're very modest and we never show
4 our naked body, so that was a big shock for me to go
5 through. And after we were done washing our body, we
6 had kerosene poured on our hair just to kill any lice
7 or whatever was in our hair. And after that was done,
8 we stepped out and we were told to sit on a chair,
9 still naked. And our long hair was cut off. And
10 then, after that, we were given clothes and a real
11 harsh towel to wipe with and given for our clothes to
12 wear. That was my first introduction to boarding
13 school. And whenever we went to our class and we
14 tried to speak our language, our elbows, our wrists,
15 whatever, were smacked with a ruler. It is true. We
16 lived through that. It is true. And in order to
17 control our unruliness, our permissive behavior, we
18 would have to stand at detention for long periods of
19 time in the hallway. And it was very hard, I mean,
20 being 5 years old and being introduced to something
21 totally foreign. But I made it through. I made it
22 through. I went to the boarding school till I was
23 about 10 years old, and my mom removed me from there
24 because another bigger kid beat me up for no reason.
25 And after that, she took me to a mission school, which

1 was just as bad. But, by then, my mother was a single
2 parent and she couldn't -- she couldn't afford to feed
3 me. She was living in a shack. So I went to the
4 mission school and there, I was stripped of my
5 traditional voice and practices. And it was really
6 hard. And listening to the older people today talk
7 about it, it has really bought back a lot of bad
8 memories that I didn't -- that I didn't want to think
9 about.

10 But it's good to talk about it. It's good to
11 talk about it now. And to let other people know what
12 we went through. It did happen. It is true. My
13 husband and I live here in Anadarko now. We're Navajo
14 people. But we enjoy living here. We're retired.
15 And about seven, eight years ago, my late friend,
16 (Incomprehensible), invited me -- she used to work
17 here as a counselor. And one day, she messaged me and
18 she told me that, "Sister, I have about 30 Navajo kids
19 here and they're very lonesome and they miss their
20 home. Can you come and talk to them?" And I was
21 like, "Okay." And then, later on, she messaged me
22 again, "Can you cook meal for them?" I'm like, "Well,
23 I don't know where you get mutton, but okay." But I
24 told my father in law, and bless his heart, he was
25 able to get me some mutton and Blue Bird flour and the

1 fixings and I came and I made a -- made a big pot of
2 stew and fry bread for them. And I came and I talked
3 to -- we met with the students and they were just very
4 happy. And I just encouraged them and I told them my
5 story and I told them that this school here and now is
6 way different than what it was when I went many years
7 ago as a little girl. And I would come about back,
8 try to come back twice a year and meet with the Navajo
9 students and just encourage them and just to let them
10 know, you know, even though they're far from home, I'm
11 here and I can encourage them. So (Speaking Native
12 tongue) Sister and sir, I thank you so much for coming
13 here and helping to bring -- help us talk about this
14 and help us begin the healing and I challenge everyone
15 else here. I see a lot of leaders here. There is
16 this school, Riverside Indian School, there's
17 Tahlequah and I'm sure there's other Indian schools.
18 Go there and encourage these young people. It's us
19 that has to do something for our young people. We
20 can't just expect Ms. Haaland to do it all by herself.
21 We need to go, I mean, I go to the powwows, I go to
22 the different ceremonies. And, you know, I know that
23 young people need to learn these -- our ways of doing
24 things. And the only way we can do that is if we
25 encourage them. Good job, good job, you did good.

1 This is what I -- I -- I'm very happy that I'm able to
2 speak today and let y'all know and I'm very proud of
3 who I am. And I'm very glad that I did suffer in
4 boarding school. It was a hard time, but I made it --
5 I made it through. Thank you.

6 MR. NEWLAND: I want -- I want to thank you and
7 thank everybody who has shared so far. I want to
8 thank all the focus for coming today in covering this
9 event and for the respect and understanding and folks
10 that want to be able to speak without having it
11 covered. So thank you. We will take -- we're going
12 to stay. This will continue. We're here to listen.
13 We're going to take a 10 to 15 minute break. And then
14 we'll be back in here to continue.

15 (WHEREUPON, a break was held)

16 MR. NEWLAND: I would like to ask everyone to the
17 please take their seats. If everyone could please
18 take their seats, we'll get started.

19 MS. WILSON: If I could ask everyone to please
20 find a seat. Please make your way back to your seats.
21 Thank you. If everyone would please find a seat, if
22 you're part of the press and haven't made your way
23 out, we kindly ask that you go and exit the building.
24 Thank you. Thank you.

25 MR. NEWLAND: All right. Thank you everybody.

1 We're going to be around for a while so there will be
2 more times for photos. Would you please take your
3 seat? So would the folks we have here who are running
4 our microphones for us, can you please raise your
5 hands. Thank you. We've got. All right. And we'd
6 ask again, if you wish to speak, just please identify
7 your name and your tribe and the school you're
8 speaking of, so thank you.

9 SPEAKER: Madam Secretary, I knew you were
10 somebody, so I asked you who you were, thank you for
11 coming. Mr. Anaotubby, I notice the chairman of the
12 Creek Tribe thank you, all you guys there and Mr.
13 Dearborn you didn't even shake my hand. Dearborn,
14 yes. And those were my happiest times here at
15 Riverside. I must be the lone ranger because I had
16 some good times here. I came here in 1935 -- 34.
17 Dorothy Whitehorse, my Indian name is (Speaking Native
18 Tongue) she comes with good prayers and I try to live
19 up to that. I'm a real Indian. I didn't talk a word
20 of English until I came to Riverside, Riverside in St.
21 Patrick's Mission and when and I came up that driveway
22 as a little 6 year old girl, not knowing how to speak
23 a word of English, the biggest comfort I seen was Ms.
24 Shida Ware, Sarah Grieco, Bell Diante. They were all
25 proud ladies who worked here. And I was comforted

1 because they talked Kiowa to me.

2 That was the only way they -- my dad passed away
3 in 1945 and he never spoke a word of English. Same
4 for my mother. She was from Rainy Mountain Indian
5 School. I loved it here. We've got -- we were
6 treated good. Maybe, if you misbehaved, but I've
7 never been struck in my whole life, I don't -- and I'm
8 thankful for that. We didn't have to put up that and
9 I currently teach a corrective -- corrective program.
10 I teach Kiowa and I -- I under Dr. Rachel Jackson at
11 USAO. And I put -- as much as I can share. I do
12 everything I can to do that and I'm happy to do that.
13 I sing, I dance, so I danced all my life. I like to
14 and I'm not really comfortable to say about where I
15 lived in know how to make -- and you ladies, it's all
16 that don't how to make because and. Because their
17 mother didn't make. There's so many different rules
18 with the different tribes and I can't sit -- I can't
19 sit here. I kind of -- Kiowas do not have any
20 vulgarity in our language. Therefore, it's hard to
21 talk about being attacked in school with mixed company
22 and I have no doubt in my mind that it probably
23 happened in the north that I, in all honesty, I never,
24 ever experienced that here. Riverside produced
25 ladies. Riverside produced good men. My whole tribe

1 left for Korea when that broke out in the 1950s. That
2 was my junior class. One didn't come back and one was
3 lost as a prisoner of war. Riverside gave two up to
4 Vietnam. So we've done our part in being patriotic
5 and believing in our country. My children are half
6 because Kiowas are so strict about marriage rules, you
7 almost had to marry out of the tribe. And that's the
8 reason so many of us are intermarried. And I see
9 nothing wrong with that. I raised some fine children.
10 There's eight of them. And one of them went to
11 Riverside in the 70s because he wanted to play
12 basketball under Ron Wilco so we had -- I got an award
13 right here at Riverside. I was the school --
14 grandmother -- and I was -- the best thing, I got a
15 certificate for that because they were my
16 grandchildren and I told stories at night and I knew
17 when they were lonesome. I know what it's like,
18 sharing that. Some of these things that happened
19 here, I just never -- I was not aware of it. And I
20 was here until 1949. I was here when the first
21 five -- students came. I can name every one and tell
22 you their level of education. One is a judge, and the
23 other one is a doctor, and the other one
24 (Incomprehensible) back here there and so -- but it
25 was the summer of 1949 and I had a selfish reason to

1 come here. That -- I have a -- I never bothered the
2 superintendent or the principal but I worked with the
3 historical society of Oklahoma to get this old gym
4 back here on the register. It's the only building
5 that qualifies. All the work was done. But, the one
6 last procedure and I don't know why it was never put
7 on the register -- Kiowa Tribe, we don't have many
8 things put on there, and we have a good memories of
9 this school. That's all I have to say (Speaking
10 Native tongue) I don't know too much, but I know my
11 language and I know how to respect any family, thank
12 you.

13 SPEAKER: My name is Mike Keahbone
14 K-E-A-H-B-O-N-E. I'm a member of Comanche tribe, but
15 I'm also and a Kiowa -- Kiowa and Cherokee.

16 I want to say, first of all, thank you so much to
17 everybody that shared and that's going to share. My
18 great uncle was a code talker. He was a Comanche code
19 talker. Forth signal division and when the report
20 came out, my family had talked about what happened in
21 boarding schools. Very vague references, but when I
22 read about the report, I was able to put the pieces
23 together. And it was one of the most painful things
24 that I've had to read and endure, knowing that that's
25 what my family went through. But it was also healing

1 in a way to help me to understand what they went
2 through and how hard they fought.

3 And for those of you that are survivors and spoke
4 today, you know it's one thing to read something in a
5 report, and it's another thing to hear your voices.
6 And it made it more personal and that helped me today.
7 So I want thank you. And the fact that we're still
8 here gathered like this says a lot about the
9 resilience of our people. And I'm proud of that. I
10 also want to speak on behalf of the Southern Baptist
11 Convention. I'm a pastor at First Baptist Church in
12 Lawton, Oklahoma. And this last month in Anaheim, we
13 had our annual convention. And it's a representation
14 of over 14 million Southern Baptists, the largest
15 Protestant denomination in the world. And I was part
16 of a resolutions committee. The way that resolutions
17 work in Southern Baptist life is that resolutions
18 speak for the day, for the season and we speak in one
19 voice as Southern Baptists.

20 And so, I went and I approached the resolutions
21 committee about the report and I shared with them what
22 had happened. They immediately wanted to respond and
23 as of today, Southern Baptists are the only church --
24 denomination in the country that has responded to this
25 report. And for the first time in the over 100 year

1 history of Southern Baptist convention, they took a
2 public stand for Native American people, Native
3 Alaskans, and Native Hawaiians.

4 I would like to read that resolution to you. It
5 was unanimously voted upon by the convention, at
6 least. It says we're going to ask the Bureau of
7 Indian Affairs investigative report released in May,
8 2022. Documents and reports of the United States
9 maliciously targeted Native American, Alaska Natives,
10 and Native Hawaiian children. As part of a diabolical
11 to dispossess these people groups from their native
12 lands by forced assimilation through the establishment
13 of mandatory boarding schools. And whereas between
14 1819 and 18 -- and 1969, federal Indian boarding
15 school system consisted of 408 federal Indian boarding
16 schools across 37 states or then territories,
17 including 21 schools in Alaska and 7 schools in
18 Hawaii. Whereas the federal government subcontracted
19 with the religious organizations to operate these
20 schools in order to accomplish the forced conversion
21 and assimilation of indigenous children to
22 Christianity. And whereas degradation and
23 dehumanization included forced removal of children
24 from their families, forced child labor, removal of
25 their tribal identity, confinement, flogging,

1 withholding food, whipping, slapping, cuffing, as well
2 as discouraging or preventing the use of Native
3 American, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian
4 languages, religions, and culture practices.

5 Now, therefore, be it resolved. That the
6 messengers from Southern Baptist convention in
7 Anaheim, California, June 14th through the 15th, 2022,
8 encourage Southern Baptists to decry the methods of
9 forced assimilation and conversion. As well as to the
10 dehumanization that fellow image bearers. And be it
11 further resolved that Southern Baptists stand in
12 support of Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, and
13 Native Hawaiians, especially those who are part of our
14 own family and churches as they process the findings
15 of this report and this discern the next steps toward
16 healing. And be it further resolved that the Southern
17 Baptists earnestly pray for the families of those
18 targeted by those atrocities brought to light in this
19 investigation. Be it also resolved that any federal
20 government's policy, former or current, to replace the
21 tribal culture for its own. In an effort to ease
22 their intent to separate tribes from their territory.
23 And be it further resolved, that we declare the
24 atrocities done against these people in the name of
25 religious conversions as reprehensible, betraying The

1 Great Commission in our efforts to reach all nations
2 with the gospel. And be it further resolved that we
3 stand against forced conversions and distorted
4 missiological practices as contrary to our distinctive
5 beliefs as Baptists in religious liberty and
6 soul-freedom.

7 And that's a huge step and just for the church to
8 acknowledge their part, to say they're sorry and stand
9 with us during this time is a big deal. And again,
10 the only denomination to take ownership and to take a
11 stand. So thank you, and I'm so graciously listening
12 to your stories. I'm very proud of you and thankful
13 for it.

14 SPEAKER: Good afternoon, my name is Susan Hart.
15 I'm the pastor at Koinonia Indian Mennonite Church.
16 Standing with me Wilma Redbird, chairperson of the
17 church board for Mennonites and her grandson Chesarae.
18 We are Cheyenne. We are -- our church resides on
19 Cheyenne Arapaho trust money. I would also like to
20 acknowledge -- we have with us present our Tribal
21 Governor and Lieutenant Governor, Reggie Wassana and
22 Gib Miles. I submitted testimony prior to this for
23 your review regarding some powers for
24 (Incomprehensible).

25 I do want to bring to you a photograph. This is

1 Cantonment. You can't see their faces which is okay
2 by now because you don't even know the names. The
3 only people who are identified are the moms. We
4 wanted to remember these faces and I'm glad to hear
5 testimony from people who lived, who did -- who lived
6 through of these boarding schools. But the Church,
7 the Mennonite Church, speak for these children who
8 remain faceless and unidentified. We want you to
9 remember this photograph as you go through all your
10 testimonies. This photograph was taken in 1894. We
11 speak for Cantonment, Darlington, as well as the
12 Kansas Hospital Industrial School. We ask that
13 federal government to do the right thing and grant
14 your permission subpoena powers before our history is
15 destroyed. At those decedents, you prevent us from
16 seeing is it. Our history is not ours until it is in
17 our hands of our people and of my congregation. And
18 at this time, I would like Chesarae to present to you,
19 madam secretary, the black and white photograph
20 showing Cantonment and the children. Thank you.

21 Forgot to acknowledge all the -- soldiers, people
22 who are present here, I'm happy to see you. Thank
23 you.

24 SPEAKER: Considering I'm so short, I'm going to
25 have to stand over here so everyone can see me. I'd

1 like to welcome Assistant Secretary and the Secretary
2 here in Anadarko. (Speaking Native tongue) They say
3 that people need to look forward. (Speaking Native
4 tongue) the Caddos descended here in 1958 -- 59. They
5 said that the people went to go look for food and
6 while they were gone there was a bug in the water. He
7 said (Speaking Native tongue) it's all. What is that?
8 It's life. (Speaking Native tongue) means water.
9 Pulled out the black bug.

10 Here on this land, he said, this is the place
11 that's going to be (Speaking Native tongue) place of
12 black bug. It became Anadarko. Years later, this
13 land was taken out of the ownership out from under our
14 feet. And sold at an unfair market value during the
15 land run here in the State of Oklahoma.

16 Later on, this was restored by Congress where --
17 was held in joint ownership with the land that we
18 settled on. The Wichita affiliated Tribe being one of
19 them, with respect to their tribe. The Caddo Nation
20 and Delaware Nation. The Caddo Nation owned 56
21 percent, 9 percent of all interest away from this
22 land. And court takes us. The reason I'm going to
23 here was -- there's a lot of them. You know, my
24 grandfather he told me a story. He was a World War II
25 vet and he spoke our Indian language and he was put

1 silent here in riverside Indian cool for talking our
2 language with a Kiowa boy and a Delaware boy. His
3 brother came from (Speaking Native tongue) the place
4 of the soldier checking on a horse. He found them
5 locked in a den in a grate for three or four days.
6 They didn't have hardly anything to drink or nothing
7 to eat. He went home and got my
8 great-great-grandfather, old man Cullen and he got the
9 wagon and carried with his son those boys.

10 When he told me that story, he was crying.
11 Today, there is a lot of unmarked the graves and
12 cemeteries on this land without any protection from
13 the U.S. Government. We've had to endure going after
14 National Park Service money to identify unmarked
15 cemeteries and graves here on this land as well as on
16 our allotted lands with \$0 from the Department of the
17 Interior or Bureau of Indian Affairs related to this
18 region. That is an administrative problem. I went to
19 Riverside Indian School as well. And he were marched
20 to and from -- I'm a product assimilation. My mother
21 was a product during the Vietnam area. It's hard for
22 her to talk about the things she endured, things that
23 we still face. Some of our members went to school
24 here, you know, we don't want to talk it. It's hard
25 some of them to even remember to talk about it. But I

1 want to thank you for being here and for all the
2 respect the tribes here and the leaders that are here.
3 Aho.

4 God, be with you. God, take care of you, your
5 families, your loved ones, all the different leaders
6 here that I've got to know over several years I'm
7 still a kid, I got a long ways to go. When you leave
8 here, don't like forget us. Don't forget it. Don't
9 forget why you're here and the prayers and things that
10 you said and where you come from, what got you where
11 you're at. And we know the tribes that you represent,
12 the things, the places where you've been. So
13 appreciate you being here. But when you get back up,
14 where you came from, I've heard our people say when
15 you go to talk to the great white father up in DC, let
16 him know we have problems still today. Funding is
17 huge, mental health. The things gone on here
18 Riverside -- one of our elders, she didn't experience
19 that. A lot of people have a lot of respect for her
20 and everybody in here. I want to thank you for being
21 here. And if there's anything that we can do help,
22 please let us know. We have a lot of elected leaders
23 here and we have people that would really like to say
24 a lot, but it's really hurtful. And so, we've asked
25 them too let us take care of them. So thank you for

1 being here. I just want to say on behalf of our Caddo
2 people and we look forward to working with you I know
3 we've got some stuff to Facetime. Thank you for being
4 here.

5 SPEAKER: Hi, my name is Sheryl Quick. Russell
6 is my maiden name. I'm a member of the Cheyenne
7 Arapaho tribes of Oklahoma. My story is similar to a
8 lot of people's stories. I attended the Catholic
9 school in Lame Deer here Montana in 1964. And I still
10 bear the my scars of the treatment that I received and
11 most of the kids that I knew of were punished for
12 speaking their language and so was I. So, therefore,
13 I learned how to speak English very well. My first
14 language was Cheyenne. And I was just a child when I
15 went to school there. But I also know that a lot of
16 the kids suffered because of the assimilation that
17 they were doing to us there.

18 And I had a lot of stories that I need to tell
19 about what I went through. But, I'm not going to do
20 that. I just wanted you thank you for coming and
21 listening to everyone's stories today. And I
22 appreciate everyone speaking. And I don't speak
23 normally, but my voice needed to be heard. Thank you
24 very much.

25 SPEAKER: My name is Deborah Sunlilly. My name

1 is (Speaking Native tongue). I am a product of foster
2 homes and a boarding school, Jones Academy, Choctaw
3 Nation. My mother lost custody of us due to what they
4 call mental health. She was a mother of six children
5 and we were taken by Tahlequah Welfare Department.
6 And, at that time, the big BIA came in and took over
7 her land. We had to go to court and the judge talked
8 to -- to me and they didn't know what to do. We had
9 not ever been in trouble or anything like that. But
10 we were sent to foster homes. My two brothers went
11 together. And my sister and I, who was 3 years old,
12 we went together as well.

13 We was sent to a home. I was auctioned off. I
14 sat all day waiting for someone to come and get me.
15 That was her choice. Finally, they come to me and
16 told me that there was some farmers and diary people
17 in Oaks, Oklahoma, that could come and get me and take
18 me and my little sister. So we went there, woke up
19 early in the morning. And then, help herd the cows.
20 She was really teeny tiny.

21 But I had came from a background that my
22 grandfather was a Cherokee pastor. He spoke it. He
23 wrote it. He sang it. All of his sermons were
24 written in it. But yet, when I was taken from the
25 foster home that summer, I had to leave my little

1 sister and I went to Jones Academy. And we were not
2 allowed to speak our language. We had to adjust and
3 it was a very huge adjustment. We had no clothing. I
4 think they brought me a box, maybe a four by four or
5 four by eight of clothes and that's all we had. I was
6 walked down the hall and there was no one on this
7 hall. And they said pick out a bed. So I went to the
8 last room and picked the top bunk. And I remember
9 laying there wondering why I was there.

10 I hadn't been home since I was 13. Had I never
11 got to experience my language. It was stripped from
12 me. I'm a full blood Cherokee and I cannot -- let me
13 speak my language. To me, that's a shame. There's a
14 part of me missing. There's a void of who I really
15 am. And I've healed from the traumatic parts of
16 boarding school. But yet, like everyone says, this
17 brought up a thorn in the side that we have to
18 continue to endure with. I would like to see that
19 language come back and not die for our people. For my
20 own grandchildren, for my great-grandchildren and I --
21 some of the things happened in boarding school -- is
22 going to be a long time of healing and forgetting. I
23 mean you're put in there, treated like you was some
24 type of a hired hand. I stayed in the summers, worked
25 in the heat, hauled brush (Incomprehensible) for most

1 of the day. If we got poison ivy, we still had to go
2 back the next day.

3 We had to go to town five miles to our school.
4 And it was -- it was a white school. And there, we
5 endured the mistreatment from the white kids. It was
6 a daily thing. The teachers, they didn't teach you.
7 They didn't treat you like the other kids were
8 treated. They knew they treated you differently. But
9 I would like to say that I had to come to the part in
10 my life that I had to let some of this go. I haven't
11 shared this -- not much with my children. But the
12 healing comes from the inside out. And I've had to
13 allow God to be my balance and help me through
14 everything at what that we've gone through. I think
15 that's it. Thank you.

16 SPEAKER: (Speaking Native tongue) I'm honored to
17 be here with the Principal Chief of my nation,
18 Muscogee Creek Nation. He's asked me to say a couple
19 words. And, if I may, I'll turn it over to our chief
20 in a moment. But I want to talk about some personal
21 thoughts as well as some policies -- policy thoughts.

22 On a personal level, my (Incomprehensible) name
23 or warrior name (Speaking Native tongue) I'm a proud
24 member of Nuyaka Ceremonial Grounds led by --
25 Arbika -- Sunny Lee but our family is also tied

1 (Incomprehensible) the Baptist church. So, very much
2 appreciated comments from the minister previously. We
3 very much appreciate all of the heartfelt comments,
4 stories, and perspectives shared here today. I'm a
5 first generation non boarding school member of the
6 family. But my mom was a boarding school survivor and
7 she was born in 1939 in Okemah, Oklahoma. And like
8 many in Muskogee, she went to Eufaula Boarding School
9 in eastern Oklahoma. As a child, I didn't hear much
10 about her experiences. But as somebody said, I heard
11 snippets and certainly the story about having her
12 mouth washed out with lye soap was something mom did
13 talk to us about, having her hair washed out to be
14 treated for lice with kerosene was something mom
15 talked about. There are many other things that he
16 didn't learn about mom's experience so well after her
17 passing. Some of those came from writings that my
18 father had written down from stories that she had told
19 him that I didn't see until he passed. Among those, I
20 knew mom had run away and anybody who's from eastern
21 Oklahoma knows the geography of Eufala and its
22 relationship to Tulsa and Okemah. But I didn't
23 realize that mom had run away eight times before she
24 was finally successful. She went to Eufaula in the
25 40s, very different place than Eufala is now. Now,

1 Eufala is run by Muscogee Creek Nation with support
2 from BIE. And for the -- all the reasons that we're
3 discussing today, it means so much to have the
4 Director of BIE here as well as the Secretary and
5 Assistant Secretary and the report produced by the
6 department is ground breaking.

7 But, in addition to capturing the past, as the
8 report set the stakes, the information being collected
9 is being collected to, hopefully, develop meaningful
10 policy in the future. And it's in that spirit that I
11 want to share a few -- few thoughts. So mom ran away
12 eight times. Each time that she ran away, and she was
13 tracked down by agents. And it's hard to think about
14 in modern -- well, with a modern sensibility. But
15 anyway, who has family from that period verified those
16 agents would sometimes when they were searching the
17 immediate property assisted by (Speaking Native
18 tongue) by -- by dogs. The school actually had
19 assistants with dogs to track down child runaways. My
20 mom ran away, as I said before, seven times and was
21 captured each time. It was on the eighth try when she
22 was successful. And finally, the eighth -- eighth
23 try, I guess the BIA gave up. And she had her arm
24 broken during school. She shared a lot of stories
25 about her classmates moving -- at least one that

1 didn't make it. Now, this sounds horrible and it was.
2 But, of course, there were friendships made among
3 other folks -- survivors of the school. So I very
4 much appreciate the perspective from the positive
5 side.

6 Those perspectives were perspectives of survival,
7 perseverance, and the enduring nature of our spirit.
8 On a side note, because of my father work, we landed
9 in Arizona. He was a professor. And although, mom
10 was a transplanted Creek she dedicated her final years
11 of her life trying to preserve the Phoenix Indian
12 School property for embrace -- embracing by and
13 ownership by the Native community of Arizona. She
14 used to talk about some of the handprints that were on
15 some of the concrete portions of the school, of the
16 forced labored children that built that school. And
17 while the school was in the federal government's name,
18 at the time that it closed, I think it finally closed
19 in 1991. It first the children's slavery that built
20 that school. It was her experience as a survivor in
21 Eufaula that fueled her interest in working with
22 Phoenix Indian School survivors and the Arizona
23 community to successfully advocate for at least part
24 of that property to be preserved for public and as a
25 remembrance and recognition, not just of the tragedies

1 that occurred there. And there are many, many
2 tragedies that occurred there. But also in honor of
3 everyone that went there and their spirit's survival
4 that came from that experience, just like here in
5 Oklahoma, you have many tribal leaders who went
6 through that process and having -- having that school
7 signify that spirit of survival. And it's just as
8 important as capturing the dark tragedies.

9 And that kind of brings us to why these
10 discussions are important for future policy. And
11 Muscogee Creek Nation contributed to some of the
12 testimony in the broken promises report issued by
13 Congress a few years ago -- a couple years. And in
14 that report, Creek Nation's testimony charted the --
15 the impacts of various policies throughout history
16 Muscogee Creek Nation as well as other nations, and
17 noted what that while fully categorizing the costs
18 involved didn't come true, and fully calculated the
19 amount of effort and expense it would take to address
20 those costs may be allusive, may be difficult. We
21 have to try. We have to try and look at what policies
22 you can implement to rectify this -- this history.
23 And what is this history? These are terrible,
24 terrible stories, but they didn't occur in a vacuum.
25 When you look at 1871, the day Riverside was opened.

1 That's one of the earlier dates that are out there.
2 There are some other earlier ones. But in the
3 proliferation of boarding schools and Indian schools
4 you see ramp up in 1880s and the 1890s. What did that
5 coincide with? It coincided with our legacy of
6 allotment. It coincided with a number of federal
7 policies that were designed, in the famous words, it
8 coincided -- coincided with allotment policy, took
9 hold and pulverized our governments as nations.
10 Whether it be by land, pulverizing our land,
11 pulverizing our culture, or pulverizing our language.

12 So these boarding schools went hand in hand with
13 other allotment assimilationist policies that
14 occurred. Now, when you think about the Battle of
15 Little Bighorn. That took place in 1876. It was one
16 of the last moments of one era of policies. You know,
17 you had the removal, then direct Indians wars, and
18 then you moved into assimilation boarding schools and
19 all that. Everything we're talking about today was
20 wasn't an accident. It was by design. And so, what
21 are the answers for the future? You know, today
22 happens to be the two-year anniversary of the historic
23 victory of the Muscogee Creek Nation in Oklahoma
24 versus McGirt. Chief Hill has recognized today as
25 sovereignty day for Muscogee Creek Nation. But

1 sovereignty day isn't just -- sovereignty day isn't
2 just the recognition over the reservation that was
3 affirmed by the Supreme Court and McGirt. It's also
4 about sovereignty over our language, our culture, our
5 food, everything about us that makes us -- makes
6 Native. So if we're looking at answers for the future
7 and how all this information could be correlated
8 processed and translated into actual actionable
9 policy. We know what policies work. The policies of
10 self determination and tribal empowerment are the ones
11 that work. The policies of assimilation, of
12 patriarchy are the ones that don't. This has been
13 proven time and time again.

14 Right now, we continue to fight these battles.
15 These battles will be fought on many fronts. Whether
16 the battles over jurisdiction or our ability to
17 provide services or ability to fund services. But I
18 just wanted to applaud the department, the
19 administration, and also (Speaking Native tongue) by
20 the way is the word Indian in our language, all the
21 (Speaking Native tongue) we voices heard from today.

22 I want to read one paragraph. Two sentences from
23 the statement issued, of course, my phone went out.
24 From the statement issued by Muscogee Creek Nation.
25 Time this -- this important issue -- boarding

1 school -- school issue to -- sorry. Gosh darnit. I
2 had it pulled up. But basically, it talks about how
3 self determination can't be understood without
4 understanding the boarding school experience. The
5 boarding school experience was a direct -- from self
6 determination. Chief Hill asked me to share some of
7 those stories. I think I offered them about, you
8 know, some things about my mom's personality that I
9 didn't understand until I was much older. Her mom was
10 actually orphaned and grew up in a school similar to
11 hers. Where we now run and manage and follow
12 hopefully it's a new day. But the path that's ever
13 been proven that works is tribal self empowerment.
14 And I'm honored to work under Chief Hill in Muscogee
15 Creek Nation as we fight for that every day.

16 SPEAKER: First of all, my name is. Thank you
17 for being here and listening to everyone. I'm already
18 getting a little choked up here. But, you know, as I
19 sit here and listen to all these, I wouldn't say
20 terrifying stories but, I mean, you got some -- some
21 good stories, some not so good. You know, my parents
22 never went to boarding school so I can't tell you
23 exactly what they went through.

24 Myself -- I only spoke Muscogee Creek in the
25 first -- second grade. And when my English went up,

1 my Creek started coming down because I had to learn
2 the English language. Again, as I sit here and
3 listen, I do see some Muscogee citizens here who did
4 attend boarding school. And as John had mentioned
5 about the Supreme Court ruling, I had several
6 conversations with one of our elected officials in
7 Tampa. And he kept referring back -- let's go back to
8 1907. Not realizing the history of 1906, 1907 wasn't
9 good for all the native tribes here in Oklahoma. His
10 comments were if you want, it was an equal decision.
11 Native Americans being the first citizens here in the
12 United States, we hadn't become citizens until the
13 early '20s.

14 Our ancestors -- my dad fought in World War II.
15 The thing that they took way, our language. We had
16 all the code talkers. That's what won World War II.
17 We didn't get to vote until the early '60s. And yet,
18 we're the first Americans here. Probably one of my
19 last statements will be at the far end of the trail of
20 tears was a promise. And that's all we ask of the
21 U.S. government to fulfill that promise, to do what's
22 right. To honor all the treaties that we had.
23 (Speaking Native tongue)

24 SPEAKER: My name is Joan Anna Scrapper. I'm
25 Cherokee, Pawnee, Iowa, and Otoe. I'm a second

1 generation boarding school individual in my family.
2 My mother attended Chilocco Indian Boarding School and
3 I was placed at Seneca Indian Boarding School when was
4 I was 10 years old. I lived there for three years and
5 then I went to Sequoyah High School and graduated from
6 Sequoyah in 1977.

7 My boarding school experience at Seneca -- the
8 most traumatic thing for me was being separated from
9 my family, from my siblings. And the years that
10 you're separated, you never get back. The days that
11 you're separated they don't return, but you learn to
12 live. You learn to become part of the trauma. You
13 don't understand it. I know many days, even now, I
14 don't understand why I had to go through what I went
15 through. And healing is a long entire life process.
16 I know that my older sister, my older brother attended
17 boarding school, but they were older. So they moved
18 on and I found myself alone again.

19 The things that were described today, yes, they
20 do happen. They did happen. But like I said, we have
21 to move on. We have to continue to get up every
22 morning and walk through it, try to get passed it.
23 But yet, I find myself, even now, dealing with the
24 things that occurred as a child, as a young adult. I
25 really commend you guys. And I honor those who walked

1 through such traumatic experiences. I just honestly
2 don't even know what else to say except our hearts
3 need to heal. We do deserve our language. We deserve
4 to have those families that we lost.

5 And I have been blessed, I really have. I have a
6 wonderful family. I don't talk about my boarding
7 school experiences with my children or grandchildren
8 much. There's a lot of healing there that needs to
9 happen.

10 SPEAKER: My name is (Incomprehensible).
11 Chickasaw. I've heard of the ages of some of the
12 survivors at 5 years old. That's when I went to the
13 Indian school. I could speak Chickasaw and I spoke
14 English. I was an interpreter for my grandma because
15 she -- when we went to the store. And so, one day,
16 the government woman come to the house and said it's
17 time for me to go to school. She said, "No, she's too
18 little." But the government woman said, "No, her
19 daddy's already signed the papers for her to go to
20 school, so she has to go." So that day a walked out
21 of my grandma's house and went to school. When I come
22 back, I could hardly speak Chickasaw anymore and
23 grandma would tell others "She's a white girl now.
24 She can't talk in Chickasaw no more." Anyway it --
25 that's -- I went to four boarding schools. And the

1 first one I went, my brothers and sisters were there
2 so it was pretty great -- wasn't bad for me because
3 they'd -- protecting me, I guess.

4 But when I went to the other boarding school, it
5 was so far away -- Norman, Oklahoma from Stonewall,
6 Oklahoma. It was -- I was there a long time. And I
7 thought many nights for my grandma, you know, I had --
8 had to make it through. So in being that I had go
9 somewhere all by myself, that's kind of made me to
10 where I am now. Many times where I've had to go by
11 myself to places. It was hard, you know. And I -- I
12 had to learn to work the white man's way. I had to in
13 order to keep -- keep being myself. It was an
14 indication that I needed to go on. In fact, that's
15 why my dad put me in these schools, to learn the
16 English. He said, "Times have changed, you have to
17 learn English, baby, so you go on and go to school and
18 learn what you can so you can come about back and tell
19 all about it." So I wrote a paper, Ms. Haaland, when
20 I was going to -- taking a course at college. And it
21 is about the Indian schools. And it's just too -- I
22 can't speak of it. But I did write it. So if I could
23 present it to you, have you keep it. Thank you.

24 MR. NEWLAND: We have, I think, one speaker over
25 here. There's a young lady in the front who's had her

1 hand raised for a while. And then, we'll take a break
2 and we'll continue again. We'll -- after our next few
3 speakers, just a short restroom break and catch your
4 breath.

5 SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Marlene Cooper. I'm
6 from the (Incomprehensible) area in Cache, Oklahoma.
7 My first memories of prior to going to the Indian
8 school, I think I remember those events because it led
9 up to my going to the Indian school. I was 6 years
10 old. I am 82 years old now. And it was 1946. I
11 remember going to Texas and I was with a -- a two or
12 three or four carloads of Comanches going to dance in
13 Texas. And I was small. Shortly after we got back
14 from that trip, we -- camp was just a little area
15 where Comanches lived. We lived in this little wooden
16 house and there were no windows in it, there was just
17 a door. No flooring. The floor was mud when it
18 rained and dirt -- mud flies. But we played in it.
19 So I'm telling you this because I was happy there. I
20 was happy with my mom and dad.

21 And one day in July, these two, big, green
22 government cars drove up. One drove up close to our
23 little wooden house. And this big white man gets out.
24 And the other car kinda stayed on the dirt road behind
25 the house. So these were traumatic moments for me

1 because I didn't know what was going on. I was
2 running around barefoot, playing with my cousin and my
3 brother, who was two years older than I. And this man
4 stopped to talk to my mom and dad and I noticed my mom
5 was crying. And so, they called me up there and this
6 man picked me up, put me in the car and I'm crying, my
7 mom was crying, my dad was crying. And then, they
8 went to my brother. And they had to pull him. He
9 pulled them and then set him in the car. We didn't
10 even have time to tell mom and dad goodbye.

11 So they took us to Fort Sill Indian School in
12 Lawton. And I cried all the way. They took my
13 brother and I to Fort Sill. And they took my brother
14 immediately up -- some big boy took him up to get him
15 ready, you know, do his hair and clothing and
16 everything. And I'm left there with this man by
17 myself, just a little old girl, you know, and I'm -- I
18 hadn't ever been around any -- any man by myself and
19 that was frightening in itself. So about two and a
20 half hours later, it was getting dark outside. This
21 big girl came and got me. And she took me up on that
22 chair, "Come," and so, she took me across the field
23 between the boys and girls dorm and took me out to the
24 girls dorm and took all my clothes off, put me on a
25 table and she put a towel around my neck. And she

1 poured kerosene on my hair and it burned real bad.
2 Some got in eyes. And so, she wrapped my head up with
3 something and I sat there for, maybe 10 or 15 minutes
4 with my head just burning -- something terrible.

5 And in a little while, she could grab -- gather
6 some clothes -- clothing for me. A towel, a
7 washcloth, and soap, she gets a big brush, the kind I
8 use to clean my floor or something hard. She gets
9 this big ol' long brush about this long, and then the
10 lye soap. And it's pretty big and long and narrow. I
11 haven't told my kids, my granddaughter, my daughters
12 about this because it hurts. And so, they -- she
13 takes me down. There's nobody else's in the building
14 but her and I. I know that they're all mad and I
15 didn't know she was my relative at the time. So she
16 takes me down, puts me in a cold shower, makes me sit
17 on the floor, rubs my knees with lye soap across like
18 that. She tells me to put your arms up and rubs my
19 arms and elbows. And then, she starts to wash the
20 stuff out of my hair and she burns my eyes. And so,
21 finally, after she makes me go like this so she could
22 wipe my bottom and all the other things that -- that,
23 you know, Comanches are real -- we just don't go
24 around half naked or let anybody touch us. So then,
25 anyway, she takes my upstairs after all of that where

1 she teaches me how to brush my teeth. She said,
2 "Brush your teeth like this," and there's a row of
3 little water spigots and we used those to wash our
4 face and brush our teeth in. And then, we use the
5 great big showers to wash our whole bodies. And there
6 are six or seven girls in there I leaned later on.
7 But I'm there by myself. And so, she takes me
8 upstairs to the room -- to the -- what did you call
9 those? Dorms? Places where we slept. Dorms. Dorms.
10 And she puts me in one of the beds and tells me to --
11 this is where I was going to sleep. There's nobody
12 else her, just me by myself. I never been away from
13 home. And she turns all the lights off. She goes in
14 the room and locks the door for herself. And I'm the
15 only one in the whole girls dorm for two months. By
16 myself. And I -- she takes me to meals and I have to
17 eat up every -- every little morsel of food on my
18 plate or I can't get up.

19 And that was my first time ever being under the
20 control of someone else with like. That was so rough.
21 And when all the kids came in, I started making
22 friends. Well, that was the good part. But we had to
23 clean floors with toothbrushes. If a big girl above
24 us didn't like us or we rubbed her the wrong way, we
25 were -- we had to clean floors with toothbrushes and

1 soap. There was so many bad experiences. I don't
2 talk about it to my kids. Today is the first time I'm
3 talking about it and it still brings tears to my eyes.

4 But are the worst part of all that, the
5 spankings, punishments and we -- underneath the
6 building, the stairs. The -- the -- if you were
7 really, really, they thought was bad, you had to go in
8 the corners way off on in there. No lights. And sit
9 on the stairs half the night, or maybe, longer than
10 that. And then, the spankings on your legs, on your
11 hands, teachers were allowed to whip your hands and
12 legs.

13 There are so many terrible things that I
14 experienced for 6 years old, I wouldn't put my -- I
15 would never, ever did that to my own children. So
16 there are a lot of after effects of all of that. And
17 my daughter -- I want her to tell you some of the
18 other after effects. I just asked to do this; but I'm
19 glad you came to hear us. My mother went to the same
20 Indian school. I have a picture of her. They're all
21 dressed in uniforms. That's how she -- she had to go
22 to school, in uniform. So.

23 SPEAKER: Thank you. My name is Catherine
24 Parker. I'm not a Comanche Parker. I was secondary
25 captive but -- but, yeah, for myself, you know, I

1 didn't understand a lot of things growing up, you
2 know, the lies of my mom and her actions. She was --
3 she was a very loving mother, but never told us, I
4 love you. It was just understood. Rarely hugged us
5 as kids. But we knew she loved us. It was something
6 inside of us that knew that. She was very regimented
7 when it came to cleaning, when it came to dressing,
8 when it came to grooming herself, anything like that.
9 All the -- we had rules and lots of rules. She was
10 very -- a very regimented mom. But she was also
11 loving. She taught us lot of things, you know.

12 But there are still things, even now, that I'm
13 learning about her life. She was always afraid. She
14 was scared all the time. I didn't know why she was
15 afraid. She was, you know, she would say, be careful,
16 you know, don't go by yourself, which is, you know,
17 now, during this day, during this day and time, who
18 doesn't tell your children that. But she was always
19 afraid of everything and which put that fear in all of
20 her children. We are all very scared of different
21 things because of what, you know, we saw her do, you
22 know, our mom. So, you know, just keep in mind that
23 it doesn't stop right here -- that the ones that came
24 and experience the trauma, that that trauma just keeps
25 passing down from one generation to the next. And you

1 don't even know that you're even in trauma until you
2 get old enough to understand it, then look at yourself
3 and say, "Wait, why am I so afraid of everything? Why
4 am I so conscientious of that -- what white people
5 think?" Seriously, "Why do I feel like I have to let
6 them go past me before I start walking?" I mean, you
7 got to stand up for yourself. You have to remember
8 that there's a lot of things that we do as the
9 secondary person to that trauma. That we do -- we
10 don't even realize that we do it. And there's much
11 more to that. Someone needs to research that
12 secondary part. It won't be me. But I just thank you
13 all for coming. And, you know, our honored guests.
14 Thank you for this opportunity.

15 SPEAKER: (Speaking Native tongue) for being
16 here. My name is Andrea Longoria. I have six
17 children, ten grandchildren, and one
18 great-granddaughter. My grandmother was Ernestine
19 Shamayne. And Andrew Harrington, Caddo and Cheyenne.
20 They were the -- my -- my grandma. There was 12
21 siblings and they all went to boarding school here at
22 St. Patrick's and here at Riverside. And 11 of the 12
23 children were taken away. And the baby, Ernestine
24 Shamayne was too little and she couldn't be taken.
25 And when all was said and done, all women, children

1 that grew up to be adults were sterilized or chose not
2 to have children because of the trauma they suffered
3 here. Now Ernestine, the baby -- not coming here.
4 She had one child. That whole family that -- it was
5 wiped out for not being able to have children. Which
6 is my grandmother. But two -- two years after she met
7 mother, she was murdered. So my Grandma Irene
8 Shamayne took my kid out of in California because her
9 because my uncles were part of the relocation program
10 as well, the assimilation. And came back and took my
11 mother. And so, my mother was raised in San
12 Francisco. And then, my mother had four children and
13 we were born and raised in San Francisco. As a mother
14 of six children and a grandmother of ten, it has been
15 hard to heal from the pain that my family almost
16 didn't survive if it wasn't for Ernestine Shamayne.
17 And I'm here for them. A lot of the stories,
18 especially the one this morning. I don't know if it
19 was the first or second person, the gentleman. My
20 grandma Irene would bring us here, I think around 11
21 years old, would come here and she would share stories
22 and she told us everything. She told us about the
23 delousing and the powder, the poisonous powder that was
24 thrown on them. And she brought us, actually, here to
25 the school and showed us where their hair was cut in

1 the basement. And she didn't hold anything back. And
2 I always wonder why she was so adamant about telling
3 me -- us these stories of her own journey and my
4 uncle's. And I didn't realize at the time what she
5 was actually doing.

6 Because she was part of the relocation
7 assimilation program, she did assimilate. She did go
8 to college. She did work for Indian Health Services
9 in San Francisco. One of the founders of Indian
10 Center in San Francisco. I lived on Alcatraz during
11 the occupation because we were urban Indians, you
12 know. Either when the relocation program happened and
13 people were promised all these things, when they got
14 to the bay area, there was nothing -- what they were
15 told they were going to have. And so, a lot of those
16 urban Indians either thrived or they died. You know
17 substance abuse and not being close -- not being close
18 to their people anymore. That's grandma was. And so,
19 it was important for -- my grandma told this, you have
20 to learn how to walk in two worlds. And so, she
21 brought us up with education being very important.
22 And she would also bring us to ballets, to the theater
23 and she was just really adamant about -- she said, "An
24 educated Indian is a powerful Indian." And so always
25 make sure that we focussed on our education so we can

1 help our people.

2 And so, I'm here today to honor them, to make
3 sure that their voices are heard, and for the ones
4 that were unborn because their family was pretty much
5 wiped out. And what's the -- the beautiful thing
6 about this whole process is, is that my son -- one of
7 my sons. I have six kids. One of my sons is, now, a
8 counselor here at Riverside. You know, he traveled to
9 South Dakota to help the suicide (Incomprehensible)
10 and he's here helping with the youth. And so, in a
11 way, we've come full circle as a family. And it's
12 just been a beautiful thing to watch. And so, I
13 want -- want to thank you for your time, thank you for
14 being here. I just than -- I thank everybody for
15 having the courage to tell their stories because it's
16 really hard for me to do because of my inside voice is
17 like, "Nobody wants to hear that. You don't need to
18 say that." But I feel compelled that I do to speak to
19 them. So help me.

20 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you. We're going to take
21 another short break for restroom and fresh air and
22 give each other hugs if you guys need it. And we'll
23 come back in here in about 10 minutes and restart
24 again. Thank you.

25 (WHEREUPON, a break was held)

1 MR. NEWLAND: The woman over here with her hand,
2 we a gentleman who's been waiting patiently so we'll
3 start with you. And again, I ask everyone to be
4 respectful of our speakers and give them the time and
5 space to share their experiences with us. Go ahead,
6 sir.

7 SPEAKER: Testing 1-2. First of all, I'd like to
8 say thank you for being here today. My name is Eugene
9 Black Bear Jr. I'm a proud member of the Southern
10 Cheyenne Tribe in Oklahoma I'm enrolled in the
11 Cheyenne Arapaho Tribes over in Concho. And I have we
12 me today, I have the Governor, Wassana and also
13 Lieutenant Governor, Gib Miles, my friend, Mike from
14 the (Incomprehensible). There's a lot of people here
15 representing our tribe here in the state of Oklahoma.

16 Our the people -- tried to get wiped out, our
17 Cheyenne people. Over in Sand Creek, Sand Creek
18 Massacre. Then, they put us here in Oklahoma. When
19 they put us here in Oklahoma, the boarding schools
20 were established. You've heard a lot of the stories.
21 The people here in Oklahoma, in the western part of
22 Oklahoma know how long-winded I am, so I'm just going
23 to try to be brief instead of talking for a long, long
24 time. When they put us here in the northwest part of
25 Oklahoma, our religion was the sun dance, Cheyenne

1 people, we had the sun dance ritual ceremony where we
2 go in there and we fast for so many days and we
3 pierce. And the (Incomprehensible) there in northwest
4 Oklahoma -- just to practice our religion, and they
5 say that when we pierced ourself, we were trying to
6 kill ourselves. And so, they took a lot of our
7 children a lot of our grandparents and parents and put
8 them in boarding schools and took the, what they
9 thought was the rough ones, they put them up in Fort
10 Mary and took the prisoners up there -- a lot of my
11 granddaughters love it there -- Roman Nose. The
12 decedents -- five generations back on my father's
13 side, Black Bear's. I'm a Cheyenne. Five generations
14 back, Roman Nose, on my mother's side, I'm Cheyenne. I
15 was married in Lame Deer, Montana to a northern
16 Cheyenne girl for 46 years. She passed away five
17 years ago. We -- I don't know how we get together,
18 but we were both products of a boarding school. I
19 graduated here in 1971, and she went to Flandreau,
20 South Dakota. And she graduated from St. Labre
21 Boarding School in Ashland, Montana. And I come here
22 today to -- to stand up for all the students that came
23 here to Riverside that were -- that were tortured, who
24 were going through a lot of atrocities. I've always
25 wondered -- that cemetery up there, the Indian

1 cemetery where there's a lot of children buried up
2 there. But, for some reason, all those records are
3 lost. So we do not know how many children died since
4 19 -- 1871, that are buried here. We looked across
5 the nation here to find in residential schools and
6 boarding schools where children are found buried in
7 mass graves. We don't know how many's buried here.
8 But I want to say, today, that on behalf of all the
9 students, on behalf of all the parents, on behalf all
10 the stories that have been told today, I want to say
11 is -- it is an Indian tradition -- we have a lot of
12 sovereign nations here today. And in the Indian
13 tradition, your being here today, the Secretary, your
14 being here shows us respect. Is it shows me respect
15 to come out from way up there, you come down here to
16 Riverside Indian School. And to sit here and you
17 patiently listen to us. And I want to say thank you
18 for doing that. And I made my speech right here. I
19 just want to say (Speaking Native tongue) I'll turn
20 this over to the Governor and Lieutenant Governor.

21 SPEAKER: Thank you. First and foremost, I just
22 want to say thank you to the, as we know as WCD, the
23 Wichita, Caddo, Delawares for letting us come to their
24 our land and hold this meeting. It's sometimes proper
25 to say thank you to those tribes. I just want to say

1 thank you to allow other tribes to come to your
2 property and have this meeting. I want to say thank
3 you to Secretary of the Interior, Haaland. I know we
4 met her when we were running for Congress in
5 Albuquerque. It's good to see that you've made it to
6 this point because -- not -- had the other had
7 representation, and I don't believe, maybe, a
8 secretary of the interior that actually visited with a
9 tribe in this magnitude before. And the Assistant
10 Secretary, as well, Bryan Newland.

11 I got to think that you're a great asset to
12 Indian Country. Great asset to us. And I think what
13 we're doing here is -- is a great benefit to all the
14 tribes. It is part of the healing process to talk
15 about it and discuss it. I was going to say I'm not
16 product of a boarding school. But my parents and --
17 and my uncles and everybody -- my cousins all. And I
18 said some of the things that were brought to and told
19 to us and the things that happened to us or what they
20 did in boarding school. I said, "Now, I know where
21 the kerosene came from." I said, "I know when we were
22 kids, we always had to wash our hair with kerosene."
23 I said, "I never knew where that came from. So now I
24 know where that came from. When my hands were slapped
25 with a ruler, I know where that came from."

1 So a lot of things that were taught and did to my
2 parents -- my parents and my relatives, it was all
3 brought town to us. Although we didn't attend, it was
4 the still turned down, the emotional -- they were
5 deprived emotionally because when you left your
6 parents as a 4 our 5, 6 year old -- 8 year old kid,
7 you had to become emotionally strong. I think some of
8 us can testify that as we had -- one lady over here
9 said that there was no emotion, not even between my
10 grandparents, I tell them and I say, I don't think
11 I've ever hugged my grandma. I've seen her, I've been
12 around for her, I took her to the store. I did all
13 those things. We know we cared for each other. We
14 know we respected each other, but I never hugged my
15 grandmother. I mean, she's gone now, but I didn't
16 understand where that came from. But some of us are
17 that product of those people who are hardened or, you
18 know, for people who were abused and neglected. So
19 it's still filtered down to my generation, you know, I
20 don't do that to -- treat my son that way. We always
21 say we love each other, we hug each other and we did
22 all those things but I never did beat him because
23 that's what boarding school did to our parents and
24 grandparents and things like that. So we still have
25 that after effect. Although they're not here, they're

1 not -- they can't testify. We remember we heard this.

2 So if there could be any type of report because
3 tragedies, whether it's the internment camps or the
4 Jewish internment camps. I mean, some of the things
5 you are hearing is pretty much in line with what --
6 what they faced. We weren't treated any better than
7 those people in the internment camps. That's the way
8 I see things. I think it's important to record this
9 history and some of our -- our kids, grandkids and say
10 that's what my great-grandfather or grandmother or
11 somebody had went through although -- that's how some
12 of us are mainly structured now because of what our
13 parents did because of what they learned. So it is
14 still in effect. It didn't go away when our parents
15 died or our grandparents died. And so, I just want to
16 say I appreciate you visiting, coming out and
17 hopefully, we get something positive out of this. So
18 with that, I just want to say aho.

19 SPEAKER: I'll try to be pretty brief with this.
20 My grandmother went to a boarding school in Arlington.
21 One of the first things she always told me is that she
22 had her mouth washed out with soap because some girl
23 named Diane said she spoke Navajo and she said, "I
24 didn't do it. Didn't do it." She was always adamant
25 that she didn't do it. But My grandmother went to

1 boarding school, my dad went to boarding school. My
2 grandmother didn't talk about it much, but my aunt
3 did.

4 About a year ago, she came to my office, closed
5 the door. Her daughter was there. She asked her
6 daughter to sit out on the foyer, and she told me all
7 the things that had happened to her back at Concho
8 Boarding School. And, you know, she saw crying. She
9 was 85 years old and I sat there and listened the best
10 as I could. But one thing that my grandma said that I
11 want to -- when I was 5 years old, my dad used to come
12 home from work and we'd all come up and jump in his
13 arms and at night, we'd kiss him goodnight and I'd go
14 to bed. But when I was 5, my dad said, "Men don't
15 kiss. We shake hands." And so, from that point on
16 from 5 years old forward, I never hugged my dad, and
17 when I met him and came to the front door, my sisters
18 got to, they got to jump all over him. But I didn't
19 get to? And I think that was an effect of -- my
20 grandmother, later in her life, told me that she
21 wasn't a very good mother because she didn't know how
22 to be a mother. All she knew how to be was a matron.
23 And so, she couldn't pass that down to her son and her
24 son couldn't pass that down to me. But when my
25 grandmother was getting ready to pass way, when she

1 was older, she said -- she was 85 years old when she
2 goes, "I didn't say tribal words, but that man told
3 the people that did." So it a lasting effect on her
4 80 years later today that she got her mouth washed out
5 with soap so that she would quit talking to him.

6 But the fear of Concho and the way it was and the
7 way people were treated there. I came home from
8 school one day and I was in my room, and there was a
9 great big box there and my dad was in there and I
10 remember going, "Hey, what's this -- what's box in my
11 room here for?" He goes, "Your mom said you're not
12 minding her." I go, "Okay." And when he goes, "Put
13 all your stuff in that box, you're going to Concho."

14 Anyway, that's my experience with that. And I
15 think the thing that needs to be said is what the
16 boarding school stopped was the family, you know.
17 Kids grew up there, they didn't know their parents.
18 They didn't have to pass it on. And I think it's
19 driven down and it still exists a little bit, but, I
20 think, some of us other ones -- because that stopped
21 with me. I hug my girls and everything, nephews and
22 everything. But that's terrible that they got wiped
23 out for generations, but the affection wasn't passed
24 down.

25 SPEAKER: Madam Secretary, Assistant Secretary,

1 my name is the Jacob Tsotigh I am the Vice Chairman of
2 the Kiowa Tribe. I want thank our senior leader from
3 the eastern part state, Governor (Incomprehensible),
4 Chief Hill, Chairman Barnes for traveling so far to be
5 a part of this discuss the because it's critical
6 because their citizens have experienced all that we
7 have been relaying to you today.

8 What I would like to focus on what my two
9 colleagues mentioned. The residual effects on our
10 citizens. I'm a retired educator, working primarily
11 in Indian education. And over the years I've worked
12 at a public school setting. That's where over
13 95 percent of our students attend, and they are the
14 ones that are the lasting legacy of the influence of
15 the cultural genocide that our people have experienced
16 they have made it through the public school setting
17 without an understanding of what their parents, their
18 the grandparents have experienced. And we need to do
19 more because it's not just a problem with the
20 Department of the Interior. It's also a problem with
21 the Department of Education. I urge you to
22 collaborate with Secretary Cardona so that they can
23 impact the broader state of education. And I'm
24 thankful for my colleague, Director Dearman. The work
25 that I had done with him to reform and -- to reform

1 improve the education of our boarding school systems.
2 He's a good man. He came he came from Riverside. He
3 has a good vision. I'm thankful he's been able to
4 lead as long as he has. And I look forward continued
5 good things from him. But we need to collaborate with
6 our departments of education. I worked regularly
7 with -- in New Mexico with Secretary
8 (Incomprehensible) and others in the Indian Education
9 Division to address the issues in -- in your state.

10 And they're -- I -- they are the same as what
11 we've experienced throughout Indian Country, the same
12 type of cultural genocide by their parents and because
13 their parents went through, and their grandparents
14 went through such a rigid and conforming situation,
15 they were pulled from nurturing, caring, loving
16 environments, and taught to be regimented just as
17 these gentleman today. So then, that was conveyed to
18 their children, their children's children. We do not
19 know how to nurture and to love as effectively as we
20 should because of that dehumanization process that
21 they experienced. And something that we need --
22 reconciliation. And I'm so thankful you're here to
23 reach out. That's not been done before on this scale.

24 So I look forward to the recommendations and the
25 policy changes. Although we've been moving in a good

1 direction the last decade or so, but there's still
2 much to recognize in terms of what -- in terms of what
3 have been inflicted upon our Indian citizens. And so,
4 I appreciate your presence and I'm that I thankful
5 people have spoken to give their prospective.

6 My mother was a product of St. Patrick's Mission
7 and she spoke like Ms. Whitehorse. Her experience was
8 good because she had a rough home environment. So she
9 had a good experience because that was the other side
10 of the coin. When our students weren't in the
11 boarding school situation, it helped them to survive.
12 Literally. With food, they weren't able to get any in
13 their home environment because of the trauma or the
14 deprivation of our Indian people in Indian Country.
15 So there's a lot to make up for and you started on
16 this journey with this first step. Aho.

17 MR. NEWLAND: We'll take time to hear from folks,
18 but we want to make sure that we're doing it in a way
19 that's respectful of everybody by just raising your
20 hand. We'll find you, we'll get to you, and we'll do
21 it that way.

22 SPEAKER: Hello my name is Wisdom. I'm a proud
23 member of the Chickasaw Nation. I went to boarding
24 school and I'm a proud veteran. I'd like to address
25 the commission about the healing process to the

1 (Speaking Native tongue) veterans in the military.

2 I was talking to a Pawnee lady about the best
3 veterans song is Arikara. Arikaras and Pawnees, they
4 communicate well. I think they're the same, but she
5 didn't know this one story that I had at -- in 1876,
6 after the battle that was -- an Arikara warrior that
7 had fallen but his horse -- battle was in Montana.
8 The horse made it all the way back to Fort Berthold
9 country where the Arikaras are now. And again, the
10 Arikaras made good songs, they made an honoring song
11 about that horse.

12 So my idea -- my idea about the healing process
13 with the military, they had what we call gold star
14 families. And what I'd like to request -- I know you
15 can't do it. But if in Indian Country, we can say red
16 star families are decedents of the people that had
17 (Incomprehensible) extreme trauma from the boarding
18 school experience. Well, you can't -- again, I know
19 you can't designate red star families. But if we
20 could make honoring songs and I'm talking, you know,
21 the Creeks can do it Kiowas, can do it, the Comanches.
22 All the nations, all the tribes and nations can, make
23 a red star honoring song. And -- and that way. It
24 has to be a healing song. It can't be a victim song.
25 But if someone starts that in Indian Country, Indian

1 Country will know that a red star family -- will learn
2 from this commission what I red star family is. And
3 again, it has to be a healing song. But once it
4 starts, I know it'll -- it'll -- it'll catch. It'll
5 spread like wildfire. And when this commission's
6 gone, that song can still be there. So that's -- if
7 you can just communicate that, someone made a request
8 that there be an honoring song -- a healing song for
9 red star family so Indian Country will know what red
10 star families are. Aho.

11 SPEAKER: Madam Secretary, Assistant Secretary,
12 I'm so happy that you came to -- your first stop was
13 here at Riverside Indian School. My name is Lori
14 Gooday Ware. I'm the chairwoman for the Fort Sill
15 Apache Tribe. And my dad, the late Gooday Gooday
16 senior went to Chilocco Indian School and he -- he
17 really didn't talk a whole lot about it. But
18 listening to the people talking today, you know, not
19 talking about it. He didn't. His father that he
20 had -- he had a good trade. He learned a good trade
21 there and he worked hard. My dad was a hard worker.
22 He worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs for 30 --
23 35 years. And so, you know, I know there was
24 something there. And his brothers and his sister,
25 they went to Fort Sill Indian School. And then, with

1 that -- you know, I hear this and I'm thinking
2 that's -- that was them. They did talk about it.

3 So the Fort Sill Apache Tribe is made up of two
4 bands of Apaches, the Chiricahuas and the Warm Spring.
5 And we're from southern New Mexico and southern
6 Arizona and northern Mexico. And in 1886, our leader,
7 Geronimo, surrendered to the government. And after he
8 did that, they took -- they took over 500 of our
9 people as prisoners of war and held them -- held them
10 in prison for 27 years. And I don't know if a lot of
11 you know this, but they were transferred from Texas to
12 Florida to Alabama because they were dying. Because
13 of the dysentery and poor, poor living conditions that
14 they had. And when they arrived in Florida, they took
15 over 100 of our kids, from small kids to adults to
16 Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania.

17 And it -- I did a little bit of research on it
18 and I'd like to send you this calendar that I did.
19 Before I was the chairwoman, I was our cultural
20 leader. And so, I would do the calendar every year
21 and the last one I did, I did it on Carlisle Indian
22 School. And I tried not to make it sad but you
23 couldn't help but be sad because of the survivors that
24 made home. We had over 30 -- 30 kids still there at
25 Carlisle, Pennsylvania. They were -- they -- they

1 moved them from their -- when they were -- when they
2 died, they didn't -- they buried them in a certain
3 area. And when the government decided that they
4 needed area, they moved them to another area. And
5 at -- I've never been there. I've seen pictures of
6 the graves that are there. We have a lot of unknown
7 graves that are Apaches. So we don't know, but my --
8 my whole thing is, how do we know that those are our
9 people. They -- I mean, how did they -- how did they
10 transfer? How can you transfer buried people -- kids
11 to another area it be correct, it be the identity of
12 these -- of our people that we lost there?

13 So a few years ago, I went to the -- probably
14 about 10 years ago, I went to the area -- I was IHS --
15 in Oklahoma City. And there was some people there.
16 And I know there was -- I know that they had some
17 funds to transfer people -- our people back to their
18 original homelands. And I know that there was some in
19 North Dakota. I think that they just recently
20 (Incomprehensible) them there. And -- but when we
21 were talking in this discussion of these people that
22 was there, I asked if there was any babies that were
23 buried there and they said, "No." But I know that
24 there was one. My -- my -- my ancestors in Colorado,
25 Chief Loco, they had grandson who was my

1 great-grandfather, his name was Talbot Gooday. He was
2 one of the people that they took -- one of the things
3 that they -- they, you know, my -- my -- not in any
4 history records, it's by history of my family that
5 they tell us that the -- when they took them from
6 fort -- Florida to Carlisle, they took prominent
7 children to that school to make an example out of
8 them. That they -- that they showed them the rest of
9 the tribes that, you know, they -- this is what is
10 you're going to become, you know, and they had to cut
11 their hair and they couldn't talk their language.
12 There's a photo that they took of some of our Apache
13 children and I'm sure some of you have, maybe, have
14 seen them, before and after picture. They, you know,
15 they were -- they -- they had long hair and they cut
16 their clothes they had their traditional clothes on.
17 And the next picture they showed of them, six months
18 later, they're -- they're wearing these wool outfits
19 and they cut their hair and none of them are smiling.
20 None -- none of them -- neither picture, none of them
21 are smiling. But it's just -- I guess it's -- and
22 they were really thought about the trauma that these
23 kids suffered. I -- you know, stories that we've
24 heard that they took some of our kids, that -- that
25 were at Carlisle. And then, they send them to these

1 white people's homes in Pennsylvania and they were,
2 basically, their slaves. They worked, they worked,
3 they worked 24/7 at these houses and people never saw
4 them again.

5 So, you know, it's -- it's -- I guess, you know,
6 I just want, you know, to make sure that they aren't
7 forgotten. I know we haven't forgotten them, it's
8 just -- I think we need to really address that in your
9 initiative. I'm really glad that you did that.
10 Started this, and so, you know, like we said, if
11 there's anything that we need to do to help you as
12 tribal leaders, let us know because we're -- that's
13 what we -- that's what we do. We try to help as many
14 people, not only our people, but the rest of the
15 people. I have -- I have good friends that are
16 different tribes and, you know, we try to help each
17 other in any way that we can and support each other as
18 much as we can. And I just want to thank you for
19 coming today.

20 SPEAKER: Okay. Hello, my name
21 (Incomprehensible). I'm really nervous. I'm just
22 going to read this off my phone. Thank you to all you
23 who are here and have shared and to those of you who
24 haven't shared, but are here. Being in a historically
25 traumatic place for our people can be triggering and

1 very painful. But I hope you know that sharing your
2 truths does make a powerful difference. I did have
3 one recommendation, maybe, in future for a tour but if
4 need be, you guys could open or close with this nudge.
5 It might be very helpful. My grandmother, my mother,
6 and my sister all went to boarding school. My mother
7 has a lot of stories to share. But one in picture
8 that really hit me hard was that some of the priests,
9 the staff members would take young boys and put them
10 in a circle and fight them like animals for their own
11 satisfaction. I don't know. But my uncle was one of
12 those kids and he was -- he was in a fight against
13 another kid and he won. And the staff member beat him
14 up until he was unconscious. And they just drug from
15 the blacktop and down into a basement. And my mother
16 didn't get to see him for a long time after that. She
17 didn't know if he was alive or dead. A couple years
18 later, he tried to take his own life at boarding
19 school by drinking cleaner.

20 I think the most damning is that our family
21 dynamics have been shattered. They've been destroyed.
22 In my own family, we've got members who are estranged.
23 We've got trauma that we continue to carry. We have
24 addiction issues, history of abuse, and our children's
25 legacy, our inheritances were stolen, our ways, our

1 languages, our integrity, and our lands. And these
2 issues continue to affect us to this day. My family
3 and I have launched a fundraiser to purchase a ground
4 penetrating radar and we reached that goal. It is our
5 own set, it can be used to check for unmarked graves
6 at residential sites. We actually launched this three
7 weeks before madam secretary announced her own
8 investigation. I read the report from the front to
9 back and I narrated it for other people to listen to.
10 It's on Youtube at (Incomprehensible) networks. If
11 you want to put it on, it's about three hours long and
12 you can listen to it. My partner and I went and got
13 certified to operate as well as data to use the
14 technology. I know there's an of landowner and
15 processes and procedures. So how do we change the
16 rules so that we may search for our children's without
17 the (Incomprehensible) office taking our names? Are
18 there not laws protecting Indian names and graves or
19 does that not apply here? How do we do a meaningful
20 investigation in time for others to be validated in
21 their experiences. I'm not college educated. I'm no
22 lawyer or politician or important person, but I am
23 byproduct of this system. One that has deeply
24 affected my family. It has not deeply affected me and
25 I feel called to do something about it. I want to say

1 thank you to you two and your teams who are doing
2 hard, meaningful work. In just the report, I had to
3 take several breaks and it took days takes to get
4 through. So I know what you guys are carrying and
5 what everybody here is carrying. It probably never
6 feels like enough. I know that that's how I feel
7 about the work that I do. But we can't let this
8 fizzle out. We're not asking for anything other than
9 to be involved and to be heard and to be seen. These
10 lands could be -- should be indigenous led because we
11 are indigenous. I know that things like this take
12 time, but my mother is 71. She deserves answers. And
13 our people's suffering, our children's suffering
14 deserves to be acknowledged. Thank you.

15 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you. I want to -- I just
16 want respond briefly. Ms. -- I missed your name. I'm
17 sorry.

18 SPEAKER: (Incomprehensible)

19 MR. NEWLAND: (Incomprehensible) I just wanted to
20 say that your work is enough. And everybody who's
21 carrying this work. The part of, you know, in this --
22 this work between generations is enough. And your
23 work is important and you're important to your family
24 and your people in your community. And please -- I'm
25 grateful for you standing up to speak, but don't

1 diminish who you are and your experience and the work
2 that you're doing. Everybody is here to help carry
3 this weight together. So thank you for that.

4 SPEAKER: Thank you. My name is
5 (Incomprehensible) I'm an Osage and also a chairwoman
6 of the United States Indian Nation of Oklahoma. The
7 first part is going to be speaking personally. It
8 hits you as soon as you grab this mic. On a personal
9 note, my great-grandmother was at Carlisle Indian
10 School. When he was -- he was traditionally married.
11 And they sent they sent -- they sent his wife to a
12 boarding school in St. Louis Catholic School in
13 Alaska, and they sent Carlisle Indian School. My
14 great-grandfather, he was murdered during the reign of
15 terror. His mother didn't make it and we were,
16 unfortunately, moved from Kansas. The only option was
17 to go to boarding school. And in his records, it
18 shows that he's married when he's 14. He stayed there
19 for several years. And then, when he came home, he
20 got an Osage divorce and said we're too young. And
21 then, later, he married my great-grandmother. They
22 had my grandmother. This is in 1906. When he came
23 back, I looked at his records and they followed up
24 with, "How much money do you have as an Osage? How
25 much land do you have?" Not asking him how he was or

1 anything else. There's this big gap of what happened
2 to him.

3 Well, through that boarding school experience, he
4 became an alcoholic. Through the reign of terror, he
5 was part a scheme and was ultimately murdered. That's
6 one story. The other story I want to speak -- it was
7 from my older siblings, because, by the time my
8 parents -- they had seven kids. My older siblings all
9 went from Haskell to Albuquerque Indian School to IAIA
10 (Incomprehensible) high school. We were such a happy
11 family? We lived in -- my parents moved us from
12 Pawhuska to Colorado for better education, and
13 opportunity, and better jobs. So we all went to
14 school. And then, one by one, my siblings went to
15 Indian Schools. When they'd come home, especially my
16 older sister, the one right next to me. She was a
17 gifted artist and she wanted to go to IAIA. My bother
18 was about four years older than I am. He went to --
19 he loved to play football and sports. When they'd
20 come home, the distance that I felt from them was
21 immense. I could only tell you the story as a sibling
22 of the boarding school. My sister told me about the
23 being raped. And then, I wasn't -- and she was angry
24 at me because I wanted her to, like, hang out with me
25 and play. But it changed her. It changed her

1 (Incomprehensible). My sisters were in Santa Fe, like
2 I was no longer part of her family. But she goes,
3 because I depended on them to be their sisters. So
4 when my parents got to my younger brother and myself,
5 we were the youngest two. They just said no more. It
6 stops. No more Indian school for my kids. So we
7 could be in public schools and went on to college.
8 But it changed my family dynamic, like someone was
9 saying earlier, and how we heal from that. And I
10 thank you. I apologize for my addressing you because
11 I also know both of you personally. And in these --
12 in these roles and these places that you are now.
13 That's the answer to the prayers. It is a big
14 assistant. You're putting your -- to help handle this
15 and I'm glad Assistant Secretary is by your side.
16 This is heavy, the heaviest in this room. I can feel
17 it in my heart. But I want to say something about --
18 let me just finish this part up because I -- I think
19 it's important to hear from the survivors as well.
20 Absolutely. I got to get my (Incomprehensible) iPhone
21 won't recognize me. It's the truth.

22 So the United Indian Nations, when we started, we
23 worked with NABSE. We had an event last month. So
24 they -- when we started going on social media, of all
25 different things that we would be discussing, hearing

1 the survivors' stories. This woman that reached out
2 to me from Pennsylvania, and started talking to me
3 about the Martinsburg Indian School. Now, this was a
4 BIA school that they let a German man -- it was almost
5 like contract -- he was a contractor. And he said, "I
6 got a big building. I can take some Indian students
7 on." We didn't even know this because he -- because
8 there was 50 Osages and 50 Oneidas from Green Bay that
9 went to the school. That school only lasted three
10 years under that contract. He lost his contract.
11 Some of the stories that some of the townspeople
12 would, like we'd heard earlier, they go to school all
13 day. And then, they became workforce for the local
14 community. But there are two Osage students that died
15 there that we know of. The right one was Henry Ward
16 Beacher. But back home, he was known as (Speaking
17 Native tongue) there's Mary Gibson (Speaking Native
18 tongue) to me. Those are names that probably haven't
19 been spoken since 1988. Excuse me. We want -- we
20 want them back home. Memorial Day, no one seen those
21 graves. So we will continue to be supportive of your
22 efforts with the United Indian Nations. When you want
23 to use our platform, you let us know because the tour
24 doesn't end here. I wish that you could have heard
25 the other stories as well. And again, I just thank

1 you all for being here. Thank you.

2 SPEAKER: Hello, my name is Carol Jean Castro
3 Flores. I have -- I started school here when I was 6
4 years old and my mother had come to school here too.
5 She attended here -- I just wanted to speak just a
6 little bit. My mother's no longer here. But she
7 had -- he went to school, my father had not come. But
8 my grandfather and grandmother had to pull her out of
9 school here when my grandmother got sick with cancer.
10 So they took my mother out of school, which was in the
11 9th grade. So she never did get to come back to
12 school. She never finished. And I'm just thankful
13 that before she left that she -- they had formed the
14 first Indian club here. And I have a picture of the
15 lady, Solomon Buxton. And I'm thankful for that. And
16 my mother -- my mother has been gone since -- I think
17 it was in '98. And there's -- we were -- I am the
18 oldest out of the eight children. So I have one
19 brother left. And, anyway I go -- I -- I hate to say
20 this, but I ran off from Riverside when I was -- I
21 think I was about, like, 8 years old, maybe 7. And I
22 ran off with one of my relatives and her son. I'm
23 sorry, her friend and they were older than me. And it
24 was almost time for summer, to be out of school -- on
25 this school. I was still -- and it was summer and --

1 but I was so long from my mother. And -- and so I was
2 going to go with them. I was in the girls building
3 and they had a -- a fire escape, the kind that you
4 slide -- slide down. And we waited until about
5 midnight and had to slide down on a blanket. And so,
6 when we get down there, there was three of us. And we
7 went -- we just walked to town and across the -- went
8 down on the -- bridge. And there was an apartment
9 that they had. I don't know whose -- I think it was a
10 friend that had the relative there within that
11 apartment. She wasn't there, but, anyway, we sat and
12 that morning, we heard a knock on the door. And I
13 don't know how they found out, but they found us there
14 and they brought us back to the school and we got
15 punished. And I don't know exactly what happened to
16 the girls. But with me, the principal, she -- all she
17 did was, she whipped my hands, and tapped me with a
18 ruler, and patted my hands. And I was surprised that
19 it wasn't worse than that. And I was so thankful.
20 And my mother got home with some things, but I -- but
21 I'd like a lot of the others that have gone through
22 boarding schools of what had happened. So I probably
23 talked about it, but my mother never did. And I used
24 to wonder why too, why my mother never -- she never
25 did tell me this. She, you know, that she loved me or

1 anything like that. And I didn't know what was going
2 on about that nowadays. I have children, I've always
3 told them -- I'll hug them and tell them that I love
4 them. And knowing that there is really, really love.
5 And my daughter's the one that told me about -- about
6 the Secretary of Interior coming over here and I only
7 found out about two or three days ago. If it were not
8 for her, I would not be here today. But I was really
9 happy and -- and I am -- I am so thankful that I was
10 able to take a picture with her. And the lady up
11 there on the right, I'm so thankful for her, for
12 getting me in so I could take a picture. And I
13 thought that would never happen for me, to take a
14 picture? We were at -- even if I could just say hello
15 and shake hands and say I'm pleased to meet you, and
16 I'm so thankful that I did come listen to -- I knew a
17 lot of the students that had gone to the -- the
18 boarding schools and the men too. And I know her -- a
19 lot -- a lot of them that are -- that had passed on.
20 And I was looking around to see if I could recognize
21 some -- some of them. But I -- there are -- I guess
22 they had gone on. And I'm, right now, I'm 83 years
23 old. In February I'll be 84. And, actually, I never
24 thought that I would make it -- past 30 or so and here
25 I am. So the Lord is not ready to take me so I am

1 happy. And at first, and when I lost my husband
2 and -- and since 2014. But I have a daughter here and
3 my -- her name is Joy and I just want to you --

4 SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Joy. And first, I
5 would like to ask all the elders in the audience to
6 forgive me for speaking. I'm just still a young
7 woman. I'm the daughter of a student here at
8 Riverside. Her mother was also here at Riverside.
9 She came here at 6 years old in 1945 and my
10 grandmother -- I don't know how old she was. It was
11 long before then. I'm also a product of Indian Child
12 Welfare. My mother and her father and my biological
13 parents, they didn't want nothing to do with me. And
14 this lovely woman you see before you in front of you,
15 she raised me to do well. And there are lots of
16 people -- look at Natives that are people that were
17 not going to make it. We have all -- all these --
18 these barriers that we have to cross that no one
19 else -- that they don't understand. Currently, I have
20 an associate's degree. I'm getting towards my
21 bachelor's degree. I was taught tribal
22 (Incomprehensible) Lawton. I know it's a small city
23 but I was there. But I would just like to thank
24 everything for being here and appreciate the -- that's
25 going on. And also, in my way, I had been dancing in

1 the shall at my tribal ceremonies last weekend. It's
2 got all the love in it. So this is just our Kiowa way
3 to say thank you.

4 SPEAKER: Thank you. Good afternoon, Secretary
5 Haaland and Assistant Secretary Newland. My name is
6 Walter Echohawk. My Pawnee name is (Speaking Native
7 tongue) which means good horse and I'm here today as
8 the President of Pawnee Business Council. I have with
9 me, a Pawnee delegation here. That includes our
10 Principal Chief, Mr. Patrick Leading Fox and Mr. Matt
11 Lee. And we want to welcome you to the State of
12 Oklahoma. We thank you for coming, especially from
13 hearing these stories today. Sitting here all day and
14 listening to these stories, it's really hard to find
15 the words to express my feelings and clearly, the
16 boarding school days were days of heartbreak. And a
17 lot of that trauma remains today, embedded in this
18 generation. And I, myself, have not -- was not a
19 boarding school student. But I did want to add a word
20 on behalf of my grandfather, Delmar Echohawk, one of
21 my grandfathers. And he, in 1907, shipped off to
22 Carlisle, Pennsylvania Indian School. And his records
23 indicate that he was a runaway and he came all the way
24 back to Oklahoma as a teenager. So now, he made it
25 all the way home from Pennsylvania back to the Pawnee

1 preservation. And he -- his records say that he was a
2 deserter. But he, no sooner, got home in 1918. Sent
3 him back to Carlisle. When I think that every person
4 in this room has their families -- have been touched
5 by, you know, by these -- that era. So I'm very glad
6 that you're engaging on this investigation and on the
7 trial towards reconciliation and healing. And, you
8 know, on the Pawnee reservation where I work today,
9 you know, my office is one of the tribal offices is
10 the former Pawnee Indian Boarding School. And it's a
11 historic district. Most of our buildings there, they
12 were boarding schools open for about 80 years. So
13 three generations of our people went to Pawnee Indian
14 Boarding School.

15 Today, we have our tribal headquarters in
16 those -- those facilities. And one of the unique
17 things that I think about boarding schools is that
18 there's no cemetery there. But we do know that most
19 of the schools happen to have cemeteries, you know.
20 And over the 80-year period that -- we know that some
21 of those students died. Where are they buried? And
22 so, I'd like to have an answer in your investigation.
23 You, what -- what -- if you can find the records of
24 those students that attended over that 80-year period
25 of what happened to the ones that passed away and

1 where are -- where were they, you know, we've heard
2 rumors when I was a younger person that they were --
3 many graves where children were buried beneath some of
4 the buildings there. When we had GPS work done, we
5 haven't found any of these unmarked graves. But we're
6 wanting to know where -- where the children are buried
7 so that they could -- we can, at least, identify where
8 their final resting places are. But, excuse me, so
9 that would be one request on behalf of the Pawnee
10 Nation would be to help us retrieve those records of
11 those students, you know, the archives, you know, so
12 we can figure out what happened on our children that
13 passed away. I've heard stories that -- that at the
14 Pawnee Indian Boarding School, where all of our folks
15 went, you know, we -- we've got one sitting right here
16 that for speaking the Pawnee language, the practice
17 there was to take the children and put them in a
18 gunnysack and hang them up in a tree or hang them up
19 on a wall there in the dormitory. And sometimes, the
20 trees would have more than one kid, you know, hanging,
21 hanging in a gunnysack all night. And so, there has
22 been trauma and I think the question is, we're on a
23 path here towards healing, and reconciliation, and
24 healing. And I hope that that would be the product --
25 that the end product of your work here on your journey

1 as you go across your country. And so, what my
2 question is, what -- how do we heal a painful past?
3 And I know in that process, our wisdom traditions
4 teach us that -- that one of the ingredients in
5 healing process is -- at some stage in that process,
6 is to perform acts of atonement. And so, my question
7 is, what acts have atonement will the Bureau of Indian
8 Affairs do for inflicting pain of this nature that is
9 still with us today. And we know that we can't turn
10 back the hands of time. But the acts of atonement
11 that our wisdom traditions call for is to do
12 everything in our power to try to make things right
13 and wipe the slate clean. And so, it seems to me is
14 that one of the things that I hope that you would
15 consider recommending is an act of atonement in this
16 healing process would be to get the funding for about
17 each and every tribe for to restore our languages so
18 that the generations of Pawnee Indian Boarding School
19 here, hang kids in a sack for speaking their language.
20 We -- today, our counsel that declared the Pawnee
21 language a state of emergency, as an endangered
22 language. We don't have resources. We don't have the
23 resources from the government to really save our --
24 our endangered language. And so, I think, because
25 that was practiced nationally by BIA to stamp out our

1 language in these institutions. One act of atonement
2 would be to restore those languages and that falls, to
3 me, on the shoulders of the BIA these are BIA schools,
4 and they need to step up and restore these languages
5 to their former state of proficiency. And I don't
6 know a dime comes out of the BIA to do that. But I
7 think it falls on the shoulders of BIA to restore the
8 languages that were trying to be stamped out.

9 My other thought on acts of atonement is that
10 when we look back on that day, basically, what we're
11 look -- looking at, the treatment of the children, and
12 the destruction of their culture and damage to their
13 family. These are human right violations. And
14 apparently, we didn't have the kinds of human rights
15 that we see today in modern, international human
16 rights law. But they need to be taken to children
17 under the UN genocide convention, taking the kids is
18 an act of genocide. And so, I think that one step of
19 atonement is to restore the human rights of Native
20 people so this process will never be repeated again.
21 And of course, we know that the UN, United Nations'
22 declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples is an
23 international document handed down by the UN that lays
24 out the human rights of indigenous peoples worldwide,
25 including Native American human rights in our country.

1 And Canadian, this past summer, the National
2 Parliament passed the national statute too endorse and
3 incorporate provisions of that human declaration in
4 the Canadian law. We need to do the same thing here
5 in the United States. And I think that would be a
6 fitting act of atonement, I think it should emanate
7 from the Department of the Interior under your
8 leadership as a step that could be taken to restore
9 the human rights so that this process is never
10 repeated -- repeated again. So I just offer those
11 remarks and I wish you the best on your journey here.
12 You have the best wish I'm sure from everyone in the
13 room here on this journey. Certainly on -- from the
14 Pawnee Nation. And we thank you for taking the time
15 out of your busy work, you know, to turn your
16 attention to addressing, some people will say, though,
17 this is ancient past, let's -- let's forget but you --
18 we've seen in this room, you know, that -- that the
19 harm and the trauma is still with us today. So I
20 thank you for looking at and I wish you the best.
21 Thanks.

22 SPEAKER: (Speaking Native tongue) Hello, my name
23 is Joanna James, I'm a citizen of the Chickasaw
24 Nation. I'm the granddaughter of (Incomprehensible)
25 and the great-granddaughter of (Incomprehensible). I

1 want to thank you for being here today and taking the
2 time to listen to everything that we have to say. My
3 grandmother was a boarding school student at this
4 boarding school, which is how my family ended up in
5 Anadarko. I was born in if Lawton Hospital and raised
6 in this community until I was 10.

7 My grandmother didn't share a lot of her stories
8 in the boarding school which was something I hear lot
9 of our elders. But one of the things I know is that
10 they did put the children in different rooms. So she
11 was a Chickasaw, they put her in rooms with other
12 children from other tribes so that the children would
13 have to learn to speak English. But our kiddoes were
14 smart. And so, instead of speaking English, they
15 taught each other their language. And so, growing up
16 I don't know how many languages my grandmother
17 learned, but I know, growing up, she could speak
18 five -- it's a Kiowa and Comanche which comes in handy
19 because now, I have grandkids and they are Chickasaw
20 and Kiowa. And so, I didn't get to learn Chickasaw
21 because that was taken away from us. When my grandson
22 was born two years ago, I was in the room and my first
23 words to him were (Speaking Native tongue) it's,
24 "Hello grandson, I love you." And those were the
25 first words he heard. And I don't speak a lot of

1 Kiowa so I apologize to any Kiowas in the room, but I
2 did say (Speaking Native tongue) "Thank you, creator."
3 And so, that's the best I could do, he needed to hear
4 both of those languages.

5 And so, there's something healing about that, but
6 I want to bring that up because when we talked about
7 what we can do and going forward. I'm grateful to
8 have my education and my doctorate study is in federal
9 Indian policy and the boarding schools and how are we
10 going to help our and education today? So the -- so
11 we carried this pain for long time and we don't want
12 our children to carry it. I don't want my kids to
13 have to carry that pain. And I'm -- so that we need
14 education. We know that suicide is really high in our
15 communities, our children ages 10 to 24. It's the
16 second leading cause of death for them. And it's
17 because they're walking in the world and in an
18 education system where they -- they try to get rid of
19 their people. The system was not created for us. And
20 so, what can we need to do a better job of creating
21 systems and educational spaces for children where my
22 grandson can walk into that room Chickasaw and Kiowa,
23 not having to code-switch. And I know that many,
24 probably know that term. But, you know, it's when we
25 have to walk into a room and we have to act like

1 something other than we are. I also had the privilege
2 of working for the State of Oklahoma for five years as
3 the travel liaison for the Department of Mental
4 Health. It is exhausting being walking into a room
5 and code-switching. I don't want to see that happen
6 for our grand -- our grandkids and their grandkids.

7 And so, I just ask that we find a way, especially
8 in educational spaces to create room for them to be
9 who they are without having to pretend that they're
10 something they're not. And also, behavior and health.
11 You know, we have dollars that go to the States. But
12 when you look at the portion that our tribes get for
13 those funds, we don't need any more state
14 (Incomprehensible) coming and telling us how to heal
15 our kids. As tribes, we know how to heal our
16 children.

17 And I worked in Anadarko when we have suicide
18 contagion that was over the suicide prevention grant
19 at that time. And we had powwows. (Incomprehensible)
20 went to state that year in Anadarko, I went to state
21 that year and I feel that creator was stepping me in
22 because when that happened, and we had our children
23 encompassed in their culture and they were protected.
24 And they had access to their -- to their elders and
25 their people. So we need more funding to go straight

1 to our tribes so that they can do those things and
2 have those programs that we know that our are
3 protected for our children. And just as we heal, you
4 know, as we stand here today, we're healing our
5 ancestors, but we're also healing our descendants.
6 And so, again, thank you for this space, and thank you
7 for all of the elders that shared their stories,
8 today. And you are speaking for my grandmother, as
9 she's no longer with us. As you are telling these
10 stories, so thank you.

11 SPEAKER: (Speaking Native tongue) Hello, my name
12 is Charice (Incomprehensible) I am a Comanche and
13 Caddo. I'm an enrolled Comanche. My mother was full
14 blood Comanche, and my father was full blood Caddo.
15 But I want to -- I appreciate to be here today.
16 Thankful. Allowed to come before you and speak.

17 My grandmother -- I am a product of the
18 relocation. We left here in Anadarko, Anadarko is in
19 Caddo where it's from the Caddo Nation -- people. And
20 being raised here in Dallas, Texas, my grandmother was
21 fluent Caddo speaking. Her and my father, I hear
22 every day, every day talk Caddo. My mother, in
23 Comanche, would pray in Comanche. But she didn't
24 really have anyone there to speak her language to
25 other than people at church that, you know, that she

1 was congregating with my grandmother -- I'm thankful
2 that I came here today because I, too, am being healed
3 from being here. My grandmother, she was -- she was
4 born 1900. She had two birthdays. 1889 and -- the
5 turn of the century, she would have been 122 years old
6 if she was here today. But, as it was, my father went
7 to school here in the 40s. Well, I didn't think it
8 was going to be this difficult to talk. But I wanted
9 to share because I have a four daughters, and
10 grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and I want them
11 to know as well. So as it was, my grandmother passed
12 away here in Dallas. But we brought her back here to
13 be buried in 1972. And she was in a nursing home
14 there right outside of Dallas when she expired. So as
15 it was, we were here for Indian Hills powwow when word
16 came to us. And so, we moved here -- moved here to
17 Anadarko and I've never left. So I (Incomprehensible)
18 Kiowa here. I'm married to an Apache. For 47 years,
19 I've been married to an Apache. But I did ask father
20 once -- I said, "How come we don't talk Caddo?" And
21 he was Caddo and Delaware (Incomprehensible) it means
22 he was here. Well, he said, "Remember when your
23 grandmother took you to visit her in the nursing
24 home?" I said, "Yes." I was probably about, maybe
25 12, 13 years old. And she was in complete

1 (Incomprehensible) she couldn't fend for your herself,
2 we bathed her and fed her, they took care of her. And
3 when my father was in the war, she would yarn him some
4 socks. And she sat on that and it caused her to be
5 paralyzed. So I grew up to take care of her. There
6 was nine of us. Anyway, back to that question to my
7 father, I asked him. I said, "How come we don't talk
8 Caddo? Why didn't you teach us?" I said, "I hear it
9 and understand it." He said, "Well, you remember we
10 went to visit her?" He said, "Over there in that
11 nursing home?" It was in Arlington somewhere. I
12 said, "Yes." And he said, "She asked me. She told me
13 not to bring you no more, even though I had all my
14 (Incomprehensible). I slept with her, we shared the
15 same room, combed her hair, bathed her, took care of
16 her, fed her, and he said -- he told me, he said, "I
17 have to keep that promise." He said, "She didn't want
18 you to know -- any of our time -- she didn't want you
19 to go through the things that she went through." I
20 said I didn't know what he was talking about. I said,
21 "What did she go through?" He said, "Well, when we go
22 to Anadarko." He said, "I'm going to show you." He
23 said, "Since you asked" he said, "I'm going to show
24 you." So sure enough, out there -- it was out there
25 at St. Patrick's when you're going out towards uptown,

1 there used to be a drive-in over there. He said, "You
2 see that school?" I said, "Yes." Drove around and
3 kind of crumbled down and he said, "that's where she
4 went too school. That's where she said things --
5 things that were done to her that she don't want to be
6 done to you or your brothers and your sisters."

7 So to this day, I can understand what I can, a
8 little bit of Caddo. When we would come and visit in
9 the summertime, my father would take us to our
10 relatives, our close relatives in that -- they see,
11 and hear, and talk Caddo. And I couldn't pick up what
12 they were saying. And well, cause I didn't talk it.
13 Well, him and his cousins, my brother -- well, he's
14 still here. I just found out from Caddo Nation that
15 he's at the -- (Incomprehensible). He's, like,
16 92 years old. And I would hear them talk. And I
17 would kind of catch on to what they were saying, and
18 talk about being here. He went to school here. And
19 he left when he was in the 8th grade. Now, I was
20 just -- why did you -- why did you leave school? You
21 know, my dad was so young, he said, "I joined the
22 Navy -- I joined the army. I signed up." I said,
23 "Well, you weren't old enough to get in." He said, "I
24 lied." He said, "There was a few of that left, we all
25 left together to get out of there." I said, "Why did

1 you leave? What -- what -- what was so bad?" And he
2 said, "Oh, there was some crazy girls over there."
3 That was what he told me at a young age, but, when I
4 heard him, you know, visit, they would talk about --
5 they all had chores and remember in the morning, I
6 would wake them up and take them, go to the milk those
7 cows, go feed them, go around 4:00 or 5:00 in the
8 morning. And they would talk about -- there, I found
9 out one of the main reasons he left, he said, "When
10 the morning time came and we had to get over there and
11 go do their chores," he said, "they just protected
12 those little boys," he said, "because those people
13 would come in take those little boys away." Said, "We
14 found out." He said, "It wasn't any good, so I left
15 Riverside Indian School.

16 My mother, she went to school at Fort Sill Indian
17 School and Chilocco. And she wouldn't tell me because
18 I was growing up in Dallas, and I see couples in the
19 park and they'd be hugging, holding -- walking, and
20 holding hands, walking around and all that. And I
21 told my parents one day, I said, "Why don't we do
22 that? We don't hold hands." And we had a big family,
23 big ol' kitchen table and my dad came up and said,
24 "You come here. You stand right there." He said,
25 "I'll tell you something, Indians, we don't hold

1 hands. Indians, we don't hug." Well, I didn't know
2 what he meant by that. He said, "We pet. We pet one
3 another," he said, "because when you start hugging and
4 holding," he said, "you're going to have a big family
5 like this." I said, "Okay." So that got me quiet,
6 asking me more regarding that. He'll come back
7 here -- when my mother and grandmother passed in
8 '72 -- residency here, oh I was happy because I was
9 going to be among Indians. You know, there are no
10 Indians in Dallas, Texas, just very few at that time
11 in the 60s. So they said, "You can go to school over
12 here, but I think you want here at Riverside." Well,
13 I was just happy. You know, isn't there Indians over
14 there? Well, I was disappointed because I couldn't
15 get in. Riverside only had to have 22 credits. I
16 already had that and I was in the 10th grade. I had
17 about almost 30 credits. So I ended up going to
18 Anadarko. I graduated out of there. But, you know,
19 they really tried to put me into the other boarding
20 school in Eastern Oklahoma, (Incomprehensible).
21 Still, I had too many credits to go in. So I kind of
22 missed out on the boarding school, so to speak. My
23 husband, he's retired from Riverside, but he loved me,
24 so he said an arsenal. And he went on out to Sidney,
25 graduated from there. Okay. (Incomprehensible) being

1 healed today because when that elder gentleman, the
2 second speaker spoke, talking about at St. Patrick's
3 and what they did to him, I could only visualize that
4 happening to my grandmother, having die -- lye soap in
5 her mouth and in her hair. She was only 90 pounds and
6 she, probably, was only 4'11". But it helped me to
7 understand little bit more today being human. Right
8 now, I'm secretary to the local chapter of
9 (Incomprehensible) Indian capital. And there was a
10 few that's here, but they left, because they went to
11 go meet with the mother of a tribal member that was
12 murdered by the (Incomprehensible) a couple weeks ago.
13 And the mother is needing some help. But before I
14 close, I have something for you, Secretary of State, I
15 don't know -- you're from out west. This is -- we
16 call it Indian perfume and we have seen here from our
17 sacred mountain in Longhorn in Oklahoma City. And
18 thank you for coming and that's one of our T-shirts.
19 So thank you for allowing me and spending your time.

20 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you. We're going to take a
21 very brief restroom break and we're going to come back
22 for one short session. We'll hear from some of the
23 last folks who've been waiting patiently this week.
24 So let's call it 7 to 10 minutes and we'll be back.
25 Thank you.

1 (WHEREUPON, a break was held)

2 MR. NEWLAND: I'll ask, first, to take your
3 seats, please. Okay. We will -- just one moment,
4 please. If everybody could take their seats. We're
5 just doing a time check. It is 3:00 in the afternoon.
6 We've been going at this most of the day. I want to
7 thank those of you that are still here to hear us
8 speak. We're going to have to wrap up in about twenty
9 to thirty minutes here unfortunately. I'm grateful --
10 we're grateful for everybody who's taken the time and
11 the courage to speak with us today. And wish we could
12 hear for more people. So we'll just be mindful of the
13 time. Ask those one of who have attended boarding
14 schools and have a relative and want to speak on
15 behalf of their families and just be mindful of the
16 time and that there are people that want to speak.

17 SPEAKER: Hello, my name is Larine Morgan, sorry,
18 and I want to thank you Secretary and Assistant
19 Secretary for being here today. My name is Larine
20 Morgan and I am a member of the Cheyenne Arapaho
21 tribes of Oklahoma. I work as a governmental affairs
22 officer for Governor Wassana. What I wanted to kind
23 of talk about today -- I am also a boarding school
24 graduate. I attended Carter Seminary, which was
25 granted to the Chickasaw Nation. I don't have

1 anything horrific that actually happened to me during
2 that time. But I did suffer from separation anxiety,
3 being away from my family. And like some of the other
4 people have talked about, becoming regimented, which I
5 turned that into a positive in my life as far as
6 working and I love to clean, so. But I came from a
7 family, my grandparents and great-grandparents
8 attended boarding schools as well as my parents. My
9 parents met at Chilocco Boarding School. My father is
10 Otoe-Missouria and my mother is Cheyenne Arapaho. So
11 I am -- I feel like I am kind of a product of the
12 Chilocco Indian Boarding School.

13 One of the things that I wanted to kind of touch
14 base on today regarding the boarding schools is the
15 intergenerational trauma. As an employee of the
16 Cheyenne Arapaho Tribes, I have worked in various
17 positions, including social services. I've been a
18 caseworker. I've worked in Indian Child Welfare.
19 I've been in social services as an executive director.
20 And I call kind of want to talk about some of the
21 issues that, not only the boarding school survivors
22 face, including, you know, they suffer from mental
23 illness, drug and alcohol, substance abuse, they
24 suffer from a variety of economic barriers and just a
25 lot of life's hardships. And some of the things that

1 I have recognized over the years and working with our
2 tribal population is that many of our tribal members
3 come from broken homes. And I believe that stems
4 from, you know, the older generations that attended
5 boarding schools. They suffer the traumas as well as,
6 you know, the ones that have grown up their whole
7 lifetime in the boarding schools, they didn't have
8 that -- they didn't have a functional family
9 foundation to where they learn to express, you know,
10 love or they didn't have their mother's love, or they
11 didn't have the role model of a functional and
12 positive father, and a home. They didn't grow up with
13 their siblings. So they don't have that family
14 relationship. And so, when they grow up and they
15 become parents, a lot of times, the family unit fails.
16 And it fails and in a lot of, you know, it passes on
17 from generation to generation to where we are today,
18 that we have a high rate of children in Indian Child
19 Welfare and foster care. Because it, you know, we
20 have the bureau here and have the BIA social worker
21 that was here (Incomprehensible) that I have worked
22 with previously and, you know, the high rates of
23 foster children in our tribes, not only our tribes,
24 but the tribes of Oklahoma. It is really at a
25 critical high, I believe. And that is -- that is an

1 after effect of the boarding schools,
2 intergenerational trauma, and historical trauma.

3 It's just kind of rolling over from generation to
4 generation. These traumas, I feel like the, you know,
5 the things that are our grandparents had experienced,
6 you know, the -- like we've heard today. Some of the
7 families didn't know how to express love in a positive
8 way. They didn't know how to -- you know, because
9 they are traumatized over the years. They didn't, you
10 know, they didn't feel comfortable being physically,
11 you know, hugging their children or hugging their
12 family members or telling their children and their
13 family members that they love them. Which, in turn,
14 traumatized the children growing up. So that --
15 that -- and then their children have issues, and we
16 see a lot of drug and alcohol abuse in -- in children
17 and even in people of my age and generation wondering
18 why their parents didn't love them, didn't care for
19 them, didn't seemingly encourage them to do things
20 like, you know, go off to college or -- or to better
21 themselves. You know, our Indian people are in a
22 really sad state of affairs. I hate to say, as far as
23 the -- barriers they experience because of the
24 boarding school experience. And now, you know, us as
25 tribal governments, and our tribal leaders are left to

1 try and, you know, deal with the -- the every day
2 occurrences that happen in our tribes, including the
3 foster children, the placement of the Indian Child
4 Welfare, tribal members depending upon the tribe, you
5 know, and the high unemployment rates, and, you know,
6 the -- the drug addiction, alcoholism, domestic
7 violence, and child abuse. So I just wanted to bring
8 that point up and to let you know that, you know,
9 that's another area. It -- it spans out further than
10 just a survivor. You know, the grandparents and
11 parents that have suffered, you know, there's the
12 children and the grandchildren, generation to
13 generation. And I hope, you know, that somehow, we
14 can, you know, maybe find solutions as far as more
15 mental health treatment options, more dollars to help
16 address some of these issues, and even just talking
17 about it. I know in our tribe, we're trying to do
18 more for mental health awareness that I think
19 education and coming from the top, especially the
20 leaders, and saying that, you know, it's okay to --
21 that this has happened, but, you know, there's a road
22 to healing and to having some solutions and -- and for
23 the tribal members that we can pass down. And I do
24 want to say that, you know, I have -- I'm the last
25 boarding school generation at my family because my

1 children did not attend boarding school, and I
2 wouldn't have them go even though my experience
3 wasn't, you know, that bad. But due to, you know, the
4 separation anxiety that I experienced before I went to
5 boarding school. I never had anxiety about being away
6 from anybody. But now, as an adult, you know, I can
7 honestly say that -- that I do have that, especially
8 with my children, and that my feeling, you know, come
9 from going off to boarding school and that's something
10 I deal with personally. But I wouldn't want that for
11 my children. And besides that, I wouldn't let them go
12 anywhere, keep them close to me.

13 But I want to thank you for being here and
14 listening to everyone. I just would like to, you
15 know, I hope that we don't forget our children in
16 foster care and Indian Child Welfare that do suffer.
17 Thank you.

18 SPEAKER: (Speaking Native tongue) Madam
19 Secretary (Speaking Native tongue) I work for the
20 Cherokee Nation, Language Department. I wanted to
21 tell you a little bit of some of the experiences that
22 I had. My father was talking in Cherokee in the
23 Dwight Mission. He's -- he was a -- a boarding school
24 survivor. And I had the honor to grow up and the
25 elder's home. I was the seventh child and my father

1 was born in 1929. And so, I was kind of the oops that
2 happened later on in life. And I was very fortunate
3 to understand and hear some of the things that he had
4 to teach us. My grandmother was in 1899. I remember
5 her and some of the things that she had. In 2003, I
6 went to work for the Cherokee Nation Child. At that
7 time, I went to work for Indian Child Welfare. Over
8 the course of the next 11, 12 years, I had to testify
9 as an expert witness in at least 33 different states.

10 Madam Secretary, I've been fighting different
11 states, I've been spit on, I've been yelled at, I've
12 been cussed at by judges. I've looked to courts with
13 bail money because I thought, for sure, I will be I
14 would be thrown in jail by now. Fighting for our
15 kids, some of the things that I've seen firsthand of
16 how they still have the Indian problem. And some of
17 the things that these elders have told me has been
18 breathtaking. From the molestation of -- different
19 guards making them molest their kids. The hurt, the
20 pain they feel, the beatings. The one elder, I
21 remember him talking to me about what was happening to
22 him. He lifted his hand and showed me the stub where
23 his pinkie used to be and told me about -- that's when
24 I stopped speaking my language. When they cut this
25 off. I went back to work and they would ask me, why

1 do we have to do this? I had several stab wounds,
2 show them my pinkie. I remember as a young worker
3 having a case in Oklahoma City, standing in front of,
4 I believe it was Judge Stewart (Incomprehensible) we
5 didn't want to lose our tribe. And I -- one of the
6 older social workers, after I got done, he pulled me
7 aside and wanted to talk to me in the back room,
8 started crying, and he wouldn't tell me how when had
9 she first started working for Oklahoma DHS, how she --
10 her and her supervisor had binoculars, how they
11 watched Native families' homes. And the mother left
12 and they would whisk in the steal the babies, and
13 never tell, never tell what happened to them. Can you
14 imagine just walking away from your babies and coming
15 back and never knowing where they went. Never. That
16 day she was crying, and asked me for forgiveness, they
17 made, me do it.

18 This young man was in the middle of that. I
19 remember my -- some of -- what some of my elders told
20 me. (Speaking Native tongue) To be (Incomprehensible)
21 on another's existence is to find the reason to like
22 or love, to hold on to one another, to humanity and
23 never let go, to treat another as sacred. But that
24 day, I said I grabbed on to because this was my
25 teachers. And not (Speaking Native tongue) I know

1 that's the truth. Even though I'm heavy hearted
2 today, talking about this. So I remember hugging her
3 and praying with her in spite of what she's done
4 because my elders felt that it was -- that told that
5 the (Speaking Native tongue) people that rose above,
6 we wasn't supposed to let this get it we were supposed
7 to rise above. A few years later, one of the last
8 cases I was involved in was the baby Veronica case.
9 And despite everything we did, we still lost that
10 baby. And it's -- I remember us naming that baby. I
11 remember us praying with it. Dustin, the father, the
12 grandparents showed us, irregardless, this is what
13 happens when you fight against the United States.
14 Just two weeks ago, madam Secretary in the rule
15 against Native tribes in the case, from what I can
16 tell, they invited other people to make a case against
17 us that was -- waived the rule against us. It scares
18 us to death because there's an Indian Child Welfare
19 case there and this Court scares us because we're
20 afraid that we're not going to be able to protect our
21 babies. A lot was said today about the language
22 program, the different languages and sacred languages.
23 There's -- our transcribe has really, really worked on
24 them, just trying to save our language.

25 Madam Secretary, it is very commendable had the

1 honor to be with you in first statement, and my kids
2 had the honor to meet you. They still talk about you.
3 And for a moment there, when you walked past through,
4 you watched our babies speak their language. I
5 watched the tears and I was able to see your heart and
6 your person. We believe in you as a Native people.
7 We're doing everything in our power to try so save the
8 language. We currently have 26 programs that are --
9 are language projects that we're doing simultaneously,
10 trying to save our language. We're building the
11 (Incomprehensible) language center which is a 52,000
12 square foot center which will house all of our
13 students (Incomprehensible). We're making plans for
14 another one. The list goes on with what we're trying
15 to do. We've got (Incomprehensible) that's moving
16 right next door we're -- speakers and Native family
17 learners, the whole families is going to be side by
18 side. We're trying to build a new generation of first
19 language Cherokee speakers. We're even putting in the
20 curriculum that babies on born in the language
21 village, with we're going to do, elders standing up in
22 the porch, waiting to hold that baby and promise them
23 our language. We're starting our babies at six weeks
24 old to speak our language, all the way through junior
25 high. And luckily, some of the things that Mr.

1 Dearman is doing with BIE, we've got a grant where
2 we're building the track on the way around the BIE
3 school. Saving the language. We've got college
4 programs, four years, we're trying to go from six
5 weeks old to the doctorates in our language. And it's
6 going to take a lot. There's more than just a
7 \$300,000 (Incomprehensible) grant. They've done more
8 damage to us than that. Our language is our image.
9 We've lost 150 speakers last year. We lost 134 the
10 year before, 119 the year before. We lost 70 to
11 covid. And right now, we're building, roughly, 24
12 speakers a year. And we're losing 150. But we're
13 getting ready for our first language speakers, and the
14 word is needed, that how things are going in the court
15 systems, how things are going in the United States.
16 We build first language speakers to get a new
17 generation. It was prophesied that this would happen.
18 That generation may go through what these folks went
19 through because it's still here. And it's even
20 greater than our people. They -- we're going to have
21 to come back unbrainwash them, what these schools have
22 done, madam Secretary. The community isn't there.
23 Our tribe has seen (Incomprehensible) we've started 13
24 different demographics in Cherokees just to figure out
25 how to activate the language (Incomprehensible). How

1 to get them behind this, and I see other tribes,
2 although I haven't seen their demographics in -- in
3 their community. But there's a lot of things you have
4 to do in order to get people behind you because this
5 is so engrained in these people. And the resources
6 that hasn't happened -- their leadership, that has to
7 be involved. And I can go madam Secretary, I've come
8 to honor and to stand before you today. I want you to
9 know that I (Speaking Native tongue) My boy wanted you
10 to let you know they said hello.

11 MR. NEWLAND: Just before you -- before you
12 speak, after you, I think we have time for one last
13 speaker today.

14 SPEAKER: Madam Secretary, Assistant Secretary
15 Newland, I just want thank you for being here today.
16 Nice -- it's good to be here. (Incomprehensible)
17 Wichita Caddo Delaware territory. I just want to say
18 on behalf of my brother my sister, Veronica and our
19 family. You know, my name is Wilson Kirk, I was named
20 after my grandfather, his name was Wilson Kirk. And
21 we never understood where that name came from until
22 not long ago. So Wilson Kirk was a full blood Osage.
23 He was a -- didn't speak English. And he started at
24 boarding school when he was a boy. His name was
25 (Speaking Native tongue) meaning five dear. And he

1 went to school and he became Wilson Kirk. And one of
2 our relatives, they did research no long ago and found
3 out that that was -- he went to school and his teach's
4 name Ellen Kirk and she said, you know, "I've got a
5 brother named Wilson, so now, your name is Wilson
6 Kirk." And now, our Osage family is the Kirk family.

7 But that's part of what boarding schools set out
8 to do to my family, was to get rid of that identity
9 that we had associated specifically with language and
10 with (Speaking Native tongue) it was meant to get rid
11 of it. And fortunately, my grandpa (Speaking Native
12 tongue) earned the name later (Speaking Native tongue)
13 he resisted that when he got out of school. So he
14 decided that that's not -- I'm not going to follow
15 that. He -- he incorporated elements of western
16 culture in his life. He was the hereditary chief and
17 resisted that change that was amended of him, that was
18 forced on him. But that wasn't all of our folks, we
19 had other family that accepted this way, the white
20 man's world. And we can't accept that.

21 So even though my, you know, in hearing my
22 grandmother and my dad and their siblings speak Osage,
23 in fact, they spoke (Speaking Native tongue). They
24 would do that and, but they didn't want several people
25 talking about it. A lot of people have seen stories

1 of their family, they would talk and say we wouldn't
2 understand. So tried to pick up words and phrases of
3 what they were saying because when they were saying
4 something they didn't us to hear because it might have
5 been saying something about somebody or they were
6 teasing or it was something serious, they didn't want
7 us to know about. So we're trying to reclaim that
8 language. This is my family and me little sisters.

9 So, you know, part of that understanding of what
10 happened with (Speaking Native tongue) as a little
11 boy and what he learned at that Catholic boarding
12 school, was -- just found a little bit of information
13 from one of our relatives. But his story as a
14 boarding school student is largely unknown to us.
15 What happened with him in -- whether (Speaking Native
16 tongue) what other students went to school with him.
17 Who did they teach that? Which ones weren't able to
18 make it home? And so, I just want to thank you for
19 your support for legislation to allow the creation of
20 commission to look into that. But, on my behalf and
21 my family's behalf and also the National Native
22 American Boarding School healing Coalition I
23 represent.

24 I'd like to ask you if you would consider
25 something. Coming up in just a few weeks, the pope is

1 coming to Canada and he's going to -- they say he's
2 didn't go to apologize, again, for what happened at
3 the residential schools in Canada and whether that
4 applies here or not, we don't know. But, not getting
5 into a discussion of faith or Christianity or not
6 saying all that stuff, the mission of this is, for my
7 family, is to find out what happened with my grandpa,
8 and to what happened to the people like him that went
9 through that. They tried to strip him of everything
10 he knew. And, fortunately, I'm proud that he resisted
11 after he got out of school. But finding out what
12 happened to him, we can continue to heal. Would you
13 consider using your position in government that's --
14 we're proud of you that you would use that to call on
15 the pope and make the churches to open their doors to
16 all the information that they hold. I know that
17 you've done that with this historic report and effort.
18 You've done a remarkable job, the two of you did. I
19 know it's painful to hear these stories. But there's
20 so much more out there we don't know that's in the --
21 the buildings all across this country and Canada. And
22 so, if -- if you might think about the influence of
23 your position to call on the churches and the other
24 institutions and the private institutions to open
25 their doors to tribes and archives and organizations

1 like NABSE to make the information available so we can
2 find out more about them. I want to know more about
3 what happened to my grandpa and his folks and what
4 happened at the Catholic schools. There's just a
5 little bit of information about that. But somewhere,
6 that might exist and your good work, the two of you
7 and you -- your remarkable staff that you've had work
8 with us on the report. That influence in government
9 can go beyond your own agency and go to these other
10 non governmental institutions that have information
11 that might say something more about our grandpa, or
12 more about my grandpa, or why they had to -- things
13 they endured so we can understand those of you and we
14 can move on best. Thank you.

15 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you, so we've got two final
16 speakers and then the Secretary will share some
17 thoughts. And then, we have to wrap up.

18 SPEAKER: My name is Augustina Juanito Rodriguez.
19 I went to (Incomprehensible) seminary school in 1948.
20 I was 6 years old when a lady by the name of Ms.
21 Walkins came by my house and told my parents that I
22 would be going is to (Incomprehensible) Seminary.
23 When I went there all the way -- they sent us by bus.
24 And my sister told me, "Don't talk your language.
25 Don't -- you have to behave yourself." She was trying

1 to (Incomprehensible). I had no idea what she was
2 talking about. So we went in there and they gave us
3 tooth powder -- toothpaste and, you know, a nightgown.
4 And they put us into a little room with bunk beds.
5 And I had -- they had a little box where we kept our
6 personal stuff, and I brought with me, a little doll
7 that my grandmother had given me. And so, anyway, we
8 were -- I had -- I didn't know the English language.
9 So what I would do is, I would follow -- the other
10 girls were doing something I didn't know how to speak
11 English. So I would follow what they would do. If
12 they made their beds, I made my bed. I got dressed
13 when they got -- you know, everything and I learned
14 from them, you know. Then, we had to march down the
15 halls and single files to the dining room. And then,
16 we would sit out at these little tables and we had two
17 girls on each end, older girls that watched us, you
18 know, to make sure we ate our food. But we would go
19 back -- march on to bed. It seemed like my -- the
20 times that I remember was all the time when we
21 marched. We went to the school, we marched to the
22 school in single file. You couldn't get out of line
23 or you'd get in trouble. Then, we'd March up the
24 stairs to the school and notice are teachers. And
25 they stood at the podium there, and they watched us.

1 They never smiled they had cold eyes. They never
2 blinked. And we would go into the classroom, and
3 then, we would sit there all day. And then, finally,
4 we would be released and everybody took us back to our
5 dormitories in a single file. It seemed like we were
6 always in a single file. We had a big playground with
7 a few swings and a slide. But nobody ever played. We
8 were too busy being quiet because they said you can't
9 be noisy here, you have to be quiet. So we went out
10 there and we would sit in the grass. They didn't even
11 get up on the slides and the swings. We didn't play
12 tag. We didn't do none of those things. Most of
13 time, we just sat.

14 And then, eventually, we had go in. Well, I
15 didn't know what my sister meant when she said, "Don't
16 speak your language ever. Don't say it." Well, what
17 happened one day when we went there to lunch, when we
18 came back to the dorms -- to the dorm room, there was
19 my little doll laying in the floor. And so, that made
20 me angry. And I said, in my language, I forgot and
21 spoke my language. "Who did this to my doll? Who did
22 it?" I wanted to know. I was very angry. This was
23 the only connection I had with my grandmother. And
24 so, I said, "Who did this?" Well, obviously, the
25 matron, her name was Ms. Malina. She said -- she

1 heard and she came, and she grabbed me. And she took
2 me town to the hallways to her office. When she got
3 me there, she said, "Put your hands out." And I,
4 being obedient, I put my hands out and she pulled out
5 of her drawer, a ruler. And she and hit my hands, but
6 the bone side. And so, what I would do -- I would
7 pull my -- pull my hand behind my back, she would jerk
8 them out again, and then, she'd hit me again. I did
9 it again, tried to protect my hands, and she, you
10 know. I'm not going to win, so I stuck both of my
11 hands out and I let her beat them. Then, she -- when
12 she got done beating me, she pushed me out the door
13 and I went back to my room. I thought my hands were
14 broken but they weren't. They were all bruised up --
15 bruised up. And I took my little doll, and I laid
16 down in my bed, and I fell asleep crying.

17 When I woke up the next morning, my eyes was
18 cold. I looked like an (Incomprehensible) or
19 something and I looked around at the room. Nobody
20 didn't even want to look me. Not one of the girls in
21 that room. And I felt bad. I was the one that had
22 come and had to sit for talking in my own language.
23 And nobody talked to me after that. But I got over it
24 eventually. But that was our life, marching back and
25 forth, forever being quiet, and that's the way our

1 life was. Just going back and forth, going out to the
2 playground and playing quietly. We didn't want to get
3 loud, oh, no. There was consequences for that. And
4 that's the way it was. I left out a lot of details
5 that I could tell you, but I don't want to take up too
6 much time. Okay. So thank you.

7 SPEAKER: (Speaking Native tongue) Hello, my name
8 is Natalie (Incomprehensible). I'm a Choctaw.
9 Listening to all these stories, I can really relate.
10 My grandparents went to boarding school, and I knew
11 that he spoke Choctaw, but it wasn't where we could
12 hear it. They were punished when they were in
13 boarding school, so they didn't pass that down to
14 their children. And the end result is, we don't know
15 it. And they didn't want their children to be
16 punished like they were.

17 My grandmother went to Chilocco and my
18 grandfather went to Jones Academy. My grandfather ran
19 away and his education ended at a very early, early
20 educational level, like, probably a lot of our people.
21 That's why they was able to take our lands and things
22 like that. Myself, my experience with boarding
23 schools have been very, very little. I went one
24 semester. I don't know if I've just blocked
25 everything out, two things that do stick in my mind is

1 they cut my hair. My hair is very important to me and
2 that was very traumatic.

3 The other is that I ran away. I was only, like,
4 6 or 7 years old and I don't remember a lot after
5 that. But there was a reason I ran away. After that,
6 my parents never sent me back. So I just see how this
7 trauma can (Incomprehensible) to hurt our people.
8 Even though people say we need to get over it, it
9 still -- it affected me. And I'm, you know, here and
10 how it affected the kids. When you look at the lack
11 of parenting skills they had, the lack of nurturing
12 that you don't get in the boarding schools, then I
13 understand why our parents were the way they were, and
14 the lack of not saying I love you, the lack of
15 affection. It just has an impact. So one of the
16 things that I'd really like to see is that our tribes
17 and the federal government do everything we can. You
18 know, we hear a lot about reparations and things like
19 that. Well, they owe the Native people. They took a
20 lot from the Native people. And sometimes, we are the
21 ones that kind of get left out of everything. So that
22 really is important. The other thing is, we can't get
23 past things when it continues to happen. The broken
24 promises that attack on or sovereignty, the taking of
25 our children by state agencies. It still happens

1 today. And they're a placing non Native homes away
2 from their culture. So that just continues the path
3 of assimilation. The whole goal is assimilate and
4 Christianize. And they've done a very good job of
5 that in some ways. And so, it takes a lot -- it takes
6 us beyond the ground, trying to re -- I guess,
7 encourage all of our tribal citizens to it take
8 into -- upon their hands to try to revive everything
9 that we have lost. Growing up, I didn't realize the
10 connection until I went to the Indigenous People's Law
11 Program, and they had a course, it's religion culture
12 (Incomprehensible) and we had to do our own
13 autobiography and how we was raised, how are -- how
14 it -- how that religion, how that culture connected,
15 and how we connected to that. And so, that opened my
16 eyes a lot about what's going on with me and trying to
17 identify with who I am as an individual, for those
18 things that were stolen from me. So it's bee -- it's
19 been a process and it's been a journey. But, I'm
20 getting there. I'm slowly learning the language.
21 It's very hard as you get older to learn a language.
22 It is. You know, the more I try, the better I'll get,
23 I guess.

24 The other thing is that tribe -- tribal nations
25 are sovereign nations. We have inherent sovereignty.

1 The attack on our sovereignty with that Supreme Court
2 ruling was -- that was not based on a law is very
3 terrifying. As tribal nations, and I'm going to
4 (Incomprehensible). I'm sorry if I said that wrong,
5 what they said is, you know, that the Judge
6 (Incomprehensible) said that the trail was a promise.
7 We expected the federal government, who is supposed to
8 be our guardian, and do what's in the best interest of
9 tribes to uphold those treaties and the federal Indian
10 policies that are there to protect us from this
11 states. And that's where we really need to work on.
12 States have been on the (Incomprehensible) but
13 continue to take our children, they continue to take
14 anything else our lands, and things like that, the
15 taxation and whatever. So we need our tribes to step
16 up. And do what they need to do to protect us, but
17 also to protect our children. When we go into those
18 court systems, state agencies should not be the main
19 person, it should be us as tribal people, should be
20 the ones that's in there, saying this is what we need
21 for our children, not letting them take custody and
22 placing them anywhere they want to place them, because
23 if we continue those patterns of assimilation and we
24 should not be doing that. So you, y'all have the
25 power to make some change, y'all have the power to

1 rule the Supreme Court again, who is determined to
2 legislate from the bench, which is not their job and,
3 to make these tribes, empower our tribes to be able to
4 take care of our people and our lands. Our lands are
5 not glorified playgrounds. We are people, we are
6 human, and we need to be recognized as sovereign --
7 tribal sovereign nations (Speaking Native tongue)

8 MS. HAALAND: I thought we ran out of battery or
9 something. So thank you all so much. I know some
10 folks there had to go home, but I appreciate those of
11 you who stuck around to the end. I just want you to
12 know how much it means to me that all of you came and
13 shared your stories. You know, I have -- I have
14 stories myself. My -- and when I was in college, I
15 graduated from UNM in 1996 and I majored in English,
16 professional writing. So I'm a writer, so. And when I
17 got up into, you know, my junior and senior years, I
18 was taking advanced writing classes.

19 And so, I would go out on the weekends to spend
20 them with my grandmother and I would tape record her.
21 And I would just write, and a lot of my papers that I
22 turned in were based on her life and the things that
23 she used to tell me about. She never said anything
24 bad about boarding schools. She went to a Catholic
25 boarding school in Santa Fe, New Mexico. And the

1 other thing she really talked about there was how
2 lonely she was; right. But she did say -- she talked
3 about when the priest came around to collect the
4 children, she said. And put them on a train and send
5 to Santa Fe, so there was a lot of Laguna who went
6 there. And her dad was only able to visit her twice
7 during the five years that she was gone. She left the
8 Village when she was eight years old. And because all
9 we had was a horse and a wagon. It was the only
10 method of transportation. And so, he was only able to
11 visit her twice. That's when she met my grandfather,
12 Mr. Main. She was from Laguna Pueblo. And it seems
13 like they really helped each other because they knew
14 what each had gone through. They were both Pueblo so
15 we had the same belief systems as far as our religion
16 is concerned. And they were -- they were part of the
17 assimilation policies to the extent that they left
18 Laguna after they were -- actually I think they
19 left -- my grandfather left to go to Winslow because
20 he knew my grandmother was moving there, he sort of
21 followed her there. They got married in Winslow, and
22 he worked on the railroad for 45 years
23 (Incomprehensible). But, I think that experience
24 bonded them together, in a way that I would never
25 understand. But, in a way, that helped all of us to

1 be a strong family. And my grandfather, he realized
2 how important our traditions were and that generation
3 of people, even though they lived away from
4 (Incomprehensible) for 45 years at an Indian camp at
5 Winslow where there were rows of boxcars. And so, all
6 the Laguna people, they lived in these boxcars and
7 worked on a railroad. They had the community there,
8 even though it was sort of separated from the rest of
9 the town. They had feast days. They had their
10 outdoor -- outdoor up ovens, they all baked bread
11 together? They -- they -- they had deer suppers like
12 we do in the village if somebody got a deer, they
13 would make deer stew and the whole village would come
14 and participate. I saw my first ceremonies at the
15 Indian camp in Winslow when I was about 3 years old.
16 And it was all because I think my grandfather and
17 the -- and the people of his generation and my
18 grandmothers recognized how important our traditions
19 were had to carry on, that there was a time in our
20 history where children were taken and those things
21 weren't handed down. And so, they spent their lives,
22 45 years away from our community ensuring that I was
23 able to learn about our traditions, to know the songs,
24 to know what it meant to dance, and hearing those
25 songs and create a community together. And so, I

1 think they went through unimaginable trauma that they
2 never shared with us. And I think it's because they
3 wanted us to not be burdened by it somehow. I mean,
4 it manifests itself in many ways. But I feel
5 incredibly grateful that I have what I have because of
6 my grandparents and the children in their generation
7 who really took the brunt of assimilation but
8 recognize what they could do to make sure that we had
9 some, you know, future. So I -- I just thought I
10 would share that with you. Thank you for sharing your
11 story with me and with us and know that we are all
12 dedicated to making sure that we can make this effort
13 truly healing for people. That's what our intention
14 is that we want to do that. And I hope that by
15 letting go some of what you shared today, that it can
16 be healing and not return. So that -- that is my
17 hope. And just know that we will continue to do the
18 best work we can to make sure that this is meaningful
19 to you. But thank you all so much, Bryan and I
20 appreciate you coming.

21 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you everybody. We want to
22 thank you and pray for you to have a safe trip home.
23 I know many of you traveled a long way. And thank you
24 for taking the time with us today. Be well.

25