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"THE ROAD TO HEALING" TOUR

Transcript of Proceedings

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Held at Graton Rancheria

Rohnert Park, California

Sunday, August 6, 2023, 10:17 a.m.

ROHNERT PARK, CALIFORNIA; SUNDAY, AUGUST 6, 2023;

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CHAIRMAN GREG SARRIS: Good morning. Welcome friends and family and Secretary Haaland and Assistant Secretary Newland. We're honored. We're going to start with prayers in our traditional languages, Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo, and then we will do blessing songs. The prayers in Coast Miwok will be lead by Melissa Elgin, and the Coast Southern Pomo, Joseph Byron.

So Melissa, will you come up, please.

MELISSA ELGIN: (Speaking indigenous language). Greetings and welcome. Aho.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

MELISSA ELGIN: (Says prayer in indigenous language.)

CHAIRMAN GREG SARRIS: Joseph Byron will now do the Southern Pomo prayer.

JOSEPH BYRON: (Says prayer in indigenous language.)

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

CHAIRMAN GREG SARRIS: Thank you, Joseph. You've got to be careful of me.

All right. At this point, we'll have Eric Wilder and his sister Violet Wilder come up, and they

are going to sing some songs three songs I believe, "Sitting Down Song," "Eagle Song," and then Mabel McKay's "Prayer Song," so -- and Eric will say just a word or two about each song when beginning, so Eric.

I'll have to share kind of.

UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER: Permission to record this or not?

CHAIRMAN GREG SARRIS: No.

ERIC WILDER: Okay. This first song is the "Sitting Down Song." The "Sitting Down Song" is for the [inaudible] and it calls in the spirit. This song is the beginning of all things is the way it was explained to me when I was taught this song, so that's going to be -- we're going to call into spirit right now.

(Song sung in indigenous language.)

ERIC WILDER: Okay. So this next song is the "Eagle Song." The "Eagle Song" is a powerful prayer song. This song is for when we're troubled, when we want

blessings for our family, for our health, we want guidance, and so we ask our prayers to become like an eagle, an eagle spirit. And since it's just two of the -- the words that usually is spoken will be in our prayer is that we describe that eagle, and so when we sing this song, we want it to become like the eagle.

And the eagle is the most powerful animal in the

air. Nothing can beat the eagle. When the eagle wants to go anywhere, nothing can stop it. It can fly over the densest forest. It can fly over all the rivers. It can fly over the highest mountains, and it's the greatest fighter in the sky, and so we want our prayers to become strong like that, so this is the "Eagle Song." And the word for eagle is [inaudible] in Kashaya.

(Song sung in indigenous language.)

CHAIRMAN GREG SARRIS: The last song we're going to sing is a Mabel McKay song. As some of you may know, Mabel worked with Eric and Violet's grandmother, Essie Parrish. They worked as spiritual sisters, and so Mabel gave us this song as a prayer song, go-ahead song, so if we go ahead, things are clear.

Sometimes we call it a basket song. She was a

basket weaver, of course, as well as a doctor, but this song is as though things will go ahead clear. And I want to thank, again, Eric and Violet for coming today and singing and -- with these songs, so we can go forward with all the things that Eric said, to bring the spirit in, to having strength, and now so that the road ahead is clear.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

(Song sung in indigenous language.)

CHAIRMAN GREG SARRIS: Again, I want to welcome everybody here, Secretary Haaland and Assistant Secretary

Newland. You're on the land of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. We're descendants of Southern Pomo and Coast Miwok.

Of course, many of you know the history. We were first colonized by the Spanish. We were forced as its slaves in the missions. Then the Mexican American period where we were slaves on the ranches. And after the Bear Flag Revolution, we -- when California became a state, the first piece of legislation that the state of California passed what's called the Government for the Protection of Indians, which legalized Indian slavery in California. Indians became the rightful property of

whosever land they were on in California. That law was not repealed until 1868, three years after the end of the Civil War. We were then indentured servitude, wherever we could live.

Today, as a result, there are over -- there are a little over 1,500 enrolled members of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. All of us trace our ancestry back to one of 14 survivors, all of whom were women, many of whom were concubines or wives of the colonizers, which is the only way we could go on.

Then, of course, the boarding schools, which so many of our grandparents and others were forced into, a legacy of brokenness. Then again became endemic in our

families, in generation. The trauma of that experience, slavery after slavery, controlled ownership after control. We had little control over our families, our own children.

But here today, and thanks to Secretary Deb Haaland's "Road to Healing," we have a chance to use the one thing we never lost, which is memory, our memory. Our memory of what happened, the good, our culture, yes, but the memory of the trauma and the tragedy that's been passed down.

And today, we're going to take advantage of that memory, those memories, as painful as they may be, to name the monsters that have plagued us because of that history so that once again we can undo the brokenness. We can become whole, and we can come home and be safe in our homes.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

CHAIRMAN GREG SARRIS: Secretary Haaland, thank you and welcome.

SECRETARY HAALAND: Thank you. Thank you so much, Chairman, and it's an honor for me to be here with all of you. Thank you for coming. I know some of you drove a ways to get here, and we're very happy to see you and we're grateful that you want to participate with us. I just want to say a quick -- your chairman was my professor at -- when I was at UCLA, so I'm just going to

put that out there.

So I -- I know him in -- in his academic -- you know, in his academic place, and I'm -- I'm very proud and honored to be here with him as well.

(Speaking indigenous language.) Greetings and good morning, everyone. Thank you so much for the

beautiful songs to help us to get started in the right way as we embark on this journey together. It's an honor to join you all on your ancestral homeland.

I'll speak briefly, because I'm here to listen, listen to all of you. Your voices are important to me, and I thank you for your willingness to share your stories.

Federal Indian boarding school policies have impacted every single indigenous person I know. Some are survivors, some are descendants, but we all carry this painful legacy in our heart. Deeply ingrained in so many of us is the trauma that these policies and these places have inflicted on our people.

My ancestors and many of yours endured the horrors of the Indian boarding school Assimilation policy, carried out by the same department that I now lead. This is the first time in history that the United States Cabinet Secretary comes to the table with this shared trauma. That's not lost on me, and I'm determined to use

my position for the good of all the people.

I launched the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative in 2021 to undertake the comprehensive effort

to recognize the legacy of boarding school policies with the goal of addressing their inter-generational impact and to shed light on the traumas of the past. In California alone, there are 12 boarding schools, leaving inter-generational impacts that persist in the communities represented here today. It's my department's duty to address this shared trauma that so many of us carry. To do that, we need to tell our stories. Today is part of that journey.

Through "The Road to Healing," our goal is to create opportunities for people to share their stories, but also to help connect communities with trauma-informed support and to facilitate the collection of a permanent oral history. This is the ninth stop on "The Road to Healing," which is a yearlong tour across the country to provide indigent survivors of the federal Indian boarding school system and their descendants an opportunity to make known their experiences. I want you all to know that I'm with you on this journey. I will listen, I will grieve with you, and I will feel your pain.

As we mourn what we have lost, please know that we still have so much to gain. The healing that can help

our communities will not be done overnight, but I know it can be done. This is one step among many that we will take to strengthen and rebuild the bonds within native communities that the federal Indian boarding school policy set out to break. Those steps have the potential to alter the course of our future.

I'm grateful to each of you for stepping forward to share your stories, and I know that some of you won't say anything at all today. You'll sit here and listen, and I thank you also for being here as a support to your community members as they tell their stories.

Now I'm very honored to turn this over to my friend and colleague, Assistant Secretary Bryan Newland, who will set up the agenda for today and start the session.

Thank you, Bryan.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you, Madam Secretary. (Speaking indigenous language.)

I want to say hello and good day to all of you. My name is Bryan Newland. I am Ojibwe from Bay Mills Indian Community, and I have the privilege of serving in this position as Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs under the leadership of Secretary Haaland.

I want to first say in English thank you to Chairman Sarris and the Graton Rancheria for hosting us

today. We know that your journey to this place today has been long and fraught as you described this morning, but I think what you've been able to accomplish is a demonstration of the resilience of native people, and so I want to congratulate you on that and thank you very much for hosting us today.

As Secretary Haaland mentioned, California was home to 12 federal Indian boarding schools. Yesterday I had the chance to visit Alcatraz for the first time and stood in the cell where the United States federal government brought 19 Hopi men from Arizona and held them together in a -- in a cold cell out in San Francisco Bay for the simple act of refusing to comply with orders to send their children to federal Indian boarding schools. It was a very powerful moment for me, and it was very moving and a reminder of why we're doing this work.

And also we know that the Bay Area, because of things like forced assimilation through boarding schools and relocation is -- has become the home of native people from across Indian country who are here not in their aboriginal homelands but in their adopted community in this area and we want to make sure we recognize those of you doing this today who are a part of that community, because you're also a legacy of these policies we're

discussing.

As we continue investigating in the federal Indian boarding school system and learning about your experiences and your families' experiences, it is important for us to hear from you because your stories and your families' stories are personal -- are our way of personalizing and humanizing this experience in a way that federal records never can.

In addition to hearing from you, we are continuing our investigation to identify marked and unmarked burial sites across the federal Indian boarding school system, and also trying to determine how much money the United States federal government invested in this system.

We also want to welcome -- or encourage you to share ideas with us, things that we should examine as part of this investigation.

I want to make sure I acknowledge some other folks involved. This is has been an effort and a partnership across the federal government, including with colleagues from the Department of Health and Human Services and the Indian Health Service. The National

Endowment for the Humanities under Chair Shelly Lowe, has been a big supporter of this work. I think Chair Lowe may be with us today. There she is in the back. Please gave Chair Lowe a round of applause.

ALL ATTENDEES: (Applause.)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: And our friends from the Indian Health Service, if you can raise your hand as well. Back here. Thank you so much.

ALL ATTENDEES: (Applause.)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: And you may see a team of folks sitting in the bullpen against the wall over here. That is the team from the Department of the Interior who is really doing most of the labor on this work through the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative. They are sitting here through these stories across the country and engaging in this research, which is very painful for all us as well, and want to make sure we acknowledge their work, so thank you to our team.

ALL ATTENDEES: (Applause.)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: I want to give a special shout-out to the Director of the Bureau of Indian Education, Tony Dearman, who now oversees the Department

of the Interior's Education -- Indian Education Program, which has a much different mission today than it did for so much of the era we're discussing. And Director Dearman is with us as well.

ALL ATTENDEES: (Applause.)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: And in addition to survivors and their relatives, we have a number of elected

tribal leaders who joined us here to support you in your -- support your community members and relatives or maybe share stories of your own about your family. Very grateful for your service. We know how much sacrifice is involved in leadership on behalf of your people, and so we thank you so much for being here as well.

A few points before we get started. We want to make sure to emphasize that these sessions are an opportunity for people to tell their stories about their experience at federal Indian boarding schools, as well as the stories of their family members and relatives. This is our opportunity to hear directly from you on behalf of the United States, and we want to make sure we're prioritizing those folks who have come today to speak on -- on their own behalf and their family members and

leave this space for them.

Many of you may have thoughts or views on federal policies and federal actions. We, of course, always want to hear from you and hear about that. We would ask you, though, to hold comment on those today so we can give space to survivors and their relatives. And if you wish to share anything else with us, you can submit that to us in writing. We've -- I believe we've shared email information about how you can do that, and we are grateful for all of you for providing the support and the

space for people to talk about their experience and their family's experience.

So we organized these sessions kind of the old-fashioned way, which is, if you wish to speak, simply raise your hand. We are going to try to stay as long as we can. We have mic runners who will find you. Can our mic runners please raise your hands so we can see? We don't have time limits on your comments. We simply ask that you try to be respectful of the many other people who have come today to speak as well, and keep your comments as brief as necessary to convey what you want to convey, and just be mindful that many other folks are here to

speak as well.

We're going to be here until the afternoon, depending on how long and how many folks want to speak. We will take breaks throughout, including a lunch break and I believe lunch will be provided as well, so I want to thank the tribe for that. We know that this is difficult for those of you who lived through this, those of you who have close family members who lived through this, and that can be triggering and traumatizing for you. We have folks here from Indian Health Service and other places to help you if you need to stop and talk to somebody. I believe that we have people located just outside the space here to guide you to those spaces.

I want to also thank you for your courage to be here today. Many of you have come to not speak but to be a part of this in recognition of your own experiences, and so we want to thank you for being here. We want to thank those of you who come to support your loved ones, and those of you who come to tell about your own experiences. We know how difficult this is. We are very grateful that you have chosen to do that.

So we will get started now. For the first hour,

we are going to be open to the media here. One of the things that is important about this initiative is that we tell the history of American Indian people, not only amongst ourselves but to the American people, so that people understand what was done through these boarding schools and hear those personal stories. We know many of you may not wish to speak on the record in front of the media, so after one hour, we will take a break and excuse members of the press, and then we will continue on today.

And so at this time, we'll open the floor up for those who wish to speak. We'll -- I'll do my best to call on folks as I see you and prioritize different parts of the room and in particular prioritize those of you coming to share your own experiences. If you wish to speak now, you may raise your hand, and our mic runners will find you. We'll start here.

JACK POTTER, JR.: Good morning. My name is Jack Potter, Jr. I'm the Tribal Chairman of Redding Rancheria, and I come from the Kosoimunonu and Kanusu Mi-Wuk people on my mother's side, Winnemem Wintu people and Nor-el-muk Wintu on my father's side. But I never lived it or experienced it, but through my elders I

have, and I have their stories.

One of the tribal elders that are involved with Redding Rancheria, Carole [inaudible], she talks about her sister who she had heard through stories, because she was sent down to Sherman and her sister was sent to Fort Bidwell, but she wondered how her sister felt in those last moments when she was freezing out on the plains, because her brother had brought stories back to their family that their sister was being touched and bothered by one of the people up there, and so she escaped during the wintertime up in Northern Paiute country trying to get back home to Pit River country.

When she could see Mount Shasta, and so she headed home, but she didn't make it and she froze out there, and so her sister wondered how she felt, because -- what she felt, you know, having those things happen to her at nine years old by a full-grown man, and then end up trying to get back home by seeing this sacred mountain and seeing the comfort in that, knowing that her home, her

village, was right below that, and she could just get home to her family. But she never made it. She froze to death.

And a lot of our Wintu people, you know, they were taken over to Greenville and up to Fort Bidwell, and they were Indian, and that's a consent over to those Indian schools at that time, and a large majority of them and their descendants do not have federal recognition now, because, for some reason, I don't know, but they took the abuses in the past and they've endured all those atrocities, and a large majority of them, my Wintu relatives, go without federal recognition, and they share their stories and the pain. We all do. And if there was some remedy, you know, that can fix those things because in the past, we were all Indian people and we're still Indian people, but we all suffer that heartache and that pain.

And my Grandma Mildred talked about her cousins and stuff that never made it back home. But she had heard where they were buried, so I went to those areas, and I don't know which grave is theirs, and it just bothers them because our people have to live these things in these modern times and have so many unanswered questions of: What was that last breath? How did they feel?

And we, as Indian people, are at our people's

sides when they take those last breaths, and to know that they died alone, and if their spirits can at least be able to sing the songs that allow them to travel. And I often wonder sometimes when we're walking and we feel those things, we trip, if it's their spirit we've tripped upon and they're trying to get our attention to let us know they're there.

But there's these things that I believe with this process we will get healing, but it's going to take a long time, because it's a long time of those abuses. But, you know, so many of the California people are unrecognized, yet their people were sent to these schools because at that time I guess the federal government acknowledged they were Indian people, but for some reason now they don't acknowledge them. So if we can help rectify that also. Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

WILLIAM FEATHER: Good morning, Secretary Haaland. It's an honor to be in your presence. Around here some of my relatives, they call you Aunt Deb. When I give presentations, I often have a photo of you next to a photo of my daughter, and I challenge people to champion my daughter, so in a lot of ways I honor the trailblazing that you've done for our people.

My name is William Feather. I'm a world tribal

member of the Round Valley Indian Tribes, a descendant of the Yokayo Rancheria. My maternal grandfather was driven into Round Valley from the Chico area. He was a mighty Concow man. My paternal side, I'm Yankton Lakota and Swedish.

I wanted to talk about a couple of things, and I've been waiting to meet you for a few years now, Deb, for a couple different reasons.

I received a master's degree from Humboldt State University in 2020 in social work. My dissertation was an interview project on a man named Francis Jack Crabtree. He's the oldest living tribal member from Round Valley. Francis is a decorated war veteran. He served in World War II on the USS Linscome Bay. He was torpedoed twice in the Pacific. 600-plus sailors perished that day, but Francis didn't. I think a lot of my success I owe to Francis and his family.

In 1937, Francis was living in Nashmead, California, which is in Mendocino County off the Eel River about 20 miles north of a small town called Dos Rios. In 1937, a BIA official by the name of Edith Murphy recruited Francis and his sister Mary to go to boarding schools. Mary went to Chemawa and Francis went to Stewart Nevada. Mary died at Chemawa and Francis came home shortly after

that.

I work as a mental health clinician at a local high school where each and every day I work with children ages 14 to 22 who often cut themselves, who are suffering. This is realtime data, right.

As an indigenous scholar, I like to challenge the western education systems. Often they like to reference things of the past, right. I studied therapy and a couple of other different things.

In my community this year, a young child murdered another young child. I believe it was tied to a lot of things, but also I think it was tied to secondary trauma and lack of services in some communities.

In 1924, my great aunt Virginia asked my great-grandfather Steven Knight, who was a member of the Yokayo Rancheria, he asked -- my aunt asked my great-grandfather a question my daughter often asks me: When is school? Can I go to school? My great-grandfather took my great aunt to school that day and she was kicked out.

In the state of California, for less than a hundred years, people who look like me, Native American

people, haven't even had the opportunity to go to public education. The ask I have for you, Deb, you know, maybe somebody from your team, as a public school employee next year, on our 100th anniversary, I'd like to promote that a

little bit, you know. I think we've been behind to get involved for so long, and there's a -- there's a reason why we lead so many statistical negative categories, whether that's child welfare, whether that's trauma. There's a lot of work to be done.

One of the quotes that I -- that I've always been fond of was the quote by Aaron Huey in his TED Talk. He said, "The last successful act of any genocide is one that the oppressor can step back and say, 'My God, look at these people. Look at what they're doing to each other. They're killing themselves.'" But we all know that was strategic.

My suggestion, my ask, the information we're talking about and presenting and the knowledge that the survivors and the survivors' families have, it needs to be in the hands of younger people. Younger people are on TikTok. Younger people are on Instagram. Somehow I've always wanted to conduct interviews and sort of culminate

these stories and the stories that I have about these elders and get them into the hands of younger people, because I've never seen younger people live in mental health in the presence of their elders. As indigenous people, we sit up a little taller when we're in the presence of our elders. We don't use language we normally would. I believe there's a way we can move forward from

the hardship that our people face.

I brought a gift for you, Deb, I'd like to present to you sometime today, and I'd like to show you some of the photos that I did from my presentation, and perhaps I can get permission for you to share some of these photos a little later. Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. Do we have -- we have a lady over here in the black shirt.

CASSANDRA TYE: Hello. Good morning. My name is Cassandra Tye, Kashaya Pomo and Coast Miwok, daughter of Linda Tye, granddaughter of MaryLou Dominguez [phonetic], and I'm still learning.

Because the boarding schools stripped our culture, our traditions, left without a sense of

belonging, not this enough to be part of this. Not this enough to be part of this. Searching for belonging. Searching for some purpose.

As an adult, I have three children. Two have graduated within the public schools, and we utilize the Indian education programs. They are very helpful. I served on the parent committee as well, much pride, in the Sacramento district. My third child, 11th grade. My feelings towards the public schools, and please excuse me if I'm being disrespectful, because of the boarding

schools, it has left me with some type of feeling that I don't trust the schools. A lot of people will be happy their kids are off and school started, "Yay, I get a break."

I don't. I worry. My children are not with me, and they are being with someone else that I don't even know. And do they really care? Because when you have brown skin and you live in the neighborhoods that are not the greatest because that's what has to happen at the time, because it's Creator's plan not ours.

But I tell you, I kept it from my children, because I did not want my children to have this ideology

of not wanting to pursue education. But I have this -- I don't trust them. There was just this negative feeling, and there was no way to create that trust. I joined parent advisory committees. I volunteer for the schools. That's when I wasn't working, because I'm a single parent of three. When my two children were older, I was able to start working, leaving my third one behind. I wasn't able to volunteer as much. I saw the difference. I saw the difference in public schools.

When you're involved and you volunteer in public schools, unfortunately they take better care of your children. But I understand that hurt children hurt children, and it's not their fault. And there's a lot of

children out there that are hurting because of what's going on in their homes, and we have no idea what's going on when they leave the home and they come into the classroom.

So with my third child, he suffered a lot of trauma because I wasn't there. There was bullying. Got a little file going on, which I'm still currently trying to fight, and I believe that it is because we are the minority, if you will. I don't like that word. It is

because of the color of our skin. He's in a school where it's a different side of town, and it was like a culture shock. So you go from the hood to you go to the suburbs, everybody in their name brands and you're just trying to fit in.

He's discouraged because of the trouble he's gotten into, where he thinks it's joking around, bad timing, bad joke, but he's the one that gets pointed he finger. So we've got negative discipline going on without the positive disciplinary actions, which is creating pile on top of pile on top of pile. My third child does not want to go to school anymore. He wants to go to online school so he doesn't have to endure any of that. He doesn't feel safe at school, and that hurts.

So being a survivor -- being a descendant of a survivor of boarding school, some how, some way, has

really affected me, and I just barely started sharing this with my children. My youngest is 16. It's taken me a long time to share this with my children because I wanted them to be good students. I wanted them to, "Listen to your teacher. Listen to the law."

But, unfortunately, in some certain areas where

it's not the best, it's just a different type of lifestyle you have to live. And thank you for everyone's testimonies. This is really near and dear to my heart, and thank you for letting me speak. Aho.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you.

MARGE GROW-EPPARD: (Speaking indigenous language.) My name is Sister Who Walks With Bears. My colonized name is Marge Grow-Eppard. I come from the Nation of Miwok, California. I'm president of AIMM, All Indigenous Missing Murdered, formerly Missing Murdered Indigenous Women People of Two Spirit in California. We were blessed from Canada to carry the red tipi with all the handprints of the missing and murdered on this tipi.

And it came to our attention that the inside hadn't been done, so we painted it orange and we put little footprints on the inside. As names come in, we will add those names, because we felt that was the womb. That's where our little ones first start before they take

that first breath of air.

I was lucky enough to be with Don Coyhis when he did the wiping of the tears all across Turtle Island, and

we went to Stewart Indian School to pray and to release those spirits at all the boarding schools, because not all spoke English when they got there. They speak their native tongue. And they weren't just from Nevada, because I found out later my sister Joyce and my cousin Lana had been taken to that boarding school when they were little, and they escaped and headed straight to my grandparents at West Point, California, where the family hid them, because they knew that they were coming to get those little ones again. In fact, they hid all of the kids that were up there, because my gramps realized we're not going to be an experiment for you with our children and the next seven generations.

So when we did the wiping of the tears at Stewart, there's a graveyard out there with so many unmarked graves, and they led a tour and they showed us where the infirmary was where these young girls were being raped, and the young boys, but when the young girls became pregnant and carried full term, they were throwing those babies out the infirmary window, and those coyotes and wolves and other animals were carrying them off, so bones were scattered. And when people come in to try and

identify those bones, where is the list? Because there is no list of what those children's real names were and what tribes they came from, so they buried them, probably ten different bones from ten different children in one unmarked grave.

So as we're touring this, one by one people kept leaving, because they said they kept feeling tugs on their pants or their skirts, and they couldn't take it. And I said, this is fine here, but we need to go to the graveyard also.

And as we're walking, the men fell behind. They couldn't cross that path to where the gravestones were. And I turned and I said, "We need the men up here. We need the warriors to help us women pray," because we carried that sacred water for our little ones, but we need you men here, and they were falling away crying, saying, "We can't do it, Marge. We're sorry." Men who are made of steel, and they still couldn't cross that path to help us women pray. And it was hard, but we prayed because Creator teaches you, no matter where you're from, the little spirit's still in here, we will release you. It's time for you to go home. Your loved ones are waiting for you. Your ancestors in the unseen world are waiting to greet you.

So this work we do is hand in hand, not with the

schools that teach his story. They don't teach about the boarding school traumas. They're just now starting to teach about inter-generational traumas "his"-torical traumas. We need to be educating in these schools the real truth and not hide it, because our children are being bullied. Our young boys are being bullied about their hair, and so they became shamed. And we've got to stop that, because we need us, as teachers in these schools, to say, "When you grow your hair, you're closer to Mother Earth." You feel that heartbeat. All these things.

We need in every school to teach the language, because once you learn one word of your language, whether it's "grandma," "hello," "thank you," your ancestors are saying, "Yeah, my next seven generations are becoming stronger." So these schools are really letting us down. They're making us shamed to be in these schools, because when you listen to these stories in these "his"-story books, they're about us being savages.

I used to love John Wayne. I'd root for him. It's like that smoke signals for a movie, you wanted to be the cowboy, not the Indian. Why? Because you're taught that at a young age on TV, and now it's hit video, social media. How do we heal? We have to go way back and start healing those wounds and those spirits.

25 I often speak of the five sisters who were

1 walking along this embankment with this rushing water.
2 And the one sister says, "There's a baby floating by," and
3 she jumps in and throws it. And she calls her sisters,
4 "Help me." More babies start flowing down, so three more
5 sisters jump in the water, and they're throwing these
6 babies to save them. And the youngest sister starts
7 running upstream, and the sisters are yelling, "Get in
8 here and help us. What are you doing? Where are you
9 going?" She goes, "I'm going to the source where these
10 babies are thrown in."
11 That's where we start, where our babies are
12 being thrown in and taught this. And where did it come
13 from? The colonization and the boarding school. Now
14 boarding schools have CPS. It's different names they're
15 using to benefit us, to get us an education, but taking
16 away our culture, our language. When you lose that,
17 you're flailing because you don't know if you're from this
18 side or this side. We've got to learn to walk down that
19 middle, that red road, and keep that respect that is us in
20 our DNA and know where we came from.
21 I'm a product of adoption. I did not know my

family. I was raised unnative, but I clawed my way back to my family to learn my language, my culture, and to eventually become a spiritual leader for our Miwok women, because our Miwok women don't have a voice, as many other

tribes. And they say silence equals violence. It started way back then.

So we've got to start healing, because, like I said, the women are the ones that carry that sacred water with our babies, and then the next generation, and the next generation. And we are taught our granddaughters carry the grandmother's seeds, so when the missing and murdered, who the grandmother was murdered, and then the mom was murdered, but yet here's these young females who are still trying to carry their grandmother's seed are murdered. It never ends, and it's got to start now with our warriors and our warrior women.

And I'm so thankful Chief Caleen is here, because she is such a role model on what she does for the females in the waters which connect hand in hand. Aho.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. I want to make sure that when -- I didn't get -- I didn't mention

this when I started. Please, those of you who are speaking, make sure you state your name for us and your tribal affiliation, if any, and please also tell us what school or institution you are speaking about, if you know, about your own experience or your relatives. I want to make sure, again, we're prioritizing the space for those of you who are coming to speak on your own experience at

federal Indian boarding schools, or those of your relatives.

And if you have other views you want to share with us, of course we welcome that. We have a way that you can submit those to us in writing. So we'll come here, and then into the middle. Next.

ATTA STEVENSON: My name is Atta. I'm a member of the Cahto Tribe, Tiokyhans of Koo'yoohaangn. I'm from Laytonville, California, up the road on 101.

I was taken away when I was real young. I saw my first suicide at 12 years old from an out of state lady [phonetic] who's older than me. I see her every day in my mind.

One of the things that I remember still today is that -- thank you -- that equality/justice has not been

given to us. We fought it. We still are fighting it. I would like to challenge the gentleman over here at the Department of Indian Education from the Bureau. I would like him to investigate the school systems of Humboldt and Del Norte County, which has some of the most racist and prejudiced situations against Native American kids. They're growing up learning what hate is. They're growing up to know what injustice is. And as a boarding school survivor, first day of school -- what's the social studies teacher's name? Who was it? Coby -- I can't remember,

but I see -- tallest person I ever saw.

It was in history class, first day, he said, "We're going to talk about the history of California." And I was happy, because I'm from California. I raised my hand and said, "Are we going to talk about my tribe?"

"No," he said. "Don't you forget it. There's no damn Indians in California." He picked me up -- he was about six-six, a white guy -- picked me by my shirt and my hair, threw me against the wall. That was my introduction to history, and that's how I learned history.

I can't fight them, but I ended up learning history better than him. I learned about our California

people. I learned about our struggle. I know that in my lifetime, we will never have justice and equality because of the racism in the public school system, but even more so in Stewart Indian Boarding School.

And so as time came on -- came by, we got to go out, and we knew what was going on out there. We knew the buildings that they were raping the little boys. We knew the buildings where they were raping the little kids, the girls. We seen the unwanted pregnancies by the raped child -- the women -- the girls. They were 12, 13 years old. They couldn't even have their kids. Their kids were taken away, and when they went back to their communities, they didn't fit in.

They were -- I don't know what you call it. They were lost, because they went from the boarding school, then they came home and they had kids. These kids were adopted or they were killed, they were buried. We don't know, because we were only 11, 12 years old. Told you, "Listen to these folks."

I think that the -- not too long -- about four or five years ago, I was asked to do a mandatory mental health training in Mendocino County, and the county was

there. She's a troublemaker, I'm telling you. When we went, it was mandatory training for cultural awareness. Ninety professional mental health people in our County of Mendocino came two days. Fire marshal wouldn't let them all in because it was too crowded at our clinic.

Out of those folks, I asked them, "How many of you professional mental health people have ever heard about boarding school trauma survivor?" None of them raised their hand the first day or the second day. And I said, "I'm a survivor. Who in this building could help me?" They put their head down, and one man said, "I think I read about it." I think he had read about it, that means nothing.

I said, "We're not history. I'm here in front of you. I'm a living person. I carry that anger with me," and nobody knew what to do with it. So what did I

do? It's easy to get mad and reach out, strike out again in anger. I can do it with the best of them. But I thought -- I decided to become a preschool teacher and to speak and to teach about nonviolence/peace. And I wanted to be able to -- sorry.

And I wanted to be able to be in a place where

we could have nonviolent existence, and the best way to do that is to teach kids that not all monsters are out there. You need to ask for help. But the problem is, it's multi-generational trauma, three, four generations. I had brothers and cousins, aunts and uncles that went. They're all gone now. I'm the last survivor of Stewart School in my tribe.

But I helped raise little preschoolers and taught them hitting's not the way. Sometimes talking is not the way. I let -- I taught them, "You can cry and you'll feel better." But it didn't help me. I ran out of tears. So what do I do? Before I was taken away, I was taught the power of water. I was taught medicine is in the trees. I was taught that the ocean is big water, and that takes all of your trouble away. And it does. When you're on big water, they come back. You didn't have to deal with the inland people who are the craziest.

They put tribal people in the service. My uncle went away to Stewart, and he ran away so many times that

he's going past Truckee. If you've ever been to Truckee, you can see that railway system on the mountain. He got caught every time. About the eighth or ninth time, they

finally took him in to Truckee and said, "Go wherever you want to go."

He signed up for service, and he became one of the Darby's Rangers. And if you ever check it out. The Darby's Rangers was the beginning of what the SEALs are now. They are an elite fight team. That's what he became. Why? Because they put Native Americans and dark people in the front line of every war. They were expendable. And he said the only thing good about the Army, he knew who the enemies were. They taught him how to kill, and he said he hated it because those other people they were killing looked like us. They didn't do us any harm, but we had to kill them.

When I went to school, I felt the same way. The majority, about 90 percent of the people in our school at Stewart were from Navajo, Arizona tribes. We had people from Utah, Colorado. I could never go home. I knew that. The preacher that got me the first day told me, he said, "When we get done with you, you'll pray to die." That was the last thing he said before I hit him as hard as I could and almost broke my hand because he had a big cross. He was wearing a big cross.

But the point was, he took me out to see the cemetery. Somebody mentioned that, the cemetery at Stewart. That was my first. He said that I would end up there. "Good. Kill me," I said. Because when you're a kid, you don't really care about consequences. You say whatever you feel. I fought with everybody/anybody.

There was one woman who I really owe my freedom to. Her name was Pearl. What is her name? She taught me how to bead bottles. To -- to redirect my anger and to do beadwork, and she learned from a great weaver named Dat So La Lee, so I learned how to make baskets and beadwork. And that is the only thing that saved me from fighting all the time. Although, I do have a school record there.

So I hope -- I learned to steal from the kitchen. The people that were going to go across the desert, they didn't care if they died on the way. I would steal stuff, a piece of bread under my arm, Kool-Aid, sneak it out, and before nighttime, they locked us up. All of our rooms had metal bars on it, and I would sneak food.

I had security from the moment I got up at 4:00 o'clock, 4:30, report to KP. Come back to my room at 7:00, get ready for inspection, and then security would walk into first room, my first class. That's how I went.

That's how I learned regiment/structure, seven and a half years. I still get up. I don't even own a clock in my house. Why? Because I know when it's 4:00 o'clock. I get up and ready to go. I've got to cook. I've got to clean. I hate cleaning. Why? It's a memory of all the chemicals that our matrons used to make us fight us in the bathrooms. Turn the scalding hot water on and make me fight against another girl from out of state. That's what they wanted, to set us -- divide us. Conquer and divide. The government sanction, the hateful regime against tribal people.

I refused to being assimilated. I got educated, because I'm my own people, so when you come back, you might not fit in anymore, so you have to create laws in our community, and then you have to create laws in the white man's community so that we can all fit in. And so I don't want to fit in. Okay. You don't have to fit in, but you can make your own world.

So what I'd say, it's not just complaining and open your eyes and ears to the awareness of some of us that survived the worst parts of our lives, but I would like to also offer a challenge to invite us to create curriculum within the school systems, within the mental health systems. Let's tell you stories, but let's bring

25 solutions, and a lot of that solution will bring us the

1 power to not forgive, never to forget, but to move on in a
2 manner that we never forget who we are, where we came
3 from, and to strengthen each other. When somebody falls,
4 it's our job to pick them up. It's not our job to fix
5 them, but it's our time to cry with them. That's
6 friendship. Thank you for letting me talk today. Aho.
7 ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.
8 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Okay. We're going
9 to go back to this one.
10 DON DUNCAN: Hi. My name is Don Duncan. I'm
11 the chairperson for the Guidiville Rancheria. We were a
12 terminated tribe, and we got re-recognized in 1991. But
13 getting recognized as Indians but we've got -- we're still
14 learn -- we still don't have the land. So when my mom --
15 I want to talk about my mom, because she was a -- she
16 was -- went to boarding school in Sherman, California. I
17 have a picture here. Would somebody help me hold this?
18 My mom's Grace Williams, and she --
19 UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER: Lift it up.
20 DON DUNCAN: -- she was taken away -- she
21 was -- she was born -- she was born in 1916, and she was

four years old when they took her from -- they stole her and my uncles and took them to Sherman. And my uncle said -- told my mom, "You're four years old. You've got stay." And my three uncles, you know, ran away. It took

them six months to get from Sherman to get back to Ukiah, so they knew she wouldn't survive.

But anyway, she said that the boarding school was like a concentration camp is what she described it. All the stuff that they did there, it's hard to explain it, but these kids were four years old, and the stuff that they did them to survive these boarding schools, that's not right for them.

But I ask -- the question I was to ask her was: Is it more harmful for the child to be taken from the parent, or is it more harmful for the children, you know, to be taken from the parent to have their kids stolen from them? I don't know which one is more harmful. But along everything, she didn't return home until she was 22 years old, and this -- the thing that I think they really did is because they stole our language, you know, and they tried to steal our dance culture, our culture.

But they did steal the language from my mom.

She wasn't able to speak it, but when she came back, all her relatives spoke her language. They didn't speak English. But when she came back, she understood the language, but she didn't speak the language back to them, because she didn't -- my parents didn't want us to learn the language, because they didn't want what happened to them to happen to us, so we lost our language.

But they didn't steal our culture, because my grandfather in our dance house, he was a singer and he made all the dance steps, somehow I -- the Creator I guess you could say, gave me that power to know the song, know the [inaudible], do all that. I had a dance group for 20 years, and they didn't take that, though. They tried to steal it from us, but they couldn't do it. I wouldn't let them.

And let's see. So I just wanted to let the people know, because this -- my mom -- I'm the only one in our family that my mom told this to. My brothers and sisters never, because my parents, again, they didn't want them to be native, because of all the prejudice they had against me. She didn't want that to happen. She couldn't do that to me. I was like the black sheep of the family,

because I wanted to know our language, wanted to know our culture, wanted to know all this stuff. I stuck with it, so I'm the only one in our family that does it. I taught, you know, our tribal members, the young ones and everything, I'm the one that teaches all of them so that they carry on their language, they carry on everything, so they know who they are, and --

So I just wanted to come here today because I was telling them -- you know, I told some of our tribal members. A lot of them don't know, because nobody has

passed it down. This is -- we're rewriting our -- our tribe's history, and I wanted to be part of the history so people will know -- our members will know they're Native Americans and this is -- you know, the thing that happened to us, our grandparents and us, and we don't have -- all our elders have passed away, so now somehow I'm the elder, at my age I'm elder. But all my brothers and sisters are gone now, so it's pretty tough on me. I do have family, which I have grandkids, grandchildren. They are still here with us today, so I want to say thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. Thank

you, Chairman.

We have a woman in the center here who will be next.

CHARLENE NIJMEH: (Speaking indigenous language). My name is Charlene Nijmeh. I'm the Chairwoman from the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area. I greet you in our native Chochenyo language.

I am a descendant of members of our tribe, relatives of mine who went to boarding schools, Chemawa and Sherman Institute.

I want to thank you both for coming here today, Secretary Deb Haaland/Assistant Secretary Bryan Newland,

to hear our stories and see us in the face, look at us, because we're still here. We're all still here. We are the survivors of the genocide that happened here in California.

My people were pushed into Mission San Francisco, Santa Clara and Mission San Jose. There's surviving ten core families in my tribe. We ended up on the East Bay, because that's where it was safe to be. We became the slaves or the laborers of the Mexican

landowners, but we survived that genocide. We stuck together, protecting each other.

I can share my story, my own experience with my grandmother. I don't like to talk about my grandmother's story, because she's not here to share her own story. She was a very quiet, private woman. I think most of our people were, and I think it's because they were made to be ashamed and embarrassed of what happened to them, and that's I think what happened to my grandmother. When her mother died, her tuberculosis brought in from the outside, her sisters died. She died. She left five children orphaned.

My grandmother and her sisters went to the Mission San Jose, the orphanage there. I have to say nobody talks about -- they talk about the boarding schools, but they don't talk about the Catholic laundry

service. My grandmother was stuck there until she was 18 years old. She was abused, assaulted by the priests. They don't like to share that. But I'm her voice now. And it was painful. I saw it in her eyes, being embarrassed and ashamed for what had happened. But it wasn't her fault. It's not her fault what happened or any

of her sisters' fault or any of -- any of our faults what happened here.

A couple of years ago I went to a Truth & Healing Conference down south, and it was heavy when I left, because I couldn't understand before that -- why my people were struggling with drug abuse, alcohol abuse, in prison. I was -- I -- I shared with my chairwoman, who happened to be my mother, Rosemary Cambra, "I'm sorry, but why are we all so screwed up? What the heck is happening?" She just stayed quiet. She wouldn't share.

And when I went to that conference, it hit me like a brick what happened, why it's generational trauma that we are suffering with, and we need to stop that cycle. And I appreciate you being here to listen to these stories and stop -- and start stopping the cycles of abuse, and it starts with sharing these stories in order for us to continue to move forward.

But I think there's other policies as well that needs to be corrected, even for the unrecognized. Muwekma

is unrecognized. The tribe actually was recognized. There was land to be purchased for our people, I'm sure along with others here, but an Indian agent decided not to

buy my people land. But we still stuck together. We didn't wither away, and we're here stronger than ever today, revitalizing our language, our dances, our songs, our culture, because they're here. They're here, they never left, and our ancestors are showing us the way. Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

VIRGINIA COVERT: Hello. I'm Virginia Covert. I'm a member of the Nevada City Nisenan Tribe in Nevada City, California.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Went there.

VIRGINIA COVERT: But anyway, my father was in boarding school, and he ran away several times and was recaptured. I don't know what to say, but anyway, he was taken back. And the thing about boarding school and being an Indian where I grew up is that if you wanted to survive, you got tough, and my father was very tough. I don't know if he was ever beat, but I had a sister that was like that also, but she's gone now.

But he never told us the Indian way, because he didn't want us to know, because he knew how dangerous it was to know. And I remember my mom many times saying,

"Don't act Indian," you know, and she meant it. And anyway, that's just the neighborhood I grew up in, and it was quite different, and I wish my mother and father were here now. But they didn't tell us so many things because they knew that it would only be harmful to us in the future. So anyway, that's what I had to say. I thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

SHELLY COVERT: Thank you. (Speaking indigenous language). I actually am really, really nervous, which is weird because I'm such a chatterbox. I actually wrote down what I wanted to say.

(Speaking indigenous language). I'm Shelly Covert. I'm the spokesperson for the Nevada City Rancheria Tribe. My mom was a former chairwoman.

I come on the heels of each generation before me. I see that our fights today to survive are different than of our generation before us. But I have a little bit of a -- I was trying to make sense of all this. As many of you have said, it's like what's wrong with us? Why are we so messed up and why -- my hands are literally shaking. Why is it so scary to stand up and speak?

I thank you for being here in person. It means a lot. And I just want to say I speak -- I was just a kid who was -- you know, my cousins were mean, so I never

wanted to go outside and play with them. I'm an only child, so I was kind of -- they would call me soft. "Here comes Shelly. She's going to hug everybody." And when I would hang out with them, I would always get in trouble for stuff I didn't do, so I chose to stay inside the house, and I would sometimes hide under the kitchen table so I could hear the elders talking, and sometimes that talking would come as they were drinking.

And my mom here has had strokes and stuff recently, so I'm so proud that she's here today to be able to -- you know, it's hard for her now, whereas all these years she spent as the warrior out front, and now she's still showing up, and how much I appreciate you, Mom.

But I see that each fight, each generation we are away from the boarding schools, we just keep continuing to survive, and it feels like our numbers just dwindle on those who hold cultural the important stories or the songs or the language or about a certain place that they remember where the old burning grounds and burials are located. That information, every time we lose somebody, we lose a piece of that culture.

And understanding that my grandpa was so afraid to talk to me. I was so relentless. Like, "Grandpa, Grandpa, grandpa, tell me about the magic. Tell me about

the magic." I was just on him all the time. And mom

would pinch me, Mom, pinch me under the arm, like there in that soft spot, you know. And if I yelled, "Ow," then I'd get in trouble later, because she's like, "I'm pinching you so that you know it's not obvious to the whole room that you're being bad," rotten or whatever.

But I was relentless with asking him about his experience at boarding school and about our culture and what was missing. And I had a similar experience with my dad's dad, who is not native, and he went to Iwo Jima, and I used to obsess over his Marine book. He was in the 5th Marine division, and they landed in Iwo Jima, and I was just -- I was little, I don't know, just twisted maybe, I don't know, but I would ask him all the time about the war and which platoon he was in. And he'd say, "Ah, Shell. Those aren't stories for little girls."

And it was the same reaction I got from my Grandpa Dutch, my mom's dad, when I asked him about the boarding schools. He said, "Those aren't stories for little kids." And yet he was only six when he was taken, and all his siblings were taken to Greenville. And when Greenville Indian School burned down, they went to

Bidwell, Fort Bidwell.

But one of his brothers, David, was sent away from the rest of the kids, and he went to Haskell, and he died there, and nobody ever knew what happened to him, how

he died. And his body, of course, never came home. And I really think that I'm just realizing the impacts of this, because we're finally talking about boarding schools. This is finally coming out where I feel like if you're a native person, we all know about boarding schools. We know about genocide. But nobody else in the world believes it, and we're always just like, lying, I guess. You know, we have to convince the rest of the country. It's like aliens came down and mind-melted everybody so that they didn't know, but we know.

And so finally I feel that it's like a justification maybe, just people knowing that we're not a bunch of liars that are just trying to get sympathy and, you know, something for nothing, which is so much the stereotypical thing.

But as I'm thinking about all this, I was realizing that this -- the boarding schools is just one more thing that we have survived in a long list of things

that we have all survived across the nation, across the world and especially in California from here.

But the questions for me are: Will we all survive? It's not given that any of us won't become a missing or murdered person. I'm sure we all have relatives and close friends and family who have gone missing and we'll never see again. We won't know what

happened to them.

For our tribe, we are also terminated. Will our tribe survive in this state of termination? I don't know. I take a lot of responsibility for my family and my tribal members, and I see them, as many of you probably do, falling through the cracks, living through this historic trauma that just seems to go on and on and on.

So boarding schools just are one thing that we've survived. We've survived the non-ratified treaties in the 1850s when, you know, the tribes all sat there with the Indian agents and said yes, we can move to these reservations, and then they were hidden in the Senate and found later. Just the most ridiculous thing ever. It's like, "Somebody found it." Okay. But yet, did that mean anything? No, not that I can see so far.

But the boarding school's just one of the expressions of the larger federal policy, long since rejected of assimilating native people and mainstreaming and diminishing our tribal sovereignty. It's just another component of this policy that's been the deaths of our elders and our leaders, manifesting most recently in the tolerance of the missing and murdered indigenous women.

The illegal termination of tribes like mine, it's just another piece of this big wheel that I see at work. And Assistant Secretary Newland, I know that you

don't want us to talk off topic today. We're speaking about boarding schools, but as other people have mentioned, it's so hard for me to unVelcro the subjects into silos of themselves.

We asked for a meeting on May 16th to discuss our case for a petition we put in, and we were told that we could not have that meeting. And by doing so, in this zoomed out view -- I'm shaking so bad. This is so silly -- you furthering -- furthering these rejected policies of assimilation, termination, and the destruction of tribal sovereignty. To address some but not all of the pillars that support this disgraced and rejected federal

policies is to perpetuate them, and I think that if we can see that we're willing to take in healing from today, which is -- this is a magnificent, miraculous moment, where we can stand and speak about these things that our elders wouldn't speak about. They wanted to keep it from us to protect us. If we get light enough and don't act Indian enough, that we would be okay and have a life for our descendants and our people. It's just awful.

And I see that to heal from the boarding school experience, we must collaterally uphold sovereignty and self-determination, to stop the exploitation and rising of our cultures and finally undo the illegal termination of tribes by who remain in that terminated state by restoring

them.

These tribes are made up of the boarding school survivors, of the descendents of the boarding school survivors, and it feels like, well, once your hand is trying to heal, the other one is really just the long stroke of genocide, so I say this for all of our ancestors that their pain and suffering will not be in vain. Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you [inaudible]. We'll come to the -- thank you for sharing.

We'll come to the front center in the aisle as our last speaker before lunch break. We will take a short break for lunch, along with some photos, and continue in the afternoon. Thank you.

BUSTER ATTEBERY: I'll stand up here. I'd rather turn my back to the camera than me try to lean this way for the elders.

I'm Buster Attebery. I'm the proud chairman of the Karuk Tribe. We're located in the very northern part of California. Contrary to any Dodger fans that are here, this is not Northern California. We live in Northern California.

So I'm here to speak for elders. I am not a survivor of the boarding school, nor is my mother or

father or my grandmother. My grandmother was home taking care of 13 children, so -- but I -- we did have some tribal members, Michael Thom, former vice chairman for the Karuk Tribe. He attended Sherman School. We had some tribal members that attended Chemawa up in Oregon. And their experiences were not bad experiences. Their

experiences is they wanted to go to a different school because of the racism that was happening in the public schools at home.

So we were not afforded a reservation. When the reservation was formed in Hoopa, California, they said all the tribes in this area will go to that reservation. The Karuk Tribe did not follow suit, we did not go there, so when they came looking for tribal children to take them to boarding schools, our members hid out in the mountains. They changed their names. Very mountainous terrain, very hard to find. Plus, they were not on a reservation, so they didn't come there that often. It was a later on. Like I said, our tribal members kind of made the choice to attend Sherman or Chemawa because of the racism that was happening at home.

And I -- looking forward, I want to encourage all tribal leaders out there to right education for our children. There is an opportunity to -- to get accredited classes in public schools for our language and for tribal

members that have -- that speak their language fluently, they can get a bachelor of arts degree given to them if they go through a credentialing program, which could take

six months to a year, and the tribe itself can set that up. So there's an opportunity to get that.

And with the help of Assemblyman James Ramos out here in California, first Native American assemblyman, he's passing bills so we can have these in our public schools. And keep in mind, 93 percent of our native students attend public schools, and we are fighting hard to get actual funding and a way to use that funding so our tribal students that attend public schools are the beneficiaries of those funds.

So I'll end on this note, and I had a conversation with Director Gearman before we started. I would encourage all tribal leaders and talk to your educators to get the book. It's called The Real All Americans, and it's a book about the first boarding schools, and in particular Carlisle Boarding School, where Jim Thorpe went to school, American Horse went to school, these students and how they -- how the schools were run. It was a time of "kill the Indian, save the man," so you can imagine what those boarding schools were like.

When I was first introduced and told about this book, The Real All Americans, it was by the late Rick

Hill, and Rick Hill and I became good friends. Rick kind of was a mentor to me as I was starting out as chairman. And I attended a reception for -- it's going to be a movie called Bright Path. It's the real Jim Thorpe story. It's still in the works. It got slowed up when they had COVID.

But similar to the picture you've just seen, Rick Hill showed me a picture of the Carlisle Boarding School, and it was 400 students. And he asked me, he says, "What do all those students have in common? What do you see in there?" I looked, and I said, "Oh, they all have the same uniform on. They all have their hair cut the same way."

He says, "No. Take another look." He says, "What you see is none of them are smiling." He said, "When you take a picture, that's the first thing you think of. Everyone says, 'Cheese,' and you smile." He said, "None of those students were smiling."

So in this book -- and another thing about education is if we can get this book and let our tribal parents read it, our tribal students, it tells the true story of the boarding schools. And I won't tell the end, but Jim Thorpe, they -- they took on West Point, which was a dominant football team in them days, so I'll let you read the book and see the end.

But I think moving forward, there is an

opportunity to educate our children. They need to know the truth. They need to know the atrocities. They need to know what happened. I know here in California, you probably all know, Governor Newsom did the public apology for the genocide, for the atrocities that happened to Native Americans. We need to take advantage of that. So again, Secretary Haaland, Assistant Secretary Newland (speaking indigenous language), I'm very happy that you are here.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Vice Chairman.

So I misspoke just a moment ago. We're going to go one more speaker before lunch. We've got someone here in the front, and then we will take a lunch break.

UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER: We have some elders right here that would like to speak from the Graton Rancheria.

DR. JULIA PARKER: Hello. Hello. Hello. Hello. My name is Dr. Julia Florence Parker.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

DR. JULIA PARKER: Aho. You're supposed to say, "Aho."

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

DR. JULIA PARKER: If you were in my cheerleading team in Stewart Indian School, we'd never win

a game, so come on. Aho.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

DR. JULIA PARKER: Now the red curtains are moving.

Anyway, I went to the Indian Boarding School in Stewart, Nevada, at -- I was in the seventh grade, I believe. And I won't tell you my own age, but anyway, I spent five years there, four, five, six years -- excuse me -- there. And while I was there, they had me do different kinds of work.

One of the places that I really liked to work was in the hospital. And every Monday morning, all the little boys would come in, and I could see my little brother, two brothers there, and I would have to paint their feet, because they didn't want to have their feet have any fungus on it.

And then on Wednesday morning, they brought all the little girls in, and then I'd get to see my little sisters. And then I would bandage if they had a little cut on their hand, or if they were crying or feeling bad, I would put my arms around them and hug them and they would feel better.

But life at Indian school was interesting, because I worked in the bakery, learned how to make bread. I worked in the laundry and learned how to wash clothes. I worked in the home ec, where I learned how to a set

table and put the fork in the right place and the glass in the right place. And then I also worked in the garden, and they had a nice garden there that we grew. We planted tomatoes and corn. And when the food was ready, then we'd go on, we'd collect it and then use it in the school.

Life at the Indian school also was where I met my good friend, Mr. Parker, from Yosemite National Park. He's not here with me, bless his soul, but when I went to Yosemite -- well, when I went to Yosemite there, I was first had to leave the school, the school put us on a bus, and then the bus took us to Sacramento, and then from Sacramento, we were able to get our own travel. And so we traveled to Merced. And my good friend was with me, my husband's cousin, and so we stopped at Merced and we crawled off the bus and there was a car waiting for us. And the car door flew open and out came two gentleman. And I said to her, "Where's the lady?" She said, "Oh," she said, "they're at home," and they always send the men

out to pick up the kids if we needed to be picked up.

So they put us in a car and we drove and we drove. I thought we'd never get to Yosemite. And when we finally did, I couldn't believe what I saw, that beautiful, beautiful mountain with its hanging waterfalls like lace curtains in your kitchen, and the trees. And the most blessed tree of all was a lot of acorn trees. I

didn't know what they did with the acorns, but my husband's grandmother, who was a basket weaver and who could cook in her basket with hot rocks/hot stones, and make a mush out of acorn.

So she told me how to clean the acorn, to pound the acorn, and there were beetles so we had to wash the acorn with a lot of water. And then we had our big cooking basket, and the basket was made out of willows, and so the basket had to be cooked -- had to be soaked in water, and you came -- you couldn't say waterproof, because the water is going to drip through.

And then with the acorns, we had to pound the acorn with a rock. And then we had sifting baskets in which we sifted the flour, and we got the nice white flour, and we had the flour -- had to wash the flour with

a lot of water.

So we built up a sand bed and made a flat depression, oh, maybe about three feet across, three feet wide, and then we lay -- they used to lay it on the sand. And then instead of the sand now, so we had cloth. We laid the cloth on top of the sand, and we took the acorn flour and mixed it with a lot of water and poured into this pot of sand. And as the acorn spread across the sand, it -- the grandmother says, "Now don't make it too deep, because if you make it too deep, you're going to be

there for a long time trying to take it -- that out of the flour."

So I made sure that it was maybe about an inch deep and washed it. And then I watched her previously and how she heated rocks up in a fire, a special kind of a rock. And when the rock got real hot, then she would take that rock and dip it real quickly into cold water and then drop it into the basket that had the acorn and they're mixed with water. And I stood there and I watched that acorn just get hot. And then she put another rock in there until she had four rocks. Stir -- I had to stir around in the basket, boiling, boiling, boiling.

And then she said -- she said, "It's been cooked enough now. I want you to test it." So she said, "Take a" -- we had a wooden spoon. She said, "Take that spoon and pick up an acorn and drop it into the water, and if it gets real thick and floats around in the water, then it's cooked." So I did that, and sure enough had boiled this acorn in this basket with the hot stones.

Living there at Yosemite National Park, I became a park interpreter. I spent 50 years talking to people about the Yosemite people there, that Miwok, Paiute, all the ancient people, so I think I better stop here. My kids say you better cut it out. So anyway, I thank you for being here, and I thank all of you for having an

interest to do with all of our people here. Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

DR. JULIA PARKER: I didn't hear it. Aho.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

DR. JULIA PARKER: Now we're going to win.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you so much.

We are going to take a lunch break now. The kind folks at Graton, as part of hosting, have offered to feed all of us. The Secretary and I will -- and our

team -- will excuse ourselves from the room so folks can get some food, and then we'll come back and do a photo line and have a chance to meet those of you who wish to come through, and then we'll continue on with the listening session in the afternoon. So (speaking indigenous language). We'll be back here shortly.

(Whereupon, a lunch recess was taken.)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Good afternoon everybody. Before we get started with the afternoon session, you know these events are a lot to pull off, and they involve a lot of folks, and -- and I know that the really good team members here at Graton Casino Resort worked really hard to get the room organized, to prepare your food, to clear the food away and keep things running smoothly, so let's please show our appreciation to the staff here.

(Applause.)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Okay. It is a quarter to 2:00. We're going to go as long as we can before our schedules will take us to leave later this afternoon, and we may take a restroom break after a little while, but we're going to just go right back to our

speakers. I know we've got a gentleman up here in the front row who's ready to be our first speaker, and then we'll just continue on.

MALE SPEAKER: My name is Bill Finegas [phonetic], and graduated from Stewart Union School, and from there I went into the United States Navy and been all over the place, all the islands, and finally got home again. So that's it.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

MALE SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Ernie Arinaga [phonetic]. I'm from Montana originally, [inaudible], the Little Shell Chippewa, Chippeways. I went to Santa Fe Indian School, originally Albuquerque Indian School. How I ended up there, my grandparents raised three sets of kids, because the parents were involved with drugs, alcohol and all the bad stuff that happens on the rez, and Child Protective Services came in and would round up the kids periodically and take us off to foster care. But then we'd end up run -- running away, go back to our

grandparents.

Well, at the end of that day -- or that shift, give up two kids to boarding school, so I ended up getting

shipped off to originally Albuquerque Indian School. My sister, a year younger than me, went to Chemawa in Oregon, so that kept -- kept the wolves at bay and so my grandparents were able to keep the other kids.

And that being said, I didn't see any of my family for probably -- still haven't seen some of them, because once I got out of the boarding school, I went straight to the Marine Corps and never did make it back home.

The one thing that I can say as far as I felt like I was in the second wave of the boarding school. My grandma was in boarding school, the -- as you hear, with the real bad stuff going on. Then it passed my parents' generations because she fought against that big time. Then it kind of cleaned up the boarding schools a little bit, so I was like that second wave.

But one thing it did do was us getting shipped that far away, it kind of took us away from our family and that connection we had to our family. And so the only thing that kind of saved me in that situation was there was this Trujillo family out of Cochiti Pueblo who felt sorry for me coming from Montana. I never -- it was like

culture shock. You know, you come from Montana and you ended up in Albuquerque, and you've got different types of Indians and different types of people there, but that family would come up and pick me up on the weekends and take me to their -- to the pueblo and let me stay there on the weekend, kind of acted as my adopted family kind of throughout that school time.

And like I said, once I graduated, I had to go straight to the Marine Corps because I had no parents, nobody there when I finished that, and to this day, I know it affected my sister, because I haven't seen her in probably 30 years, and she's been in and out of prison ever since. She's never been back to the -- to the rez, and I don't have -- it created a -- a thing where I don't have a very good relationship with my mother, because by the time we started talking again and she -- she -- there's a lot of feelings that was brought up just because of separation.

I didn't see my father until I was, like, 22. He had been in and out of prison himself, and he ended up -- the way I ended up in California is kind of unique. Is, once I got of the Marine Corps, I hitchhiked to L.A., because I know there was a lot of Indians in California. And so after getting in L.A. somebody says -- recognized my name, and then said, "Hey, I heard -- I know your dad's

in California," because he was a real hardcore member of the American Indian movement at the time, and they told me he was up in Sacramento, because he -- he had been out at Alcatraz when they took that over. So I didn't know him, because he was mostly locked up my life, and so hitchhiked up to Sacramento, and they told me he had sobered up.

So I went to an AA meeting and I just asked around if they knew who the guy was. And it just so happens his sponsor was at the meeting and gave me a ride to his house. And so I ended up knocking on his door, and he opened up, he goes, "Who are you?" I said, "Well, I'm your son," you know. And so that started a -- and some people know -- know him and ran into him because he's worked in the field of alcohol, drugs, helped the natives and stuff like that.

But the one thing that I -- because of -- of the boarding school, being separated, that did make me really fight hard. The only thing that helped me kind of remember was when I was growing up on the rez, we used to have our ceremonies, our sun dancing, different things like that, and I used to remember that when I was a little kid. And it took a lot of years, but now me and my wife go back to that. We've been doing it for probably 20-something years, and hanging off that tradition.

25 But the one thing for me myself, I see what's

1 going on on the rezes, with drug, alcohol, suicide, all
2 the stuff when I go back there, and I'm pretty proud of
3 myself that I survived that -- that type of situation, and
4 thrived. And me as a warrior, when my grandkids look at
5 me and my kids and my wife, they look at me with respect,
6 and so, you know, on one hand, I -- my grandma, she didn't
7 want no white people around. She hated them. Now my
8 parents, they're -- they -- they mainstreamed a little bit
9 more. And now it's like in my generation, it's -- my kids
10 are mainstreaming, learning how to live, learning how to
11 survive. I have two grandchildren that went to college,
12 graduated, and it's all because I don't drink, I quit
13 drinking, because I know that's a -- that's a thing that
14 terrorizes the tribes, terrorizes people. You know, you
15 see it around.
16 And I can tell you, when I first hit Santa Rosa
17 there's one family that I'm truly grateful for, and that's
18 Lucy and Clint McKay. They're the greatest people that
19 when it -- that -- welcomed me and my wife here with open
20 arms, and so I've been living here in Santa Rosa now for
21 about 30 years, and in that this place -- I actually -- it

was funny, when they built this casino here, it was a native thing, so my wife's pretty -- pretty activist. She's still a member. Still believes -- fights for a lot of causes and things like that. And I said I'm going to

work over there because it's a native thing, and so I applied. And I had my own business at the time called Indian Time Plumbing, and so I came over here, took a job, and I think I got hired as the lowest possible paying job you could -- you could get. And I told my wife. She's like, "You need to quit that and do your own business, make some money."

And I said, "Well, just give me a year. We'll see what happens," you know. And so it turned out great. But like I said, I'm -- I feel like I'm a true testament of survival, and I don't look at my -- my parents or my grandparents, they're still dealing with a lot of those wounds, but I try to be positive with my family and change that.

And I don't drink. My kids, like any other family, we have issues and problems. I have one son that's been in and out of prison, and I'm just waiting for the day when I get the call. That kind of stuff hurts,

but I have other kids that are doing great, that are educated, and I don't know. I'm true -- what I truly believe in is as a -- as a native and knowing what my family and what every family -- like on the rez, I'm not unique. Everybody's dealt with the same stuff and the same life and the same wounds, and so I try not to feed.

The one thing that I know, even with all those

people that love me and that are around me, I still feel loved. It doesn't matter. I got -- my wife loves me. My grandkids love me. My kids love me. All my life I still have that lonely feeling because I had lost that connection, and that was because of getting shipped off to boarding school as part of it, but also being stripped from your culture. So the thing is, you've got to stick to your family, stick to your culture, stick to who you are, and thrive.

And myself, I don't feed into the negative. I appreciate and respect the elders, respect AIMM, respect what the generations before me fought for to where my life now can be how it is, and my kids' lives for the future, and my grandkids. And so that's the one thing I -- I just want to always try to stay positive and -- because there's

still issues, there's still wounds, but you -- if anybody knows me, I don't -- I don't buy into any of that, because I'm a warrior, a native, I represent my tribe. Just like him today when he said that word (speaks indigenous language), that's my country up there. That one word. That makes -- that makes you proud. So we are -- all survived. We all survived, so we're all strong, and that's the way we need to keep it. So that's all I have to say. Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: (Speaks indigenous language). Thank you so much.

So we'll come to this gentleman in the bandanna in the front here. Thank you.

JAMES BROWN: (Speaking indigenous language) my relatives. My name is James Brown. Not the singer, but I can dance. I was sent for relocation in 1959 in Oakland and went to an all-black school. I was lucky my name is James Brown. All I had to do was learn to dance, and I became a good dancer. I'd rather dance than get beat up.

Anyway, I want to share my story, because a good example, my relatives went to boarding school. I was --

I'm the youngest of seven, and I attend Stewart. Maybe we should have a Stewart reunion, all the people from Stewart. So I went one year from 1969 to 1970. But here's what happened, all my family went to public school. That year, Alcatraz happened. My family, because of our traditional leadership, was invited down to bring our Bighead ceremony to the island.

We went there, and when I got there, I felt so good, I wanted to stay. And I promised my parents that if they let me stay, I would go back to school, so they let me stay. So I stayed on Alcatraz for about two and a half months on -- during the occupation. And so they told me I could go to Stewart. So I didn't know anything about the

history, so I ended up going to Stewart School.

And what is crazy about it, though, was that, again, I'm the youngest in my family attending. I chose to go. I wasn't forced to go. But when my uncle and my father took me there, the principal wasn't going to accept me, because he said I didn't have a juvenile record. So remember, boarding school is about that. It listed you as a juvenile and a delinquent, and so you always -- that record always followed you in school. Okay. So you've

got to remember that.

Now, again, my cousin also attended. Her name is Sarah Garcia today. And what is crazy is that what we learned in that boarding school came back to our tribe. And for the past 13 years, I have been publicly disenfranchised by my cousin, all of my family, Elem.

Now I have a website called [inaudible]. I would like you to go on it and take a look at it. This is my research for the past 30 years of all the documents that shows my tribe has a 14,000-year history in Lake County. Every tribe that calls themself Pomo originated from us. And, again, we know Pomo is not our original name. We all know our traditional names. But we've been using Pomo all our life, just like Navajo, so again --

But what I wanted to say is that, when I went

there -- for example, my hair was down to my knees, and it was just like going to the Army, as soon as I got there, they shaved my head. I went into the shower, they deloused me. While, I was there, everybody was stealing everything I brought, and I got a lot of criticism from other Indians. See, I wanted to go to all Indian school,

and I felt proud to go there, and when I got there, I was called a Mexican hippy Indian from California by the other Indian kids. And I said, "Gee, you know what? I'd rather be a called a Mexican hippie Indian than looking like a John Wayne Indian," because every one of them had cowboy hats and cowboy boots.

See we weren't raised in that society, so it was hard dealing with that. I made friends with Utes and Shoshone, and that was so great. So once I said that, I got beat up, so I didn't say that anymore. And it was hard understanding that, but what I looked at -- I had to work in the kitchen like somebody was saying. Every time the BIA showed up, all the new spoons and forks and all the new plates came out. They were there investigating this rape of one of the girls, and that's the only time that we got to eat meat and have good food, because the BIA official showed up.

So, again, those kinds of things -- now a good example, all my family were -- I was saying I have

four brothers, older brothers, and I have two sisters. All of my brothers were outstanding in sports. I was pretty fair in sports. I was looking forward to play on

an all Indian team, but guess what? They had a thing called the yanakis [phonetic]. It was an initiation. Does any of you Stewart people remember this? If you went out for the team, you had to -- for two weeks, you had to be a slave to the block L players on the team, and that included wearing dresses, taking their books to school, fixing their beds and doing all the maintenance before you could even try out for the sports team, so I decided, I'm not going to go out for sports.

I found another friend that told me the educational system is the worst ever. And he said if you really want to get some education, get a GED and get out of this school. And that's actually -- I spent the whole year there, and I came home, and it was unfortunate because my tribe, we live on the largest mercury mine ever, okay. This mercury exploded -- it poisoned all the lake. Every fish in Lake County has mercury in it.

Now what I'm saying is we need to do something about the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Catholic Church, all the churches. All of those lands from those schools should come back to the tribes.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

JAMES BROWN: That should be our property of those tribes that suffered. And not only that, I would go as far as saying the Catholic Church, their license should be taken away from them, in those counties, for everything they did. What about the long list of Bureau of Indian Affairs officials? Deb Haaland is the only one to present this. Look at all these years of those super -- BIA Secretary of Interiors who were all non-Indian people. They weren't there for us. We have to realize, if we look at -- we talk about our sovereignty, don't you know, California is still a public auction state? We're always -- they are always planning to terminate us, but yet we always think they're great people.

Look at all -- when we had the treaties, they weren't ratified. They let us go for 50 years before the federal government came back in. And during that time, that's when the government protection of Indians came in. We were all slaves. You know what? There are schools, like, for example, I would like to get this from the bureau in Lake County. There was the Catholic Mission boarding School. There's also burials there. I have a record of that, because in 2009, I was appointed to the Lake County Heritage Commission, and it had all those records. But I didn't know about the Middletown training school. Has anyone heard of that?

Okay. See, so in our area, Lake County, Napa, all this, there are almost 18 mines, so they had to move all the native people out. And one of the ways they did do it is they took their children to boarding schools. That's how they displaced and got rid of us from our homelands. So these are the things that we need to do.

Now here's what -- the best thing that happened for me, after I survived the school, I came home to alcohol/drug free parents who are traditional leaders, whereas, my other cousin came home to an alcoholic father and mother and family that physically and sexually abused her. Now look at that. That's my first cousin. Our mothers are sisters from the Big Valley Tribe, and our fathers are from the Elem Tribe. That's how boarding school mentality separates us and divides our families.

Look at how many tribal children went to boarding school. Look at all the things that have happened to us. We are all relatives. We're all related. Look at how all the unrecognized tribes. My -- my wife is from the Yokayo Tribe, one of the oldest tribes around. Almost all the tribes from Ukiah came from it. Now we're always separate, individualized, colonized tribes.

I can prove that my tribe, my -- we had land on Bodega Bay. See, but nobody wants to hear that, because

25 our history is written in a passive voice, so that way the

1 white people wouldn't feel guilty about all they stole
2 from us, everything they -- how they murdered us. Even
3 our own tribal historians are writing in a passive voice,
4 not telling the truth, and that's what we need.
5 We need to empower our children with this
6 knowledge. They're the ones who are going to suffer and
7 keep suffering this inter-generational trauma. So what I
8 look forward to is that I came back and got involved with
9 my roundhouse ceremonies, became a traditional captain,
10 took over for my parents, and that power was passed on to
11 my son and my nephews, so our tradition is alive, but the
12 tribe abandoned us.
13 So what happened was in 1971, a group of
14 Berkeley students came to our roundhouse ceremonies, and
15 they were so grateful that -- to see our roundhouse
16 ceremonies going on, but they were appalled that here in
17 1968 we had no running water, no electricity on our
18 reservation, so they have petitioned the federal
19 government. The BIA came in with 13 homes, a new road
20 system, but guess what? They went next door to the
21 mercury mine and bought the toxic mintailings to put our

roads and our homes on top of. And it took us until 2006 to get the U.S. EPA to come in and clean that up. And what they did is they violated Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act.

Our archaeologist that we hired said they have a $22 million violation of the National Historic Preservation Act. Our election was overthrown, and a group of insurgents was -- you know, you hear about this Trump thing going on. This is what happened in our tribal government. The first thing that Sarah Garcia, my cousin, did, they disenfranchised everybody living on the reservation. So for the past 13 years, my reservation hasn't received one penny in any federal services. And the tribe moved to this county. They stayed right here in Santa Rosa. They don't even -- they're not even on the reservation. None of them even lived in our county.

Now look at it. I wrote this letter to the Bureau, and I was never responded to. But these are, to me, are the same traumas from the boarding school system that all of us have. Look at the different families, how you're impacted. You know, so many of us, and like I said, the only thing that helped me survive was my parents

and their values, and they helped me cope with it.

But so many times I look out there and I see our children suffering. Remember, if we don't empower our children, we're not going to be here. They have to learn. They are the ones who suffer.

All of our families are divided in our tribe. I mean how many -- shouldn't we be having all the tribes

that call themselves Pomos meeting here together? Shouldn't we be united? We're all divided now, because of gaming. So gaming is bringing in another era of disenrollment and corruption to our people, so it's really hard for us as survivors.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you, Mr. Brown.

JAMES BROWN: Thank you. Thank you.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Did you have -- did you have -- okay.

VIRGINIA HEDRICK: (Speaking indigenous language.) Good afternoon. My name is Virginia Hedrick. I'm a member of the Yurok Tribe and the executive director

for the California Consortium for Urban Indian Health, and I have my daughters here with me.

FEMALE SPEAKER: [Inaudible]. I am the great-granddaughter of a boarding school survivor.

FEMALE SPEAKER: I am Kayla, great-grandchild of a survivor.

VIRGINIA HEDRICK: And I am the granddaughter of AA-Wok Georgiana Trull. She was born Georgiana Myers at the village of Sregon in a traditional house to her mother, Melissa Star, and her father, Charlie Myers. My

grandmother left her village at the age of nine to attend school in Fort Hoopa. While there, she remained in Humboldt County and on the Trinity River, the largest tributary to the Klamath River.

When she was 16, her parents were convinced it was time for her to leave to get an education at Sherman Indian Boarding School. When she got there, her whole world would change. She would not return home until her late 20s, having given birth to her only son. She was told at the hospital she would not be able to have anymore children and that my dad had ruined her.

Nearly 50 years later, her grandchildren would

come to understand that our grandmother had been sterilized. An unmarried Indian woman giving birth in San Diego County would never be given the chance to give birth again. In her attempts to save her son from boarding school, she brought him home to her parents back at her village at Sregon, and a few years later, after saving money, she would return home with her husband to care for the son and her aging parents.

So what impact did Sherman Indian Boarding School have on me? Before my birth, my father was born to a survivor of boarding school. He would struggle with alcoholism for more than 20 years. During this time, the impact of the trauma my grandmother experienced in her

generation would ooze out of him. This painful cycle of addiction would continue.

My father would later seek treatment at an early Indian organization, NARA, in Portland, Oregon. I'm the youngest of ten, and so much of that isn't my story. My story is a story of healing, a story of what happens when children are born in a time of cultural vitalization.

I was born just a few years after vitalization of our world renewal ceremony, the penguin jump dance,

where my brothers fast and pray, where me and my sisters dance. When I was 12, I saw the first woman in my community wear her 111 marks. I was mesmerized by her beauty. I asked my grandma about them, and she said her mother lived during a time of contact, and that her grandparents didn't think they'd bring them any good luck. And as I grow older, my grandmother and I would have many conversations about these marks.

Healing from the wounds of boarding school must -- must include access to culturally competent education, one that doesn't continue to penalize our kids for participating in ceremonies. One in which the history of the land is accurately told. We need full funding of the Indian health care delivery system. We need traditional healing services to be billable under Medi-Cal.

Our land was stolen while our grandparents were at boarding school, and we need it back. (Speaking indigenous language).

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you very much. Yes.

SAMANTHA CYPRET: I risk piggybacking off of each other, because we're cousins.

(Speaking indigenous language.) My name is Samantha Cypret. I am a native from the Taylorsville Rancheria. I just want to take a moment and say thank you to Secretary Haaland, Assistant Secretary Newland, and then also to Graton Rancheria Chairman Sarris for hosting this.

Professionally I work as the Chief of Staff for Wilton Rancheria and I also teach Federal Indian Law at McGeorge School of Law at the University of the Pacific.

My grandmother was a little older when she was taken with her sister to Stewart Indian School in the early 1920s. She always said that she had it easier than most of the people who had to go there because her name was already in English, and she already understood English, so she said that her transition into that school was much easier than most.

We always heard stories from our other relatives

how my grandmother was sort of the protector of everyone. She was older, ten or eleven, when she went, and so she really made sure that her younger siblings and their

family were protected as much as she could. We heard that she endured a lot of abuse that was meant for them, and she always hid and stole food and would sneak it to them when they were being punished for not doing whatever they were supposed to be doing that day.

She would -- she never really told us about her time. Most of the time that we heard when I was younger was shared from other family who was really lifting her up and telling us how much she supported them. All she would really tell us was that she still remembered some Maidu, and it was mostly all of the curse words, because that's how she would talk about the people at the school when she didn't want them to understand.

She would tell me when I was younger that she was a troublemaker, but she said it with such pride, because she knew that she -- she was standing up to them, but she suffered a lot of abuse. It wasn't until she was in her 90s when it was helping her change, and I noticed she had a bunch of scars on her back. I knew one was from back surgery, but I didn't know what the rest were from. And she told me that they were from the abuse that she had at Stewart.

As she got older, she began sharing more. She told stories about a house in the back, and she would tell us about how, when they would give the -- all of the younger girls a bath, and they put them in new dresses and they would present them to grown men that were coming to that school to be taken to the house in the back. And she was told if she complied, then maybe her and her sister would get to go home soon, and so she did. She would never tell us about what actually happened there, but we all have kind of put the pieces together, and it's more abuse than I can ever imagine enduring myself.

After three years, she finally escaped the school. She never taught my mom or any of my aunts or uncles any of our language or our culture. She said it was only safe if she did it. She knew -- was protecting them by encouraging them to assimilate. It was an entire generation that was taught that our culture is dangerous to their safety.

As my older cousins began to try to relearn our language from other elders, my grandmother swore she didn't remember any Maidu. She always -- she would always kind of blow them off and tell them to go ask other people, but then on her 90th birthday after Taylorsville, one of the other elders kind of called her out and said, you know, "Go ask Leona. She knows this," and she

pretended like she didn't. And then when we were in the car on the way home, she started speaking a little bit of Maidu. She started talking to me about counting her "lay-oh-knee," which is her money.

She finally started speaking in full sentences, teaching people about the grammar and sentence structure. She finally knew it was safe for her to share our culture. She passed away when she was 97, and all I can think about is how much culture she shared with us in those seven years and what would have happened if she would have felt safer in the 70 before that.

As I said, we come from the Taylorsville Rancheria. Our status has been terminated. We've been in federal court for over 20 years fighting for restoration. The biggest hurdle in that lawsuit has been: Where is your culture? And it seems a little bit egregious for the federal government who worked so actively to strip us from our culture, to now hold that lack of culture against us in our fight for restoration.

So moving forward today, I ask that you look at California tribes specifically. You've heard from so many people about the status that has been taken, and we ask -- we understand that California is viewed as such a unique landscape. Someone earlier mentioned PL 280. It's

such a big fight to try to retain our sovereignty in

our -- within our tribes. But it shouldn't be held up to tribes to hold pride right fundraisers or hold bake sales to try to hire attorneys. Tribes shouldn't be relying on celebrities to call politicians to raise awareness. Instead of the federal government fighting against recognition or restoration and using arguments about lack of culture or why tribal members have moved away from a rancheria, it's time for the federal government to acknowledge their role in this erasure, to honor their trust responsibility that they owe to the tribes and to offer assistance to the tribes to restore their rights that were so wrongfully taken from them.

Thank you for this opportunity to share, and we really appreciate this as a first path that -- first step down the path of healing.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

UNKNOWN FEMALE SPEAKER: Is it possible for chief [inaudible] to speak, our matriarch, to have a word?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: We're -- we're doing our best to call on folks who want to speak as they raise hands. And our mic runners, just want to make sure

you're flagging me down when you identify someone. We can go to the chief. We'll make our way around.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you very much. I just want to say that, you know, we're here in

California, a very unique state, one that has brought the United States and California to task about the California Indian claims case, and have won that case. But in that winning, we also seem to have lost, because up until then, the California Indians worked together. We all had the axillary commissions together because we all shared that same kind of background.

You know, in my river, McCloud River, we lived there until the 1930s when the Shasta dam was being planned to be built, and when that happened, they flooded our homelands, they flooded -- they cut everything down, but it was the beginning of dams everwhere in the state in the 1940s.

And the government, while they passed the 1941 Act to take our land for the good of California, they provided no land for the Winnemem Wintu people. They actually provided a cemetery so that we would remove our dead, our recently died, to a piece of land to be

reinterred.

At that same time, my parents, both my parents and my uncles and aunts, in -- were taken from the river to Sherman Indian boarding school. And at the boarding school, luckily my parents and my cousins were mostly in their teen years, and so within the four-year period, a lot of them who are born on the river had no -- no birth

certificates, so they lied to go into the service rather than to stay at Sherman Indian High -- or at Sherman Institute at the time.

And when they got home from fighting for this country, there was no home. There was no land. The government ignores still today the Act, 1941 Indian Land Acquisition Act, that makes us now unrecognized.

But, like I say, you know, in 1928, the California Indians banded together, they filed a claim for all of the treaty lands that we were lied to about, as well as other lands that were loss of communal ownership, like cemeteries, like burial grounds, like our sacred places.

And at that time, there were three rolls, government rolls that were taken. One in 1928 of the

actual petitioners, which included my grandparents' era and probably many others in this room. And there was a roll taken then showing an enrollment number and what tribe they were from.

And then again in 1956, a second roll was taken, because it had been so long that this case was in the courts, that many of the original people had already passed away. And so the descendants were then enrolled in the California judgment.

And then again in 1970, just before the court

ruled in the favor of California Indians, awarding California Indians $29 million. And of the $29 million, about 14 million went to a law firm that represented the California Indians. The rest of the money went to pay for everything that the BIA gave to the rancherias, including paying for all of the rancherias out of that funding.

So technically all Californians that have a judgment roll number are federally recognized because we belong to -- even this land was paid for in the California Claims case. All of the lands, except for Hoopa, which is an executive order.

So now we won that case, 1970. The BIA put out

checks to everybody on that list, but they were supposed to wait for the tribes to decide whether or not they were going to accept that -- that agreement. Seven tribes in the north refused it. But the BIA sent out checks to everybody on that list, and they said, as long as that person cashed that check, that meant it was approved, that the Indian people approved what had happened here. There's over a million dollars in the California Congress right now from people who refused those checks, and they don't know what to do with that money that the -- the tribal people turned back to the government and refused to sell.

We have that for 1972, they sent out those

checks. 1972 to 1980 or 1978 when it started, they came back and said, "Oh, now you have to be a recognized tribe, and we'll decide who's going to be on that list." And they created that list. We've never seen the criteria for how they created that list, but we know that the majority of California Indians were left off that list.

You know, we had a population of 300,000, always bordering with Oklahoma's population, down to 28,000 BIA-certified Indians in one year. The rest of the

California Indians were left off, left out, and have no rights to actually continue to be. You know, you can say you can act like an Indian, you can carry yourself like an Indian, and that's what we do. The Winnemem Wintu people do that. We hold our ceremonies. But in order to do that, we have to fight with the Forest Service.

You know, and there's going to be another fight coming up because our next girl that's coming through puberty rites is deaf. We have to have that closed. We can't have motor boats coming through this ceremonial ground, and so I'm just saying that's the struggle that we have, because we're up against the wall.

But many tribes are going through that same kind of thing and trying to hold ceremonies, trying to keep their people together, and it's like I feel like in some ways that the Winnemem are really lucky because they

didn't really kill all of our leaders. And we learned from our leaders how to lead. And we were so far up the river that we didn't really get the boarding school experience, more so than my grams and that generation was sent to Greenville Boarding School, where they prayed for that school to burn down, and it did.

So they weren't there very long. And they came home. But as they became parents, they knew how to hide the kids when a buckhorn came up the road or a horse came up the road, because we're not horse people, to hide the kids. And my family -- my parents taught us how to hide from county cars. You see a county car with an emblem on the side, go out the back door and you go up the hill, and so that's -- you know, we -- we learned that from boarding school experiences. And I'm sure that's the same thing everywhere, because, you know, the social services were looking to send kids away from their -- their places.

We hold that ceremonial ground. He hold connections to the sacred sites, because we had somebody who would not give that up, would not set that down, would not let loose of the river, and so we're still there, and We're -- we're in that position where we want answers for the California claims case. Why did we get certified in the California claims case and now we're unrecognized?

And that's more than just like, oh, we want a

casino. That's more than, you know, we want a bank account or whatever, but we went our health rights. We want our kids' education rights. You know, they just

passed the UC system to give waivers to the kids for education at the UC system, but not for us. But not for the unrecognized.

You know, and then Graton graciously extends a hand to say, "We'll help you." But how is that right when the universities of California cannot decide who the Indians of California is and turns it over to another California Indian tribe, so they're able to identify us and let us be the -- you know, to get some of the -- the breaks that other people get. But right now, like I say, we don't have our right to be and hold our cultural event. Every time we hold a ceremony, if you're not recognized, you're breaking the law.

We found out that the American Indian Religious Freedoms Act was only for federally recognized tribes. The Indian Child Welfare Act is for federally recognized. We can't protect our own children. We can't hold our own ceremony in peace, you know. And so many other housing, language, we can't even apply for language grants, because we're not federally recognized. These things -- you know, the Winnemem Wintu have taken that to Geneva to file a complaint and assert to say this is not right for

California Indians not to have rights.

Maybe we're not federally recognized, but you really can't take away our rights. You shouldn't be blocking us from having our rights to be who we are and to carry our traditions the way that we are struggling to have. One day maybe we all lose that, but right now, you have numbers of people who are fighting to hold on to culture, to hold on to a traditional way, to hold on to a tribal way.

And the rights of the tribe, the collective rights, is dwindling as casinos pop up and individuals per capita has popped up and disenrollments happen and people are blocked from applying or enrolling with the tribe, where actually the tribe's from or whatever those reasons are. That the individual rights of Indians are overriding the collective rights of the tribe, and tribes are disappearing. And this all stems from the boarding school time. So I just want to say --

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you.

FEMALE SPEAKER: -- I'm on the Truth & Healing Council of California, and we are making no headway. We need help. We need somebody to actually help us, because I'm feeling like, you know, we're -- we're just holding a spot for the governor, but hopefully I'm hoping that Secretary Haaland and -- and Assistant Secretary Newland

are serious about helping California, because we have one of the highest populations of Indians --

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you.

FEMALE SPEAKER: -- we're doing it without anything.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: We come to the front here, this gentleman. And I know you guys have been waiting, so we'll go to this gentleman, we'll find a place over here, and we'll come back, okay?

UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER: Thank you.

MALE SPEAKER: Good afternoon. Thank you very much. I'm the vice chairman for the Koi Nation of Northern California.

Secretary Haaland, we're really grateful for you. We're proud of you. Assistant Secretary Newland, the same. Thank you. Thank you, Graton, for having us today. Everybody, this is a beautiful day. It's a wonderful thing to have.

I am the great-grandson of two survivors of the Sherman Indian Institute. They were taken from their families. They were obviously going through what

25 everybody else had to go through down there. My

1 great-grandfather ran away twice. The second time,
2 obviously, he didn't -- he escaped, didn't have to go
3 back.
4 But my great-grandmother, she had to stay there.
5 Ironically, they did not know each other while they were
6 there, and when she came home, they met each other, and
7 our tribe was able to flourish.
8 The main thing that I'm trying to share with you
9 is this, is because of their inability to learn love, that
10 intimate personal reaction from person to person, hugging
11 and telling somebody that you love them, they did not pass
12 that down. They did not have the ability to pass that
13 down. And it got to my grandmother. And older
14 relatives -- my grandmother passed when I was -- when I
15 was young. My older relatives tell me how she didn't hug.
16 You know, she didn't tell you she loved you. But
17 everybody said, "We knew we were loved by her."
18 So the Koi Nation has decided to go ahead and do
19 something proactive. So as a land base tribe, we receive
20 the IGRA funds. The only thing we could use those IGRA
21 funds for was for behavioral health. Thankfully to the

tribal nations here in California and our friend Christine. I saw her here earlier -- thank you, Christine, for helping us start our behavioral health going on four years now. And our models is unique in the

sense that we heal together.

Our tribal council does not tell our people to go to IHSS. We don't tell our people to go to a health program or behavioral health or anything like that. We say, "Come heal with us together." While there, we promote -- they have families come together. Fortunate for me, my wife comes, children come, grandchildren come, and we're all doing this together with tribal council present.

I'm glad today you have therapists on hand. We have a therapist on hand for hours. We go to a nutritionist for lunch nearby. We have a personal trainer. Please, don't judge me. So what -- what we've been able to do, is our facilitator actually is the son of Gail and Jim Brown. He's wonderful man. We're all ceremony people. We've been opening up this model to other tribes. I've had conversations with other tribes in the region, and we've invited some other tribal leaders to

come up so we can overcome this inter-generational trauma, because we all -- I believe, Secretary Haaland, you said it at the beginning when you started this. And thank you. You said if you are a Native American, you probably are affected by this. And it's true.

So today, I would like to invite, Chairman Sarris, Chairman Potter, Chairman Attebery,

Vice Chair Elliott from Hopland, and any other tribal leader that wants to come and heal with us. So I'm learning this colonized way of thinking. Because we were gone -- the Native American household that supports Native Americans in all endeavors, no matter what, as long as it's not toxic, and as long as it's not illegal.

So we're going to support all tribes the best we can. As a land base tribe, moving forward, this is absolutely the most important work we've done for our people, but it also includes extended family and tribes from the region, and we welcome you, and we would be honored to have you. Thank you very much.

Oh, and one last thing. We will continue to bring you handfuls of water until you come and join us at the river.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: We had a person back here. We'll come back. We're going to do our best to try to get -- everybody wants to speak. I see lots of hands up, but I understand. We're doing our best. Okay. Thank you.

BETTY TRUJILLO: (Speaking in indigenous language). My name is Betty Trujillo. I live in San Francisco. I'm the son of Julian. I'm from New

Mexico, but I live in San Francisco.

I woke up in a party wagon in San Francisco. That's how I ended up living there. I went through a recovery center there, and I stayed there.

How boarding -- I went to a boarding school. I did go to a boarding school. The place was like in the middle of nowhere in New Mexico. They called it -- that's not what they see. It's actually one of our sacred mountains, one at the foot of the mesa. That's where the school was.

I went by choice. I was a day student, and I begged my auntie to transfer me to the dormitory. Reason

why I did that, I was getting tired of Hollywood. I was getting tired of coming home, chopping wood, bringing in the coal and taking care of my other cousins' needs. I was getting tired, and so I switched to dormitory, and I had fun, because I did all kinds of sports. I did all kinds of activities. I actually crawled under the steps until the buses left on Fridays. I was supposed to go home every weekend, but a bunch of us had the idea that we don't want to go home. We don't want to work that extra long, cold nights, so we just crawled under steps, wait until 6:00 o'clock, crawled out from under there, and lied to the dorm mothers and say, "Hey, we missed it." We had a -- we didn't do good in class, so we had to stay after

class.

So that's -- that was my experience. I did sports. There were some not good news, you know, in everything in our lives. The bad thing was that quite a few people -- quite a few students ran away, even in the cold, summer, during the winter. They didn't go far because it was in the middle of nowhere, and they found them frozen under the bush, behind the building, down into the arroyos. That's the sad part about it.

And the teachers, some of them are mean, you know. One teacher used to -- you didn't pay attention or he thinks you wasn't, he'll hit you with a book and kick your chair. We had an African American librarian. She used to say "English." We didn't understand the silence, so we translated it to understand to complete the assignment.

One day, we all ended up in the hole. The principal came around the corner and said, "Why are you guys all here? I says, "We couldn't understand, so we asked so and so, and she got mad because we all went in the hallway." So that's how my boarding school days was.

And I hear a lot of you how it affected you and brought it into your tribal -- as an adult working and living. Like I said, I made that choice to be in the dormitory, because I was getting tired at home. I didn't

-- I didn't have the -- I had siblings that are older. I had two epileptic siblings I had to take care of at the young age -- I am the youngest of 16 on my dad's side. My mom's side, I'm the youngest of six. My dad had two wives.

So looking at that, you know, I just -- I'm

tired, so I went to the board. I had fun, but, like I said, one day a friend of mine was gone, close friend, a relative. She came back two weeks later and I said, "What happened to you?" Near my town, there's all white racists. They always kill somebody. Apparently, some young white guys got together and beat up her dad, drunk, killed him, cut up his fingers, and they got caught by crossing his fingers in the [inaudible]. That's what I should have said, when she said, "They killed my dad."

At the same time American Indian Movement was happening, we went to the theater, and we came out, and my mom and my auntie just, you know, had us go back to her place and called my uncle and took us out of there. And then I -- I remember pictures, you know of clubs and sticks going down Main Street. And so, like I said, you know, it does affect me, and sometimes I talk to my son about it, and it does -- you think back on how -- you go to bed early. You get in line like somebody said, shower, and I think about those things sometimes, and I try not to

be aggressive with my son, because that's how the dorm people were.

At the time, it didn't affect me, as long as I

stayed over here, as long as I didn't haul in the wood. As long as I didn't take care of my little bratty cousins, you know, I'm okay.

And today, it is hard. You built up, in time, years of, you know, laws. That guy said, "Love, what does that mean?" It's funny when I end up here in the Bay Area, that's when I start learning about recovery, of how to love to take care of yourself. Self-love. In boarding school, what does that mean, you know? You just do what I ask you to do.

But here today as an adult, it's sometimes hard. So some of those memories are hard to discard and kind of it makes it a lot less if you do some sort of ceremony, here and there, and that's what I did. And so today, I think about all these things that you guys are talking about, tribal stuff, you know, political round, and sometimes we stayed with what bothers us so much, that we forget what's right here, you know.

So -- which makes it back to my own life, like fight or flight, right? That's all I knew. And I knew that that's from boarding school. You've got to jump up and do what they ask you; otherwise, you get a swat, you

get a stick or something.

But today I try not to do that with that my child. He is a young adult. I haven't -- since he was a baby, toddler, preteens. I've never hid them. Because I swore the day I had him, I wasn't going to raise him like I was raised. I let him have friends. I let him have sleepovers. I didn't. I was home raising seven of my siblings/cousins. I didn't finish high school, but I got my GED here in the Bay Area. And I got my AA, and I didn't have to take care of anybody.

But it helped me, in a sense, to be independent from my family, and as you guys talked about culture and belief and stuff, it became more stronger here because people are more reaching out to help you, it's like, "Is that what you want?" Without thinking bad of the person, without thinking, "Well, what -- if I give something, what do I get back?" And then it's hard to think that way -- you know, not to think that way.

But eventually, you know, I -- I got better. I got better. I think about all those friends that I made back in boarding school and what they're doing. I found one on Facebook. And I was able to talk to her and how she went through -- and how she's doing. But all I know, you know, it does change us. It does change us. And I talked to my kid about it, and he was like, "Why did you

do this?" So I had to come up with reasons, and tell them stories. Some things he doesn't want to hear, but this is what it is.

Like I said, you know, I quit, because it's not good for me no more not to dwell on those things. It did happen. You know, things are not spoken of, you know. And today, you know, it hurts just for me to just kind of move forward to find better -- better things to say and do for my life and my kid and also for the community I've grown to love in San Francisco.

And I like to joke and I like to laugh. You know, that is what I'd like to share, you know. It is hard and things that we try to improve, because we need something. There's a part where maybe take care of your house first, you know. Maybe stop living isn't really worth all the energy in one plot. So I just wanted to share that.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. Thank you.

So we've got this gentleman standing in the gray that's been patiently waiting.

CESAR CABALLERO: Thank you. Appreciate for my turn, you know. It's an honor.

25 Madam Secretary, it's an honor to be able to

1 hear you speak a little bit and mention you talked about
2 the investigation that you ordered regarding the Indian
3 schools, and in your investigation, it included tribal
4 affiliation, and I appreciate that you added that to the
5 -- to the investigation, because I wanted to add that my
6 grandfather's -- I'm a grandson of the Indian schools.
7 My grandfather, Roman, original California Roll
8 No. 4089. 4083 all the way to 4089, those are all my
9 relatives and all my cousins. They went to the Sherman --
10 to the Sherman Institute in the '20s and '30s. I -- their
11 report card is there on file, and it says "Alberta
12 Blackwell." She got all straight A's. And it also says,
13 "Tribal Affiliation: Miwok."
14 We all went to the Indian schools. We voted in
15 the 1934 IRA not to accept the IRA, and after the Indian
16 schools, my grandfather went to World War II and Korea.
17 And after that happened, to find out that all of our
18 Indian reservations with the name of Miwok on it have
19 all -- they're all being raped. The name Miwok is being
20 taken off of our Indian reservations. And the Miwoks are
21 not being allowed in. You know, it's someone else, but

it's not the Miwoks who are controlling it, and the original names that were recognized by congress for a whole entire 100 years recorded on these records are just being wiped off, and, "Oh, this is the new name," and it

takes off the name Miwok, including this place and several other Miwok reservations.

I don't know if Congress approved it or the Bureau of Indian Affairs approved it. Usually when you want to change your name, you file something in the newspaper for seven consecutive weeks, and if -- and if nobody objects, you get to have that new name. But these reservations or these problems that's going on here, it's just a name change. They're slaughtering the name Miwok off of it. They're -- it's -- it's -- they're murdering our identity, and it's wrong, and it needs to be taken care of.

Again, you'll find that on the -- on the report cards, the tribal affiliations for the Sherman Institute. My grandfather, Joseph Blackwell, Alberta Blackwell, several other Blackwells that are on that list.

And one last thing, you know, even though we're talking about schools and education, education is

important for us to know, for us to know how to speak, to know how to address ourselves. If we don't have certain degrees, we won't let -- be left -- allowed to speak or allowed to put our name on certain documents.

I'd like the last thing. I want other people, lastly, to be able to speak. I'm not trying to take the mic for so long, but we have a university, an

Indian university, called D-Q University that is in Yolo County. Currently, it's continuously being raped from us being able to use it, to learn from it, to pray -- pray at it. And it's -- constantly, they've got goons at the doors. They broke down the doors months ago, and it's wrong, and it's our Indian land and it's on Miwok territory, and we need -- we need help on these matters of these name changes of these reservations that nobody approved these name changes. Definitely not the original owners, but the Miwoks.

And how is it that these name changes are going down, and these things that are going -- happening to us when we're in the center of the Gold Rush? We were hit the hardest because of this Gold Rush that happened in 1849 and 1848. We were -- we were really very brutally

16 removed from our lands, removed from our everything. And
17 there's -- really we should have more protection from our
18 names being slaughtered and raped, taken off the
19 reservations.
20 And I have proof of these names that are in the
21 system previous to the 1920s. I have offered you this
22 proof from vital records. I have one -- one piece of
23 document I'm going to have for you guys, and otherwise
24 I'll pass the mic to whoever you want.
25 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Sir, can you

1 please share your name?
2 CESAR CABALLERO: Cesar Caballero.
3 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you.
4 CESAR CABALLERO: From the Miwok Nation of the
5 Shingle Springs Indian Reservation.
6 ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.
7 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. We've
8 got a -- thank you. We've got a woman more forward in the
9 center right here who's raising her hand.
10 CESAR CABALLERO: This one right here?
11 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Yes.
12 CESAR CABALLERO: Here she is.

LORI LAIWA THOMAS: (Speaking indigenous language). Greetings, Secretary Haaland, Assistant Secretary Newland. Federated Indian -- Federated Indians from Graton Rancheria, thank you for having us. And all of you in the general public.

My name is Lori Laiwa Thomas, and I'm an enrolled member of the Hopland Band of Pomo Indians, where my mother is from, but I was raised on my father's tribal lands, the Point Arena side of the Manchester Rancheria in Mendocino County, both of which are north of here.

So my mother and father are pretty lucky in the sense that they attended rancheria day schools rather than residential schools hundreds of miles away from home and

family. In fact, my dad's family, most of them didn't go. My grandpa hid his kids down in the hills of Healdsburg, and they survived on acorns and wild pigs, and so they didn't get educated in that sense.

But my mom's people all went. My mom's mom is Genevieve Knight, and she had 14 siblings. All of them went to either Stewart or Sherman. They were split up at both schools in Nevada and down at Riverside.

So I came here specifically today to provide

testimony as a descendant of residential school survivors, and I came here specifically to acknowledge my great-aunt, and her name was Priscilla Edna Knight. She was born in 1911 in Hopland, and she lived to be 15 years old where she died at Sherman. But she wasn't buried there, and I always used to look for her name online and doing research, but I couldn't find it. And it's because she's buried at Yokayo. She's buried at Yokayo Indian Cemetery near Talmage, and I have no idea why, but they allowed her body to come back instead of being buried with the other 65 people who are in the cemetery down in Sherman.

This is hard. She's on the right. Her name is Priscilla. And her sister, Aunt Josie Hunt, is on her side. They're sisters. They were teenagers when they were at Sherman. So I'm thankful for the opportunity to share this story about my great-auntie. And I truly

believe that our shared experiences and stories allow healing to take place.

I'm thankful as her niece that I didn't have to attend residential schools and that I teach Native American studies at Santa Rosa Junior College and at Mendocino College, and so students come into my classroom

every semester, and so far I've had about 1600 students come through my classrooms, and they all learn about residential schools. They learn that they were places where there was a lot of violence. But they also learn that they were places that some people had good experiences. It all depends.

My dad wanted to go. Sometimes situations at home were not ideal like people think. Some people were raised by extended family members, and they had basic human needs met. But residential schools sometimes provided those basic human needs for families who had very large -- you know, a lot of kids to feed. They had their basic human needs met there, so it all depends. So that's what I came to tell you about today, so thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. We're going to -- can we come to this lady on this end. I'm trying to go back and forth across the room. I see you.

WANDA QUITIQUIT: Thank you. I think I need to

come up here, because I have something to show.

Thank you, Secretary Haaland and Assistant. My name is Wanda Quitiquit. I'm 76 years old this year, and

I say that because I'm here to talk about my mom, who was -- her name was Marie Geraldine Red Rose Boggs Quitiquit, and she grew up in the -- in Lake County in the lake area. At that time, there was no Robinson Rancheria established there.

She -- I think what -- you know, her story -- I really appreciate being here telling her story, because I never dreamed that I would be doing this ever in my entire life, and the world outside is that she -- that we had to live with with her and not talk about her experience as a -- as a child incarcerated at Stewart School.

I asked her one day, I says, "Mom, what happened to you? What did -- what did you think?" You know, that was the only time I ever, ever talked to her about it, asked her a question. And she was very, very quiet. And she says -- Well, what she remembered was her and her sister, Dorothy White Rose, they -- mom was about six, and she was about seven, and both parents -- both my grandparents were already dead, and they were being raised by relatives or anybody who would probably take them in, because that's what it was, it was a world of poverty, disease and alcoholism. And so there was no advocacy, and

that was -- that's a key word for us today, we needed advocacy within the tribe to stick up for our children. There was nobody there to advocate for them.

And I says, "Well, how did you go?" And she says they are -- two people came up in a big black car and just took them, literally kidnapped them. There was nobody to speak for them or save them or anything.

So they took them to Oakland and loaded them up. And I can imagine that there were other Indian kids -- they probably had it all planned out -- on that same train. And they went from Oakland to Sherman. That was the holding pin down there, and then to Stewart. And this was in the early '20s. Mom was born in 1918, and so she had to have been about six or seven years old.

And what is difficult for me and all my brothers and sisters is that we never did the research because my mom did not want to talk about it. So she was -- the few things that she did talk about were the good things, like some of the other people have talked about here, the other elder, that there were some fun times, and they learned things, because that was all about assimilation.

So my mom spent all her girlhood there at that -- probably at the worst time of our history, these boarding schools, like other people have -- have talked about. And she said that there -- there -- some of the

things that she described was one that -- she said the girls had to go, and they would take these -- take them out to these little old white lady houses and iron their linens, handkerchiefs and linens, and she thought that -- they all thought that was funny. You know, how ridiculous, ironing handkerchiefs and linens. You know so that -- but that was something she handed down to us, because we all had to learn at a very young age how to take care of ourselves and iron our own clothes. My brothers ironed their own clothes. And so those things that our -- you know, that she learned there that she passed on to us, you know, she -- that was her way of training us to be self-sufficient.

So I think -- you know, when I think back to the things that she has taught us, the cooking and the sewing and the ironing and punctuality. Punctuality was a big thing, because she said that, you know, this lining up to go get your meal, lining up to go play outside, lining up -- the constant marching, this -- you know, some of these survivors, didn't you have to do that? But that's what she remembered.

So one of our great artists, Jean LaMarr. I think she's Maidu. She painted a beautiful picture. It's a historic picture of the little girls, and she put her

25 own art to it. Well, see, it's framed. I took it off my

1 wall because -- because I have no record of my mom's
2 experience in that school. That I -- for the longest
3 time, ever since Jean did this picture, I like to think
4 that one of these little girls is my mother, because
5 there's no pictures. And that has been the profound thing
6 with me, because that -- these dresses that these little
7 girls -- you see we -- we grew up -- my mother had a --
8 her first husband, she had three kids, and then after
9 that, she met my father, who was a Filipino immigrant who
10 came through Lake County and he took her to San Joaquin
11 Valley where we all -- which is the Delta, the big
12 agricultural area of -- part of California, and that's
13 where we were all born.
14 My mom, her first husband, she had three kids.
15 One passed away, and then with my father, she had 13 more.
16 So there were 14 of us that survived, so I had 7 bothers
17 and there were 7 sisters, 14 of us. And now -- right now,
18 there's only 6 of us surviving.
19 So mom worked beside my father in the farm labor
20 field because she loved that. It was quiet and we all had
21 to work in the fields. And I noticed that she never -- we

wore jeans out in the fields, but she would never wear jeans. She wore these chino pants. I said, "Mom, how come you don't -- the jeans aren't -- you know, they don't keep the dust out," you know. And she says -- she says,

no, she could never wear the jean material because it reminded her of the boarding school clothes. That -- that little dress you see those little girls wearing was -- was a scratchy canvas-type material, and she could never wear jeans, because, you know, denim, denim material basically, because it was scratchy to her. It reminded her of that boarding school. So that was one thing that she shared with us, and, you know, doing all this slave work for the little white ladies as she explained it.

And she said the kids even stole alcohol, real rubbing alcohol, mixed it with water, and tried to drink it. And she says it was funny because everyone got sick. I mean, you know, they were just these little things that they had to do to entertain themselves or find some semblance of -- you know, of being incarcerated, you know, it just -- you know, that was all we got out of her.

And when she finally got out of school, she was about 15 or 16, well, that was when she met her first

husband. So right out of this -- this -- out of Stewart, she came to a place where there was disease, poverty, alcoholism. What kind of chance do these people -- you know, her generation, what kind of chance did they have coming back to the land where there was nothing but despair? So I was glad she met my dad, because he took her away from this -- this -- you know. And she -- she

liked it, and then she raised all of us.

And we did not get to attend any cultural events. The only thing we did was we came up to Lake County to visit once in a great while and we would see some of the old friends -- people that she knew, and that was good, you know, because we didn't get the culture at all. She would say a few Indian words that she remembered, and she -- she never made fry bread for us. We got it like once a week -- once a year when she felt like baking it, but we didn't have that constant Indian thing that, you know, it was kind of like a silent thing that was there, and here we all -- we all came back to the tribe, and we're all involved in it.

And it was like she had set us up without even talking about it. And -- and I -- and for her, I -- you

know, I just give -- you know, I just thank her for giving us that self-sufficiency that was developed in the Indian school against all odds; that she felt very successful having all these babies, and we all -- you know, semi-successful. None of us went to prison, but we all did our thing.

My sister took photography, and she did a picture of mom that we are so proud of that some people wanted copies of it. I said, "Don't you be selling my mom's picture or anything like that," because it was a

beautiful picture. And, again, I just feel that she and probably all those others of her generation, they are unsung heros.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

WANDA QUITIQUIT: They were silent unsung heros, and my mother was a hero and that she raised all of us. And my sister, Luwana. Some of you in the audience knew Luwana Quitiquit, and she was, like, you know, everywhere doing everything. Great artist, great tribal leader and all this stuff, you know. Well, Luwana was one of the first occupiers at Alcatraz, and she -- she was there the whole time, the whole two years.

And when she got there, she found this big ledger, these old hard-bound ledger county books. Well, she used that as a sign-in book for Alcatraz, so everybody who came and visited Alcatraz, she got them to sign the book. So there's celebrities in it. There's -- there's probably your relatives in that book who signed it if they came to Alcatraz.

Well, my mom, last year or two years ago, they celebrated the 50 year of Alcatraz, and she -- she wrote something in that book. And here was a woman with no more than an eighth grade education had she not gone to the school, but it was eighth grade there. That was her only education. But she loved to read and she loved to write.

Well, this is what she wrote in the book, "We are about to leave for Alcatraz, maybe for the last time, to this beautiful little island which means a little something which no one will ever understand my feelings."

Well, that was published on the 50th year up in the L.A. Times. Some columnist took her quote, her writing, and -- and published it in the L.A. Times to celebrate the 50th year of Alcatraz, and I'm so proud of my mom to have done that. Who would have thought that

this little Pomo woman who suffered in this school with nothing to end up in the L.A. Times? How many of you have been in the L.A. Times?

And so that's why I'm so proud. And I do, whenever there's an Alcatraz issue coming up, you know, this is what I read now, because she's -- this is the legacy. This is the historical account of Alcatraz that she put out there, and nobody else has gotten this -- has -- has done this. And we didn't know it until -- and this is -- this the -- well, truthful now because of a great tribal leader named Marshall McKay.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

WANDA QUITIQUIT: Who purchased that book and is now housed in the Gene Autry Museum. And you can Google the Gene Autry Museum, and you can go to this book, and you might even find a relative in here 50 years ago who

went to Alcatraz. Thank you very much.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. This beautiful photo.

Okay. I know we have a gentleman over here who wished to speak. We're going to go to him. And then

we're going to take a short break. Those of you who've been waiting, I see you. We're going to try to move around the room and hear from folks today. We're going to take a short break after the next speaker. Yes.

JIMMY JACKSON: Thank you for letting me speak for this gentleman. He requested I introduce him. To my right is [inaudible] Campo, Pomo. And the gentleman on the far right is Bruce Gali from Pit River. I've known them for the better part of my life when I lived -- when I lived in California here. And my name is Jimmy Jackson, and I am Dene from [inaudible]. Thank you for listening to me. Thank you, Secretary Haaland.

MALE SPEAKER: Thank you, Jimmy. First of all, I want to thank the Creator for giving us a beautiful day to be out here with all our indigenous people. It's a great honor to be with you, Greg Sarris. Thank you for hosting this.

Madam Secretary, welcome to California. Listen to what we have to say about many, many issues that we

face as indigenous people.

I heard a lot of people speak today and I listened to what they had to say about many, many issues,

Alcatraz, Wounded Knee 1973, the Longest Walk in 1978. Pay attention. There was 11 bills pending in Congress against indigenous people. One of the bills I'll repeat, H.R. 9054 written by Cunningham out the state of Washington. Ask the President of the United States, Jimmy Carter, Walter Mondale, and Congress to advocate and terminate all Native American treaties. What if that would occur? What if them bills would have passed?

Alan Cranston, Senator of California, came out and said, "Them bills not pass." On that walk, we met many, many people across this nation, across this nation. Muhammad Ali came out and supported us. Dick Gregory. B.B. King. Stevie Wonder. Max Gail. Marlon Brando. And the list goes on. The list goes on. If them bills would have passed, what would happen?

And there was another bill called H.R. 9051, written by Abetza [phonetic] out of the state of Washington. Water bill. That bill stated that indigenous people will be rationing water, but the non-Native Americans can have all the water they want. So these are some of the stories.

But I honor Greg and Madam Secretary for coming

today to listen to our issues. I come to speak about the boarding schools. I will tell you about the boarding schools. It was a hate crime to do our people like that, to come and a torture our men, women and children. What happened? The truth must be told. The truth must be told on what happened to our women and our little boys.

When they went to bed at night, they were crying and sleeping and wanted their mother and father to come and hold them and kiss them. There were no -- they were not there to support their babies.

I have a picture, and I hope Bryan and Cesar, there's a picture of a little boy. I don't know his name. If you can walk around and show that picture of that little boy, he was taken and put in a boarding school. They dressed him up in military uniform. They cut his hair. They gave him a name. I don't know what his name was, his Indian people, but they named him Joe.

Joe, they put a string around his neck for the cardboard and told him to pick a name off that blackboard. They beat him and told him to pick that name. His name was Joe, and I hope Bryan and guys are shown that picture of that little boy in his uniform. This is what they did to him. It's very sad what happened and what they did to my mother. Creator, help me today to tell the truth about what happened to my mother and all the little Indian kids

that went to these boarding schools. What happened? The truth must be told.

My mother, Miwok, born on the Tuolumne Indian Reservation. They came and took my mother. Her name was [Inaudible] in Miwok language meant fast runner. 500 miles away from the Miwok Reservation in Tuolumne, California. 500 miles to Stewart, Nevada, where she couldn't run home, because she didn't know her way to get home. Five years old, hiding behind her mother and said, "Don't let them take me, Mom. Don't let them take me."

She went to boarding school, and what did they do to my mother? What did they do to the rest of the children, the little Indian children that was there? What did they do to them? They took them to the woods and they abused them. They abused them, sexually abused them. What happened to the children when the pastor and the priest raped our little girls?

Creator, tell the truth. Some of the girls committed suicide, because they didn't want them pastors' babies. They buried them there. Now our kids suffer there at the boarding school. My mother suffered, and it affects us today.

I heard people speak about drugs and alcohol. People have come to me, say, "Why you indigenous are

25 alcoholics?" I'm not an alcoholic, and all Native

1 American people in this country are not alcoholics or drug
2 addicts. And I know that. My journey has been across
3 this country. I've been fighting for our indigenous
4 people for over 60 years. In the American Indian Movement
5 with Dennis Banks. He organized that in 1969, and we
6 faced many, many issues across this country.
7 But getting back to the boarding schools. The
8 boarding schools was a hate place for our indigenous
9 people. They tortured our people. The truth must be told
10 here.
11 How many people in this room had a parent or a
12 grandma that went to the boarding school?
13 UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER: [Inaudible].
14 MALE SPEAKER: Thank you. I heard grandma speak
15 today.
16 UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER: [Inaudible].
17 MALE SPEAKER: Yeah. That's fine.
18 UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER: [Inaudible] hear about
19 that.
20 MALE SPEAKER: It changed. It changed. It
21 changed, but --

UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER: It's been years ago.

MALE SPEAKER: Yeah, it changed though.

UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER: [Inaudible].

MALE SPEAKER: Yeah. Okay. That's fine. But

we're talking about the early days of the boarding schools. What happened? I'm 81 years old, and I'm delivering this message.

UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER: I'm 90.

MALE SPEAKER: He's 90. He's ahead of me. She's 95. She's my grandma. And we -- yeah. We have respect. We have respect for the elders. My job as a spiritual warrior is to protect the elders.

UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER: Right here.

MALE SPEAKER: Thank you.

UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER: Right.

MALE SPEAKER: Grandpa.

UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER: [Inaudible].

MALE SPEAKER: Thank you, sir. Grandma. Doctor. And I listen to all their stories. Like Caleen says, fighting for her territory, for the salmon people. I listen to Jim Brown, my friend, fight for his people, fighting. Tell you something, we're not fighting. We're

fighting. Because we don't have weapons of mass destruction. Other countries have weapons of destruction, but we don't have weapons of mass destruction. You know what we have? We have our medicine, our prayers, our cedar, our sweetgrass, and we have our drums. And we got something more powerful than their weapons of mass destruction, and that's the Creator.

It's up to you, as indigenous people, and non-native Americans who are suffered and taking their rights away from them. When they came from you in the morning and take your civil rights, your human rights, your gay rights, your religious rights, what are you going to do when they come for you in the morning?

Because they're coming for us. They want our land. There is 13,000 remains of our ancestors locked up in UC Berkeley. Why are any of them locked up? We want them to go back into Mother Earth where they belong. They never had a Native America ceremony. so my question to you, as indigenous people, you have a responsibility and a duty to keep fighting for what you believe in as indigenous people. My journey is never over until the Creator say, "The end of the road for you wounded is

coming." You can't stop time.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. Thank you, sir.

MALE SPEAKER: Thank you.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you.

MALE SPEAKER: Thank you Greg Sarris. Thank you, Secretary Haaland, and thank you for listening to our stories, and I got other stories. Thank my friend Bruce Gali from the Pit River, and thank you, Creator, for another beautiful day on this Earth. We are all Earth

people, and we all bleed the same color, red. (Speaking indigenous language.)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: We're going to take a short break now. Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Hello. Can everybody please take your seats. We're going to go for a little bit longer this afternoon. We're going to do our best to hear from as many folks as we can. I will apologize up front that we may not be able to get to

everybody who wants to speak today, and I apologize. Those of you who've had your hands raised for several sessions now, I see you. We're going to try to get to you.

A couple housekeeping things as we come back. We have mic runners and we have a great sound system here. I would ask that when you're called upon to give your remarks, we can hear you just fine where you're at. We -- we don't want to have folks coming up to the front of the room and -- and crowding. We have an incredible security team who works for the Department of the Interior. We want to make sure that we're helping them do their jobs, and so we can hear you just fine where you're

at. When you're called upon, please stay there, give your remarks.

Because we're coming toward the end, and we're going to try to hear from as many people as possible, I want to reiterate a couple of things. First, we want to prioritize people who are sharing their stories about their experience in boarding school and their relatives. I know many of you wish to speak about a number of things, and I know that they're all connected. We understand that

federal Indian law and policy is all connected. We're trying to reserve this space for the folks who want to tell the stories about themselves and their family members.

Also, because we want to hear from as many folks as possible with the time that we have left, if folks are deviating from the topic, I may be a little more quick to interject. It's not out of disrespect to you. I'm trying to make sure we can hear from as many people as possible.

So -- Okay. Thank you. So we'll go back. We have -- I think we have our first two folks identified, correct? Great. Thank you.

PETER NELSON: (Speaking indigenous language). Hello. I'm Peter Nelson. Thank you for letting me speak today. Thank you, Greg and Tribal Council for hosting the event, as well as Secretary Haaland.

So I did not attend boarding school, and the information that I have about boarding schools comes to me through my great-great uncle, my grandpa's uncle, who experienced the impacts of the boarding school in our community at the time that he was living at Moss Bay in the 1920s and '30s in his very early life, as well as his

mother, my great -- great-great-grandmother, who did go to boarding school.

So at that time, status mattered in terms of colonial policies on who was considered Indian. A fourth blood meant that you were singled out to go to boarding school versus people that didn't have a fourth blood were not. And that also mattered in terms of who received commodities as well in these communities.

And so that was one thing that he told me about. As well as, you know -- you know, my great-great grandmother who went to Sherman Indian School, and we don't know a lot about her experiences there. She did not talk with him about that too much. Through historical research, I have looked at some of the records there at Sherman, and one of the positive things was that she was a great baker, and she made doughnuts and was commended for her doughnut making.

One of the sad things about that, you know, her experience in boarding school, like many who were taken

away from our community, was that in 1906, my great-grandmother was born, her daughter, and she left for the boarding school in 1907, so she was taken away from

her one-year-old child so she can attend boarding school at Sherman.

Two years later, she didn't finish her whole schooling there, but my three greats-grandmother, her mother, sent a letter to the director of Sherman requesting that she come back because she was sick, and she couldn't take care of the two kids. One was a relative, and then my great-great-grandmother's daughter. And so the director sent a letter back saying that she was free to go, which I think is pretty lucky, but they would not pay the fare that my three greats-grandmother requested, because they had no money to get her back, pay for the transportation.

Again, I have no idea how she got back to our community. You know, you might be able to guess those things of hitchhiking or however she managed to do it. I think that speaks to her resilience to getting back to her family to raise her child, but that's -- that's what we know about those experiences in my family with the boarding school and the -- you know, another thing that my great-great uncle told me was that many of the families were presented with, you know, the, you know, agents that

came to take the children to boarding school in Tomales Bay, many of the families, as we heard from other people, were hiding their children from having to be taken away from -- from those families. So thank you (speaking indigenous language).

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you very much. Yes. Go ahead, this gentleman over here.

PAUL STEWARD: Thank you very much. My name is Paul Steward. I'm from the Elem Indian Colony. This is my sister Donna Steward. This is my father Richard Steward. We're from the Elem Indian Colony. My grandmother was Priscilla Brown Smith. She and her older brother, Calvin Brown, were taken to Stewart Indian School in the late '30s. It seemed there must have been a sweep at that time in this part of California.

They never told us much about it, but they didn't like it. It was a very negative and dark experience. So very shortly after, maybe only a few months, they escaped and hitchhiked all the way back to Sulphur Bank Rancheria Elem from -- from Carson City and never returned.

My experience had been my grandmother never got an education, but she encouraged my dad to seek education. Today, my sister and I were two of the first tribal

members of the Elem to ever receive college degrees. My sister was the first to get bachelor's degree. I was the first to ever receive a master's degree from the Elem Indian Colony.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

PAUL STEWARD: But the hope and vision today is that our future generations we can find a balance and a peace between carrying our cultural traditions and seeking higher education and being part of the American system and not looking at it as a negative but find a balance between the two. I want to use my knowledge and skills to support my culture, and I want the government to respect that and support all of us together, both our culture and our knowledge equally. (Speaking indigenous language).

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. So go to this woman in the second, and then the gentleman in the back after.

YANA ROSS: Good afternoon. Thank you to everyone who helped make this gathering possible, and thank you Madam Secretary Haaland and Assistant Secretary Newland for coming to listen to us and all the others on your historic journey.

My name is Yana Ross, and I grew up on the

historic Graton Rancheria, as did my mother,

Gloria Armstrong, who could not make it today, and my sister, Lorelle Ross, our honorable vice chair.

My grandmother on my mother's side was Ramona Cordova, and her sisters Florine and Renee were Dry Creek Pomo and Mishewal-Wappo from the northern end of our county, and for a time, they lived on a ranch in Freestone about 15 miles from here towards the coast.

One day, agents came to their home and they took the three girls. While their littlest sister, Vernice, stayed hidden, somehow the child hunters from Sherman knew where to look, even down the old dirt road past the big rock, and somehow Auntie Vernie knew where to hide. This kidnapping changed our family forever.

I can only share with you a glimpse into the pain and sorrow of such a profound familial loss resulting from this act of violence, but I can tell you firsthand of the depravation and the bereavement they experienced have had a lasting legacy for their generation to my mom's and to mine.

The trauma of these childhood abductions reverberate in our communities to this day as depression,

alcoholism, addiction, poverty and other cycles of despair and abuse that result in premature death and significantly poor health. This forced assimilation ruined our cultural continuity and damaged our indigenous identity and their

sense of self, making some prone to believe the prevailing religious dogma, instead of living out their birthright as whole individuals with an intact family unit and sovereign tribal community.

And now as we continue to live our lives in an act of survival and resilience, attempting to heal from this severed past, what we also experience is lateral oppression, where we tear each other down as Indian people, and I directly correlate this to the massive destruction of our native life ways. As a result, our families and tribes were torn apart.

Let us contemplate and acknowledge how such acts of colonialism and white supremacy have and continue to affect us, and may we never forget the innocence and perseverance of the old-timers who survived and came before us, that we might be here today grateful for their existence and their sacrifice. Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. Yes. Thank you, sir. I know you've been waiting as well.

Thank you, ma'am.

MALE SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Kenneth [inaudible]. I'm the tribal chairman of --

UNKNOWN FEMALE SPEAKER: We can't hear you.

MALE SPEAKER: I know. I'm here to talk about the boarding schools. Within our tribe, we had 20 to 35 members that we know of that attended Sherwood -- Sherman and then the one in Nevada, Carson City, Stewart.

I was able to go down to Riverside and pull up the paperwork on our members, over a thousand documents inter -- littered between the families, trying to adopt some of the children out, showing the probation, like if somebody said earlier that, pretty much everybody was on probation with the county. Showing the county, the state and the Feds how they were removing our children, you know, removing from the parents.

My mother talked about Stewart. She ran away several times. She got beat, they called it the red line, and, you know, it was very hard for me to see my mother, a

beautiful lady who did so much for her community, be torn. You know, when I sat there and listened to her talk, it's just like, I'm a grown man, it just made me cry, because she was a very strong lady. She -- she was a mover and shaker -- I don't know how to say it, but, you know, to see somebody that gave to her community, her tribal organization, working with everybody, our land allotments, our 72 judgments, and everything she tried to do to help us. I'm not going to go into this recognition or 83 process or Public Law 280, I just want to know, some

had it good, some had it bad, but we do know what the whole system was set for, it was to destroy our children, our -- you know, our parents, take away their landholding, take away their judgments.

You know, I get a little angry talking because I'm trying to figure out where this anger comes from, and I know it comes from her being in school, uncle being in school, aunties being in boarding schools, so there's a lot of anger still.

I'm trying to work with the State of California with the Truth & Healing Council. We're trying to, you know, work this out, but there's so many things that we,

unfairly recognized non-service tribes, do not have, you know. They want to apologize for the situation, but you can't. Apologies just don't work.

So I just wanted to let you know that I have documentation showing what it was in the village, you know, and then what it was in boarding school. I also have the letters that were written between the state of California, boarding school experiences, and such, and I just want to say thank you for letting me talk. Thank you very much.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. We can take those documents, sir, as well. I think we've got --

our team over here can take it.

I know the gentleman in the red hat has been waiting, so we can come to you, and then up here in the front.

LAWRENCE HARLEN: All right. Thank you. So, yeah, like the gentleman said, it makes me angry, so I'm going to try my best to hold my emotions together, but on base. So my name is Lawrence Harlen. I'm a council member from the Gidutikad Band of Northern Paiute from

Fort Bidwell Indian Reservation.

So to be brief, I did cross out some paragraphs. I wrote this here. I really just want to speak up for my dad and my grandpa. They're both deceased, and they didn't get the chance to speak about their experience. They wouldn't. They wouldn't. They wouldn't do it anyways. They didn't trust the BIA. So my grandpa died in the '70s. I never met him. My dad just died three years ago, and he didn't talk about it.

But -- so let me just go, so my name, Harlen, that's a settler name for my father who's Omaha, Nebraska. I'm an enrolled member, like I said, Northern Paiute. My Paiute mother and Omaha father met during the occupation of Alcatraz, so there's a lot of inter-generational trauma there.

But my father, he hated -- he hated white folks

all his life until he died. And I attribute that to his time at Indian boarding schools run by the Catholic church. He wasn't affectionate. He wasn't a kind man. But I'm grateful he showed me how to work with my hands, with a wrench, with a hammer. And, like I said, he wasn't a kind person, he had little patience and was quick --

quick to curse.

But he hated the Indian boarding schools. He did mention he hated how the Indian boarding schools prevented him from speaking Omaha, and I hate that too. I only know my Omaha name, (speaking indigenous language), means fast force, and that's dad. I knew two words from my father's people. Imagine if Governor Newsom only knew two words of Italian. So yeah, there's a lot of trauma from the Indian Boarding School experience. Look at my body. I'm shaking. I've -- I've done public speaking, but whenever I talk about my culture, I cry.

So my mother, Paiute. Numu. Gidutikad. She didn't go to Indian Boarding School, but her dad did -- her dad did, my grandfather. His name was Ninago [phonetic], and his classmates -- I used to be proud of this, but it sounds like he's not the only one, but his classmates, they tell me they called him the runaway king. So I'm grateful for learning he wasn't the only one that ran away several times.

He hated the schools. He went to at least three: Fort Bidwell, Stewart and Sherman. So I'm learning a lot from being here. It's a healing process.

And I didn't even know -- like I was surprised that I heard Fort Bidwell twice. Being from the Bay Area -- or living in the Bay Area now, no one's heard of Fort Bidwell, but now I've found some folks.

So Fort Bidwell, Paiute Indian Reservation, is located on what used to be United States military fort, a military fort to kill, murder, rape and terrorize my Paiute, Feather River, Klamath and Modoc relatives on behalf of and in collaboration with the United States citizens/United States settlers, so, yeah, there's a lot of trauma in my community.

A lot of trauma, a lot of tears, and that's why I like -- Secretary Haaland, I like the tears, when I saw you tear up on C-SPAN when you accepted the nomination, because I saw my mother. She couldn't speak without tears. I saw my sister. I saw myself. I cry often, and I cry in public, because it's hard being an Indian.

Only one more page. So after the Modoc Indian War in the early 1870s, the U.S. Army closed Fort Bidwell, and a boarding school was established at the fort. Nobody knows this history. They don't know about the war or the boarding school. My daughter went to a college prep high

school in Silicon Valley. Every November, like clockwork, I'm invited to talk to a class or a club at the high school, and I ask them. I asked if they've heard about the Modoc Indian War. I've asked if they heard about Fort Bidwell Indian Boarding School. It's in their state. I get blank stares from the teachers/from the students. I asked Governor Newsom to come visit us. Nothing happened. Nobody cares about us. Nobody cares about our history.

My point is, and with all due respect, Secretary, how can you come to California on an Indian boarding school healing tour without coming to Fort Bidwell? It's not your fault. I know we were defeated by the U.S. Army and nearly wiped off the map by the BIA, wiped -- wiped away by alcoholism. Wiped away by incarceration. Wiped away by diabetes. Wiped away by tribal tannin. Wiped away because we are too remote to attract gamblers and build a casino. It's not your fault. It's not your fault you don't know about us, but that's why I'm here. So please, write down in your report, Gidutikad, groundhog eaters, Numu, Paiute.

So if you come to Fort Bidwell you'll see that we rightfully demolished the Indian Boarding School buildings.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

LAWRENCE HARLEN: Unfortunately, the trauma

remains, and if you're a spiritual person, you know the horror's still there. Inter-generational trauma is real. My nephew died of suicide ten years ago. My other cousin was murdered by his own son on the Klamath Chiloquin reservation after a blackout binge night of drinking, so, yeah, I have a trauma.

But us Numu -- us Paiutes, we move forward. We are survivors. The great basin is where the oldest human remains in the lower 48 have been unearthed, so we've been here a while, and we know how to survive. We are beautiful, and we are dark skinned.

I'm doing okay, if I don't talk about boarding schools. I'm -- I'm happy to be alive. My only child is studying engineering science. Right now she just finished her second year at an Ivy League college, so I don't know if there's any hip hop fans, but like Notorious B.I.G. said, this is dedicated to Indian boarding school teacher, headmaster who abused my grandfather and my dad. Now my daughter has the final -- the final word. So not all is bleak.

It's not easy, in fact it's painful, so my own -- my request is one of these days, Secretary Haaland, Assistant Secretary Newland, come to Fort Bidwell. Help us with your presence. Help us with your prayers. And

it's the 21st Century, help us with your DOE money.

There's no spa, no hotel, no A/C in the tribal building, but, like I said, there's trauma to be processed.

Thank you, Secretary, for coming to the coast, and I wish you one day you'll make your visit up to Fort Bidwell Indian Reservation. Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Lawrence, thank you for sharing about your grandfather and your father and your daughter and wish her a great success at her school. Thank you.

Looking for our mic runners to see if they've found any -- identified anyone. We'll come to this gentleman here in the front.

STERLING WRIGHT: Yes. Thank you, Secretary. My name is Sterling Wright. And I am Pomo. My reservation is Sherwood Valley Rancheria. We're known as Band of Pomo Indians there. My father is Clarence Wright, he was from Pinoleville, and his father was Alan Wright, and he came from Coyote Valley.

I'm here today to share my personal experiences that I had at Sherman Indian Institute, which is no longer

named that. It, in fact, got changed in 1972.

I stand before you a humbled warrior because I spent 14 years in the military. I'm a decorated vet and very proud to serve as my uncles and my father before me.

I want to share that my experience there was very, very good. I was on the wrong road. I was going in the wrong direction. My teachers helped straighten me out, loved more [inaudible]. It was a really different time from what I'm hearing here. But I want to share with you it's not all that way. Not all.

My family -- my aunt -- my grandma, was Lorraine Lockhart. My auntie gram was Elsie Allen, basket weaver, so I'm a very proud man. Like I said, I stand before you to tell you that I am very proud. I'm a grandfather. I have 11 grandchildren, one grandson, great-grandson. I just wanted to let you know that I thank you for the education that I got and got to serve my country. Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Okay. And here in the front.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Hello. I just want to thank

the Creator today for allowing us to come here to our lands. And every time I come into new areas, I ask permission, so I ask permission for my family to come. And I honor the Graton Rancheria, you folks coming out and taking time and there's -- we've got a lot of time to keep going.

I'm the next generation. My mother is Dr. Julia

Parker. I want to follow up on her story about her growing up. She was in a house with her little brothers and sisters I believe out in Kashaya. They were in the house. She was cooking a soup for -- for her brothers and sisters because they were hungry. Where were the parents? Where was their mom and dad? Where did they go? Who was watching them? All these questions. And she was stirring this soup to keep them going.

One day, somebody saw and -- these kids in the house. Who's these kids? The non-Indian people came in. The county came in and they took them. They kidnapped them. Nobody knew where they went, what happened to their house, what happened to their land, what happened to their cars, what happened to their rights. They didn't know.

My mom said she remembers the house being full

of dirty clothes. To this day, she doesn't like dirty clothes, so she's always washing. But they went with the -- to a foster home. They became wards of the court. The court came in and they said, "These kids, they've got to go over here. They've got to go over there." They didn't know where to go.

And then there were these wonderful women, nurses, said, "I want those five little Indian kids. They're coming with me." So they went with those nurses. They lived here in Santa Rosa. They lived on Parker Hill

Road, which she didn't know she was going to be a Parker. She remembers where that is. We drive up there. Her mother's buried up in the cemetery there. But, you know, where did -- where did the parents go? Nobody -- nobody seeked them out.

So she was sent to the Indian school in Stewart, Nevada. Stayed there with her brothers, and sisters all followed. And she says that it was good. They, you know, learned how to make a bed. If you didn't learn how to make a bed right or a quarter bounced off it, you were put in the dorm to darn socks with a light bulb. Never heard of that before.

So she did that. All these things. The nurses would come in there. The matrons would come in. They would see if they dusted their windows right. If they didn't, then they were sent out. They said, "No singing. No Indian songs. No basket weaving. No words. Nothing. You can't do this. All you're going to be is -- is servants, clean, cook." There was no education of saying go on to be -- go to high school. Go to -- go to college. Be a lawyer. Be a doctor. Be something, a bug. It was just, be non-Indian. They wanted you to be non-Indian people.

So after a while, they left the school, became friends with my -- my dad's people in Yosemite National

Park. My dad is a full-blooded Yosemite Indian. He was last of the chief in Yosemite. She followed him into Yosemite and met all the relatives in the last Indian village that we lived in. Today it's called Wahhoga, and we -- that's where I grew up. I learned and I watched my Great-Grandma Lucy make baskets.

She started making baskets, learning from the ladies in the east side: Minnie Carrion, Carrie Bethel, and these famous, prominent basket makers, and everybody

thought everybody was crazy, they're making baskets. So went on and then she learned -- she had her knowledge, came back home, got a job in Yosemite National Park, stayed there for 55 years for the Park Service. My Uncle Bill was a Park Service employee, retired out of there. They went on and had their careers.

But, you know, where did they come from? Where did you come from, Mom? She didn't know that one day Greg Sarris and Aunt Mabel McKay and Essie Parish came to Yosemite. They heard about a Pomo woman being in Yosemite, and that was my mother, Julia Parker. They came to our house, Essie and Mabel. I remember them. I was just a little kid. And they said, "Julia." Essie said, "You're our family. We found you."

So that's the story how she knew where she came from and will never forget that. Aunt Mabel and Essie and

Greg, who's only about 14, with the ladies, and from then on, she established a lot of high awards. Two doctorates. Fresno State and the California Indian Arts College in San Francisco, honorary doctorate. Several books, lots of movies. She gave a queen -- a basket to Queen Elizabeth who visited Yosemite. Sits in England somewhere.

She gave a basket to Norway. Baskets over there -- all over the world in private collections. And that was the skill that I -- I got to learn from my mom when I was little growing up in Yosemite. I got to learn how to make baskets. And the things we did there, we didn't -- you know, we went to college, but the things in Yosemite we did was we went rock climbing, we went hiking. We went running. I used to run up El Capitan, Half Dome. That's what we did for our education.

And it really today, you know my family are athletes. My son Lonnie is a rock climber and a snowboarder. We're all real athletes. So our people, we need to get back in shape. We need to start walking, hiking and start running, because that's where it begins, with your body and your mind, that you get healthy again.

You know, education, yes, but, you know, we go outside, look around. Look around outside. We're all like this, tunnel vision. Look up at the sky. Look everywhere. At one time there was no buildings here. It

was all our Indian land here.

So those are the things that I offer, the stories my mom told me, and I'm very grateful because she

told me all -- I asked her, "What happened, Mom?" And then she told me everything. So today I'm just really happy to be here, and everybody in the room here, I love everybody's stories. It's just really overwhelming, but, you know what, we've got to go on. We've got to go on what we have right now, because we're another generation. And I'd love to make a basket with my Grandma Lucy, but I'm in another generation, so I'm -- moving forth, and we just try to stay healthy and just, you know, stop, look and listen, as my mom always told me.

So that's what we need to do: Listen to each other. I mean, you know, a lot of times my sons -- well, I have five kids, four boys and a daughter. My one son goes, "Mom, you're not listening." Like, "Oh, yeah, you're right."

But I thank you today for being here in California. I will never move out of California because this is my indigenous land. I don't care how expensive it is, but I -- my skill is baskets, and I work at Mammoth Mountain, I'm a ski instructor, so come take a ski lesson with me and have fun, but help, please help your mind, keep your mind, then you can focus on everything,

and you just do that. Look around. Look everywhere. When we go out today, look at the sky. Look at the sun. We're so lucky to be here. Thank you. Aho.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you very much.

We've got a -- we've got a gentleman back here, and seeing also one, two, three other hands.

DENNIE SCHULTHEIS: I had a few questions to pose. You don't have to answer them, but with all these sensitive traumatic issues, who's going to own it? How can it be accessed? One brother was saying it should be the younger generation. I hope that information is gotten by these folks who are sharing these stories, so -- and no one gets their Ph.D. off of tapping into this information, that kind of deal, right? Prostituting it essentially. But that would be one thing.

And after about 150 years of boarding school, how come it's not like a boarding school remembrance day, a national one or something like that or wear whatever color to remember. Why can't that be put forward, because then a larger over-culture could see that. "Oh, why are they wearing orange that day?"

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Sir, can you share your name with us?

DENNIE SCHULTHEIS: Oh. Bubba. No, it's not Bubba. It's Danny Schultheis. I'm Wintu, Puyallup, Chinook. I'm a family physician. When I became a physician, I was the sixth California Indian physician. Our first California Indian physician is still in practice, that's how short we've been in this kind of medicine.

But I want to share a story about my grandma and grandpa. That's where it goes back, as far back as we trace. My Auntie Toots went to Sherman and we -- she was going to come live with us, and we asked her about that. "Why you want to know about that?" She didn't want to share any of that.

And when they spoke Indian, she said they -- of course she would run outside. She sat behind the big rock and would hear them talk Indian and Wintu, and we would talk about that, but she never shared the boarding school experience.

Now gramps grew up in Slate Creek in La Moine. He lost his -- lopped off his arm in a box factory in his teenage years, and his grandma who was raising him said, "You're going to Auburn to go to high school with your auntie." The reason why there probably was not boarding school trappers there is because of the mountainous area.

25 They didn't go probably up that far on Slate Creek.

1 But grams, she grew up in Quinault Reservation
2 and they found her. They sent her to Chemawa, and she was
3 able to survive that. And after a couple years, she ran
4 away. It was never talked about in our family that much,
5 but my uncles, I got two uncles and my mom, they grew up
6 on Quinault Reservation.
7 First uncle was by a different dad, and by the
8 time that generation came about, the grandparents, a lot
9 of that was taking them from them, their connection to
10 culture and things like that. It was beaten out of them,
11 taken and stolen.
12 So when grams went to Chemawa, the first thing
13 they said they had -- she had hair down to about
14 mid-calf/mid-thigh. First thing, of course, was cut the
15 hair off. And after that two years, she ran away, she ran
16 as far on the rez she could in Quinault in Queets, and
17 that's where grandpa had met her.
18 But her first child by an Indian man, she had
19 learned or been stripped of or beaten of that connection
20 to being Indian. She didn't want to identify him,
21 Uncle Rod, as Indian. Didn't enroll him in Quinault or

try to identify his dad in the birth certificate.

My grandpa, being Wintu, was a different mindset, so he had us on a California judgment roll. But grams would not, uncle said, would not speak Indian or not

dance Indian after that experience. And she never spoke Indian. But when she got to drinking, right, she said, "You can't lie to me. I'm your" -- and she said grandma in that language. "I know you didn't. You can't lie to me," all four-foot-two of her pointing up to me.

But it would slip sometimes that she'd speak that. But it was only when the drinking. What she was hiding, we never knew. We never asked. We were too young to ask anything like that.

But I apologize because I've never publicly mentioned this, but I think it's important, that moms was -- she was able to dream things, and it scared her, but that lack of connection to a spiritual culture that people are talking about, untraditional health and Indian Health Service. Fairfield County, Siskiyou County, about spiritual connection to land. All these people about connecting back to culture and spirit.

So mom was a dreamer, and it scared her, so she

went to psychiatry more than once, more than twice, where they gave her pills and they gave her different medicines, and she shortened her life at age 38 because there was no provider there that could make that connection, so the trauma that she had experienced, it opened her eyes up to what dreaming meant.

So can I give the mic to my mother's mom?

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

MELODY WILLIAMS: (Speaking indigenous language). So my name is Melody Williams. I'm from Sherwood Valley Pomo, and also from Yokayo.

So my father and his twin brother were sent to boarding school, and they were sent to Chemawa. They never talked about it, but they both became alcoholics, and my father left my family when I was four years old, and I didn't reconnect with him until later in life, so I never knew about his experience at boarding school.

But I was close to his sisters, and one sister, who now is still alive, she's 90, she told about what happened to them. So when she was seven, so this was -- she was seven years old in 1941, and they -- her parents -- or her father received bus tickets. So there

were four girls, and they were going to -- they sent bus tickets and they sent them clothes. She said they were used clothes, because I asked her if they were uniforms. She said no, they were just used clothes like now what you would get from a thrift store. And so they were required to get on a -- put those clothes on and get on a bus and go to Chemawa.

So the day that -- this is in Ukiah. So they went to the bus stop. Her dad drove them to the bus stop with their mother. And so when he got out of the car, the

mother -- my grandmother -- told them to lock all the doors, so they did. And so my grandfather was telling them to open the door, but she wouldn't do it, and then the bus drove away. And so then she told her daughters open the door. So they didn't go. And so they drove back home, and she said her dad had a smile on his face the whole way home. So they were fortunate to not have to go to boarding school.

But even so, growing up in Ukiah in 1941, she remembers that on the stores and restaurants there, there were signs that said, "No dogs. No Indians." And so there are a lot of places that they couldn't go at that

time.

But what's so interesting, too, about this story is that they were from Yokayo, and Yokayo is purchased by them, and it's still in fee. They're not federally recognized, and yet they paid taxes for 139 years. So what's interesting is that they would be -- those natives would be required to go to boarding school when they weren't even, you know, really -- they were a community, and at the time -- I mean, you know, I just -- I don't know where the federal government was going to take the children from, but she did say that at the entrance to the land, there was a, I don't know, she didn't know what to call him, but there was a man -- or a man that would stay

there, and then in order for them to go off the land, they would have to tell them where they were going.

So all of this was happening in Ukiah. If you don't know, it's only about an hour north of here on Highway 101, so I -- anyway, that's my story.

I think that if there were any repercussions from my -- my father going to boarding school is that, you know, they -- they didn't talk about it, they became alcoholics. And if that's, you know, the result of that,

then I think that happened to a lot of people, so thank you for listening.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you very much. I see up -- okay. You've got somebody.

JONATHAN KUNKEL: (Speaking indigenous language). Hello. My name is Jonathan Kunkel. I am Hiaki-Yoeme, also known as Yaqui. I also have California Mission Indian ancestry from Southern California to Baja, California. I also have learned this past winter that I am Tiwa Pueblo from Senecu Pueblo from my grandmother's father, and I also have [inaudible] ancestry.

I'm here on behalf of my family from Southern California. My grandma's first cousins were taken forceably to Sherman Indian Boarding School, and my great-grandmother's cousins were taken to Phoenix Indian

school in Phoenix, Arizona.

I'm just going to share this story, because my auntie, my great auntie, who was the younger sister to those survivors, she passed, and so she passed on that knowledge on to me, and no one would know these stories unless I share them with you, so I'm going to share them.

So my Aunt Wendy, her grand -- her mother was from Santa Ysabel Iipay Kumeyaay, and her father was Hiaki Yaqui and also California Mission Indian. They stayed off the reservations because they knew that the children were being taken, but they still had family who were taken to the reservations. So they had their children go visit family one weekend, one weekend on the reservation. When they went to go back to pick up their children from visiting their grandparents, they were gone. They were taken to Sherman Indian School.

So the father, Lucas Sombria Carrizosa, he wasn't going to have it, and he went all the way to Sherman Indian School and asked for his children to be released to him. And they said, "Why? No. They're Indian. We can't. We'll arrest you." He's like, "I'm not Indian. I'm Mexican." But he wasn't. He was Indian. He lied. He lied to them and spoke Spanish and said, "Give me my children. They may be Indian from their mother, but they're not through me," and he was lying

about who he was to get his children. And they released them, and that's a really rare case where children were released from boarding school in that case, so --

I won't take up too much time, but I just want to share about that with you. Oh, and before I go --

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

JONATHAN KUNKEL: Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. There's something else. There's another survivor. Her name was Fern Ponchetti Morelli. She's an ex-chairwomen for Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians, Kumeyaay Iipay. She was the first NACA representative for Southern California region, and as a woman back in the day, and so she was orphaned and taken to San Diego Mission, and that mission was a boarding school. They were taking Indian children and they were treating them the same way. So she survived that boarding school, which was a mission.

And long story short, she got her education and she worked for a tribe, became the first chairwoman for her tribe, and she came across a document. I don't know how she came across it, but she came across this document, and it's a manual of how the teachers and Indian agents were supposed to treat our children in the boarding schools, and she saw it and she snuck it in her bag. She stole it pretty much.

And her granddaughter gave it to me, because I'm

the knowledge holder within that side of the family, and she wanted me to give it to whoever I found that was rightful holders to that manual, because these are rare documents that they tried to hide away from our people. They don't want us to know what they were planning to do us and so --

I spoke with Secretary Haaland's team already. I'm going to give that to you, because your team deserves to have that, and (speaking indigenous language) to Graton Band -- or excuse me -- Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, Coast Miwok and Pomo. And (speaking indigenous language) Deb Haaland and Secretary Assistant Newland for being here. Aho.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

UNKNOWN MALE SPEAKER: Can that document be shared?

JONATHAN KUNKEL: Sure. So to back that up, there are actually no California boarding schools in there. I'm not sure if any California native are at these boarding schools. Actually, it's an earlier document, and it's more relative to other cultural regions for other tribes, so -- but it can be shared.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. I see a woman at the table that -- back there.

SHARON ROSE: Hello. Good. Afternoon. My name

is Sharon Rose I'm a citizen of the Lakota Nation. I'm enrolled in Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe of South Dakota. I'm here to share with you the story of my life -- well, to ask for help and just to be very thankful that you're doing this today.

My mother was a survivor of the boarding schools South Dakota. After surviving boarding school, she was -- came out here on a relocation program. A lot of families came out here at that time. They were relocated to San Jose. There was no support here. People got very homesick. Some people tried to go back home and didn't make it.

When I was four years old, we were removed from her care. I was placed in foster care. I felt kidnapped. My first foster home when I was four years old, a white woman drowned me in the pool. The lifeguard had to get -- go in to get me. When it was time to go to swimming lessons again, she took me in the bathroom to get me changed and she was hurting me. My mouth was bleeding because she tried to cover my screams.

When I moved from that foster home to my third foster home, I stayed there from the ages of four to eight years old. I was a sex slave to the man of the house while his wife knew. This house housed a lot of

25 children. I was not the only Indian child in that home.

1 A CPS report was made just because I couldn't take it
2 anymore. I was seven years old, and I went to school and
3 I showed my teacher my bruises. When I look at that CPS
4 report today, there was over 20 bruises on my body, and my
5 spine was all messed up. They still left me in that home.
6 By the time I'm 12, I've already bounced around
7 to seven non-native homes. By this time I'm separated
8 from my brother and my sister. I'm isolated by myself.
9 This is where the son of the original perpetrator begins
10 to rape me. He's a 40-year-old man and I'm 12. He begins
11 taking me to hotel rooms, truck stops and tells me to go
12 sit on somebody's lap for $10 to feed his meth habit.
13 When he rapes me, he tells me, "You owe me for all of the
14 stuff my mother does for you."
15 I'm 43. I spent the last 23 years of service to
16 our community. I've worked at the Indian Health Center.
17 I worked for the County of Santa Clara trying to promote
18 and trying to be there for mothers that need help, but I'm
19 working for the system that did this to me.
20 In my records I found that my tribe was asking
21 for me back, and my county denied it. Once again, they

are systematically isolating us and creating a vulnerability. I run away from foster care, and I'm picked up by the gangs in the street and I'm trafficked out. I've spent a lifetime fighting the urges to kill

myself. When I asked for help, I've given 400 milligrams of Seroquel, 900 milligrams of lithium. This isn't healing. There's something wrong with our health care system. There's something wrong with the foster care system. We need help.

I want to read you something. It's a short paragraph. It's from the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty. It says, "If bad men among the whites, or among other people subject to the authority of the United States, shall commit any wrongdoing upon the person or property of the Indians, the United States will, upon proof made to the agent, and forwarded to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs at Washington city, proceed at once to cause the offender to be arrested and punished according to the laws of the United States, and also reimburse the injured person for the loss sustained."

This is the bad men clause part of our treaty. The bad man is Santa Clara County for leaving me in that

home. I'm here today to ask for help. I'm tired. This -- I'm looking forward to my second back surgery in which I might not make it out. All I want is to be reunited with my tribe. So please forgive me how this comes out, but what I am doing here today is asking for help. We have counties that are breaking treaty rights and I know I'm not the only American children who was in

that home. Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you, Sharon. Thank you for coming today and sharing.

It is just after 4:30 in the afternoon. We're going to go -- try to go until 5:00, and at that point, I think we'll look to conclude the session today, so if there are any additional speakers, we'd be happy to hear from you. Please raise your hand.

There's a woman here. Can we go to this lady here.

FEMALE SPEAKER: I'm here to share about my three sisters that were in an Indian boarding school. Only one of them were able to get -- tell me her experiences there, because the other two are passed now.

16 And what she said was she was never beaten. She was never
17 hurt. She got treated pretty well and ate pretty good.
18 But she was so lonely, and she carried that through her
19 whole life, being lonely.
20 My mom and dad were in a boarding school as
21 well. My father came out to be an alcoholic. They moved
22 out here on a -- the relocation plan, and my -- they both
23 had really good jobs. My father just longed to be with
24 his people, so he moved back.
25 The whole time they were in a boarding school,

1 they were unable to speak their language, they chopped
2 their hair all off. They controlled everything that they
3 did. But my mom said they -- that she was okay. She
4 -- she grew up and she said she would never treat her
5 children without giving them love and hugs. She never got
6 a love. She never got a hug. She never got a Christmas
7 present. She never got a birthday present or a happy
8 birthday to you, a game, a card or anything. And she was
9 fine with that.
10 So she raised us really well while my father
11 stayed in Oklahoma. Oh, by the way, I'm chopped up from
12 Oklahoma, and I thank you all for letting me speak. I

come here today just mostly to share about my family. I heard about you through Mary, who is a Californian here, and her and her family have welcomed us into her -- their family, and we have no family. I'm the elder, besides two of my sisters that have left now.

And so I just wanted to say that. It -- it's hard for people to be in one of those schools, and I'm glad that they're not like that anymore. And my mom turned out fine. But there's so many people that I know that's been in those schools, and they're just a mess. And whatever you people are here to do to help people, I hope it turns out to be just great. Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

BRUCE GALI: Madam Secretary, my name is Bruce Gali, Pit River Tribal Nation, Northeastern Valley of California, and to address this, we're honored and blessed for you being here today. Greg Sarris, we're honored and blessed that you had put this together and that we come here on a short notice.

The words I'd like to say, the stories that are told today, I'm here to stand here today for our ancestors, for you, Madam Secretary. The question is, on

these residential schools, when will our children come back home? And we're not only looking at Stewart or Sherman. We're also looking at these missionaries.

You'll see in these public schools today, there's no gravesites. And the children in these schools, these residential schools, the question is: Do you have this power to bring in x-ray machines and so on like that to find these gravesites, you know, for us. And it all goes back to a lot of these children, our families, our family members, the young women and children, some of them probably all unrecognized, and I like the word that Colleen [inaudible] said. And that's another issue about the residential schools.

Our children that went to these residential schools that were unrecognized, you have this power to recognize all federal tribes. Not only in California, all

across here, Turtle Island.

The ones in these gravesites, the women and children, I'm here to tell you the truth here. Somebody has to speak for them, and this is their voice from me to you, Madam Secretary. You have this power. So we ask that you do this in a good way to honor all our children

in these residential schools throughout Turtle Island. Again, Madam Secretary, we're honored and blessed that you're here. Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. I think we have time for one, maybe two more speakers, depending on how long they go. In the middle we had a --

CAROLYN SMITH: Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you for this opportunity to be able to share. My name's Carolyn Smith. I'm from the Karuk Tribe, but I live here in Sonoma County, and I was born and raised in Sonoma County.

I wanted to speak a little bit about my grandmother. Her name is Gladys Temple. I don't have much of a story, because she didn't share that with us. I remember growing up with my grandma. I remember her teaching me how to sew and crochet and embroider. I remember sitting on a couch with her, snapping beans, peeling corn and apples. I love my grandma. She died,

gosh, over 30 years, but I still think about her every single day.

My grandmother was born in Happy Camp, and from

a very young age, she was sent to Chemawa. When she was at Chemawa, she contracted tuberculosis and she was sent to Fort Lapwai, which was a sanitarium at that time. At the time she had some sort of experimental tuberculosis treatment, and she survived. She survived.

When she came back to California, she didn't come back home. She didn't go back home. She traveled here and there throughout Northern California. She married a few times, had about seven children, and each time she left her husband, she left her children behind.

So my dad was the baby. My dad was the youngest. And he was the one who spent the most time with her. And they lived in Trinidad. They lived in, oh gosh, Redding. They lived in all sorts of different places. They've -- my grandma worked in agriculture, so they kind of followed an agricultural trail.

My grandpa -- while they were in Trinidad, my grandpa was a commercial fisherman, but she left him, she and my dad, just traveled, wound up here in Sonoma County, and that's where I've lived my life with my sister and my brother and my grandma.

The thing I think that hurts most for me is

being disconnected from my family, being disconnected from my home, being disconnected from my culture. We didn't even know we were Karuk as we were growing up. We didn't find this out until much later. But, you know, with -- with the sort of -- we -- we came back. We came back to our tribe. We still live here, but my sister moved up on the river for a long time and learned the language and worked with the linguist who read the dictionary for our tribe.

And I've worked. I've been weaving baskets for the past 15 years. I'm still a beginner. It's hard to weave when you're so far away from home, and so far away from the plants and people that are all about their weaving.

My dad, who would have liked to have been here today, but he had an emergency. He had to. When my sister was living up on the river, she invited my dad to go to the mountain dance, and that was years and years ago. And he still talks about it. He still, every summer, wants to go back up on the river to go to the mountain dance. That's really his first experience being back in our culture and being back with our people.

So, again, I want to say thank you so much for being here, and I just wanted to share what little I could just so that my grandma is not forgotten. (Speaking

indigenous language). Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you, Carolyn. Okay. And then, ma'am, you'll be our last speaker today at this session, and then we'll -- we'll have a few closing remarks and I think a closing prayer for everybody to leave with. Thank you.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you again. Thanks everybody, Secretary Haaland, Assistant Secretary Newland, and Chairman Sarris for putting this on. Thank you very much.

I just want to share. I've had -- I haven't gone to boarding school myself. I have five siblings that did go to boarding school. They're the younger generation going. They didn't quite have the same -- that I know of. Now they didn't share a whole lot with me. I just experienced what it was like when I see my family come back. And it was normal, like most of the other kids our age or young people our age, teenagers. They also were in problems with school and problems with -- not so much the law but mainly school.

But what I did want to share was my aunt. She was born in '25 she went to Sherman and she was probably -- my mom had 13 brothers and sisters and 7 --

25 7 girls. And my aunt that was closest to us, because she

1 had a lot of kids, my mom's sister, and the children
2 closest to us were, of course, my dad's nieces and
3 nephews. My aunt married my dad's brother, so we had a
4 real closeness there, but she went to Sherman, and I
5 believe it was in her early high school age, but
6 disciplinary actions, she was put in the basement where it
7 was wet and damp and she only had one blanket.
8 And so I watched my aunt suffer after -- she was
9 fine when we were little growing up, but after I got
10 older, I started to see her change and her body start to
11 cripple, and she suffered severe rheumatoid arthritis that
12 had run the whole gamut of her body. When she passed
13 away, she had a halo on when she was in the hospital with
14 it, well, bolted to her neck. And for me -- she said it
15 was from the boarding school. She said it was from going
16 to Sherman and being disciplined.
17 And that was, for me, my most traumatic
18 experience in the sense of understanding what everybody
19 here is talking about when they talk about their boarding
20 school experience and the negativeness of it. And to
21 watch my aunt, to see that happen to her and know this is

what she held and who she held responsible. It just breaks my heart to know that still today there's a good possibility that a lot of it is still going on in some -- some of the more private schools maybe and some of the --

what would you call -- Child Protective Services. And we have so many children in the services.

But I just wanted to share that because it -- it just hit home to me, the real understanding of that age group, that our -- that our grandparents went through and our grandmas or uncles and -- and you don't know it until we come to a situation like this where everybody can share it, and you only know one person like me. I only knew my aunt, and I didn't -- I know that's what happened to her, but not until I can hear everybody else discuss it. I've to got an understanding of what it must have felt like for her, and I just wanted to share that. Thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you very much for that.

Before I turn it over to Secretary Haaland, I just want to extend my gratitude, again, Chairman Sarris and council and others from Graton Rancheria, and all of

you for joining us today. We've done many of these sessions across the country in different tribal communities. This one may be the longest, and I think we may have had more speakers at this session or close to it than any other session we've done, and so I know how -- we know how difficult that is for you. You've taken time on a Sunday in the summertime to share with us, which shows

the importance to you for coming out and speaking on your -- your experiences and your relatives, so on behalf of our team, I want to say (speaking indigenous language). Thank you so much for hosting, for sharing, for teaching and for giving.

So Madam Secretary.

SECRETARY HAALAND: Thank you so much everyone for your time, for your story. I -- as I sit here and take notes about the things that you say, I feel like it answers -- every time I come to one of these, it answers more questions for me about my grandmother and about my mother, who both experienced boarding school, and I think for -- for my mom, she experienced a lot of really negative things from my grandmother's experiences from boarding school. Somebody talked about their -- their

family member being incredibly lonely, and I was sitting here thinking, that's why my grandmother hated being alone. She could not be alone. She would cry if she was alone for one minute. She always had to have somebody with her at her house.

And we used to think, you know, we -- I like being alone. I like when nobody's around me, you know. But my grandmother, it was really -- it was really very, very difficult for her, so somebody always had to be with her. And we -- we all kind of shared that responsibility

at one point. My cousin Georgia actually lived with my grandmother from the time she was 15 and took that role on.

And so I think we'll never know the extent to which our relatives, our ancestors suffered, and, you know, we can never get my grandmother to say one bad thing about the boarding school. She just wouldn't do it. She -- she was sent to St. Catherine's Indian Catholic Indian School in Santa Fe. It was about 125 miles away from her village of Mesita on the Laguna Pueblo.

And she did tell me that the priest came around to the village, and her words were, he gathered up all the

children, so he gathered all these kids up and put them on a train and sent them to Santa Fe. And her dad was only able to visit her twice during that five years, because all he had was a horse and wagon to travel with, and it took him three days to get there each time, which was six days total. A lot of time an entire week away from his farming and other obligations, and so it was difficult for the families of that era.

And I think that, you know, sometimes my parents -- my grandparents were also part of the assimilation policies. My grandfather worked in Winslow, Arizona, for 45 years as a diesel train mechanic and a lot of Lagunas who went to work on the railroad in various cities and

towns in Arizona and also in California, so I have a lot of relatives who were also relocated to California. And they were sent to California to be plumbers and electricians and other things. They didn't send them to, you know, Berkeley or any other California school to learn how to be doctors and lawyers. It was -- it was working to support, you know, whatever mission the United States had at the time.

And so I -- I gratefully acknowledge my

grandparent's generation for preserving my culture for me. They went through great pains in their little Indian boxcar village. My mother was raised in a box -- born and raised in a boxcar in Winslow. Now they put all the Indians in boxcars with the fence around it, and they still had their, you know, little village of Laguna there, and they had feast days, and they had sacred ceremonies there, because my grandfather refused to give up his culture, and -- and him and the men of his era went through great pains to ensure that they could put on those dances and put on those feast days for my mother who, in turn, lived away from our community, because my dad was a Marine, and so we were constantly moving either to the East Coast or to the West Coast.

And so my mother, because of the way she was raised, reserved that culture for us as well. We

always -- we had a Pueblo household wherever we moved to, regardless of whether it was on a military base or not, my mother made sure that we were raised to be Pueblo women, and that's how I identify, as a Pueblo woman. Very proud, of course.

So I -- I just -- I want to acknowledge today

all of -- all of you tribal leaders, your families, your aunts, your uncles, the people who -- who really went out of their way, who worked incredibly hard against all odds to preserve your culture for you. That is the most important thing it was to them that they were able to pass on. And -- and I am -- you know, sometimes I -- I wish my mother -- she didn't teach us parents our native language because -- I think it was because she was beaten when she was kid. Yes, in public school. She acknowledged a lot of pain that she experienced in public school, and I -- and I lament that.

But thank you to the person earlier who talked about speaking your native language even if it's a few words a day, because, yes, the ancestors do hear that, so thank you for acknowledging that, and I -- I just -- I just really appreciate everyone sharing today. For those of you who didn't share and who are just here because you wanted to support your community members, I appreciate all of you as well.

I -- as I said, this was our ninth "Road to Healing Tour." We have several more to complete. I appreciate, councilman, the invitation to Fort Bidwell,

and I appreciate all of you who have invited us to come. I would love to see every single tribe in every single state while I'm secretary, and so I -- I appreciate that, all those invitations and everyone being so kind and hospitable while we are here in California.

So thank you all again so much, and thank you for helping me to learn about myself while I'm here as well. And I hope all of you have a really wonderful day and a beautiful week. And yes, let's look up at the sky and look around us. There's a lot to be grateful for every day that we wake up, and I do -- I do acknowledge that. So thank you all.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

CHAIRMAN GREG SARRIS: There we go. Secretary Haaland, Assistant Secretary Newland, on behalf of all of us here today, thank you for sharing.

Just a little bit of how we can keep going and the connections. For me, I'm sitting here thinking of a wayward kid, who's me, who was adopted by non-Indians, and two women, Essie Parrish, and Mabel McKay took me under their wing and taught me. And as a wayward kid ending up going to Yosemite because Mabel said there's a -- to

Essie, "You have relations up there." Because of them, and because of these connections that were made, I felt responsible to go on and become a professor, and one of my students, I'm humbled, is Secretary Deb Haaland.

So there are these connections. And today and now as we close out, Robin Meely, who is a descendant of the Dominguez family and enrolled member of this tribe home today, she has made for Secretary Haaland a traditional baby basket that we would like to present to you.

Robin, thank you.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

CHAIRMAN GREG SARRIS: We'd like to then close with a closing prayer today, just as we opened. And Joseph, if you would come up. We'll close with a Southern Pomo prayer. Joseph is lighting angelica, and angelica is a traditional root that we smudge with here in this area, and it's for cleansing, purification, and safety for all as we travel about.

(Says prayer in indigenous language.)

CHAIRMAN GREG SARRIS: That will conclude our meeting today. Go home safe.

ALL ATTENDEES: Aho.

(Whereupon, the proceedings were concluded at 5:07 p.m.)

I, MICHELLE BARBANTE, Certified Shorthand Reporter, License No. 12601, hereby certify that I have transcribed to the best of my ability the proceedings herein.

I further certify that I am not of counsel nor attorney for either of the parties to said proceedings nor in any way interested in the outcome of the cause named in the caption.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 23rd day of August, 2023.

_____

Michelle Barbante, CSR
License No. 12601