

LITTLE TRAVERSE BAY BANDS OF ODAWA INDIANS

7500 ODAWA CIRCLE
HARBOR SPRINGS, MI 49740

DECLARATION # 012022-01

Statement of Support for United States Senate Bill S. 4752, *To establish the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policy in the United States, and for other purposes*

A Declaration is a formal written public statement in support or opposition of an issue or matter. Declarations shall be approved by Tribal Council motion.

The Waganakising Odawak is a nation of Tribal Citizens with inherent sovereignty and right to self-governance; and

The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians is a federally recognized Indian Tribe under Public Law 103-324, and is a party to numerous Treaties with the United States the most recent of which being the Treaty of Washington of March 28, 1836 (7 Stat. 491) and the Treaty of Detroit of 1855 (11 Stat. 621); and

In accordance with the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Constitution:

“ IN THE WAYS OF OUR ANCESTORS, to perpetuate our way of life for future generations, we the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, called in our own language the WAGANAKISING ODAWAK, a sovereign, self-governing people who follow the Anishinaabe Traditions, Heritage, and Cultural Values, set forth within this Constitution the foundation of our governance.

We will work together in a constructive, cooperative spirit to preserve and protect our lands resources and Treaty Rights, ... In keeping faith with our Ancestors, we shall preserve our Heritage while adapting to the present world around us... ” and

The United States Federal Government enactment of the Act of March 3, 1819 (3 Stat. 516, chapter 85) the *Civilization Fund Act*. This Act encouraged activities of benevolent societies in providing education for American Indian children and authorized an annuity to stimulate the "civilization process".

The Civilization Fund Act also established the Indian Boarding schools and the policies which forced more than 150,000 American Indian children to be removed from their family homes and placed in either a Bureau of Indian Affairs-operated school or a church-run Indian boarding school. These schools utilized assimilation and "civilization" practices and were part of the assimilation efforts of the Federal Government.

The goal was to "civilize" American Indian children by teaching them reading and writing in the missionary schools. By 1883, there was more emphasis on forcing them to give up native religions, culture and languages by stripping them of their cultural identities, often through physical, sexual, psychological, industrial, and spiritual abuse and neglect;

In the United States, thousands of American Indian children attended boarding schools from the 1880's through 1983.

The last boarding school to remained in operation was located on the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians reservation, Holy Childhood of Jesus Indian Board School. Children at Holy Childhood were not permitted to speak their native language or to participate in cultural activities. Breaking the rules resulted in harsh punishments that were mental, emotional and physical. The longstanding ramifications of the inhumane treatment of the children continues to impact our Tribal families and our Tribal community through intergenerational trauma, cycles of violence and abuse, disappearance, health disparities, substance abuse, premature deaths, and additional undocumented psychological trauma.

The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Tribe support the establishment of a Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the United States that would formally investigate and document, for the first time in history, the attempted termination of cultures and languages of Indigenous peoples, assimilation practices, and human rights violations that occurred against American Indians through Indian Boarding School Policies in furtherance of the motto to "kill the Indian in him and save the man".

From our own experiences of boarding schools, and in support of Tribal families who have suffered the loss of life, cultural, spirituality and traditional-way of life, the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Tribe sets forth this Declaration to Support of United States Senate Bill S. 4752, *To establish the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policy in the United States, and for other purposes.*

A copy of this Declaration is on file at the Tribal Council Legislative Office.

Motion approved by Tribal Council on January 20, 2022, by:

Emily Proctor, Legislative Leader
Leroy Shomin, Treasurer
Tamara Kiogima, Tribal Councilor
William Ortiz, Tribal Councilor
Marty Van De Car, Tribal Councilor

Marcella Reyes, Secretary
Fred Kiogima, Tribal Councilor
Aaron Otto, Tribal Councilor
Melissa Pamp, Tribal Councilor
Regina Gasco Bentley, Tribal Chair

