

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 17

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES MCCORMICK, Himschoot, Fields

Introduced: 1/18/24

Referred: House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the United States Congress to pass the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian**
2 **Boarding School Policies Act.**

3 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 **WHEREAS** a 2022 report from the Department of the Interior investigating Indian
5 boarding schools found that the United States implemented policies establishing and
6 supporting Indian boarding schools across the nation from 1819 to 1969; and

7 **WHEREAS** there were over 100 Indian boarding schools in the state, which the
8 Department of the Interior has yet to identify because of a lack of accessibility to primary
9 source information; and

10 **WHEREAS** the purpose of federal Indian boarding schools was to culturally
11 assimilate American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children by forcibly
12 removing the children from their families and American Indian tribes, Alaska Native villages,
13 and Native Hawaiian communities; and

14 **WHEREAS** American Indian child removal coincided with American Indian
15 territorial dispossession; and

16 **WHEREAS** the conditions experienced by attendees included manual labor and

1 discouraging or preventing American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian languages,
2 religions, and cultural beliefs; and

3 **WHEREAS** many children who attended federal Indian boarding schools endured
4 physical and emotional abuse and, in some cases, died; and

5 **WHEREAS** the Department of the Interior has identified approximately 53 different
6 schools across the school system with marked or unmarked burial sites; and

7 **WHEREAS** the federal Indian boarding school policies of past eras focused on
8 assimilation and other harmful practices, and those policies caused harm for many; and

9 **WHEREAS** the Department of the Interior has laid the groundwork to address the
10 intergenerational trauma created by policies supporting the federal Indian boarding school
11 system and recognizes that the existence of these schools has implications reaching beyond
12 intergenerational trauma; and

13 **WHEREAS** the Alaska Federation of Natives passed Resolution 23-14, which
14 supports the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act; and

15 **WHEREAS** Resolution 23-14 also affirms the Alaska Native Heritage Center Lach'qu
16 Sukdu Research Program as the central entity in the state researching and distributing
17 information concerning Indian boarding schools in the state; and

18 **WHEREAS** the United States Congress reintroduced the Truth and Healing
19 Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act as S. 1723, which seeks healing for
20 stolen Native children and their communities;

21 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature stands in full support of the
22 passage of S. 1723, the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies
23 Act, by committee, the Senate, and the House of Representatives and of the signing of the Act
24 by the President of the United States.

25 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, President
26 of the United States; the Honorable Kamala D. Harris, Vice President of the United States and
27 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Deb Haaland, United States Secretary of the
28 Interior; the Honorable Bryan Newland, United States Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs,
29 U.S. Department of the Interior; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan
30 Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Mary Peltola, U.S. Representative, members of
31 the Alaska delegation in Congress.