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

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

MS. WILSON: Good morning. Thank you for being here. I am Amber Wilson, I'm from the Caddo Nation and I'm the principal here at Riverside Indian School. I would like to welcome members of the community, tribal leaders, federal agency partners, and tribal
partners. On behalf of the Bureau of Indian Education, Bureau of schools, Hankie Ortiz, Associate Deputy director, Tony Dearman, Director, we extend a warm welcome to Deb Haaland, Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, Bryan Newland. Former Congresswoman Secretary, Deb Haaland, made history when she became the first Native American to serve as a Cabinet Secretary for the Department of the Interior. She is a member of the Pueblo Laguna. Secretary Haaland, thank you for making Riverside your first stop on your road to heal tour. Also with us today is Bryan Newland, Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs. He is a citizen of the Bay Mills community in Chippewa where he served as Chief Judge of the tribal president.

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

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

And happy to see so many of you, friends and family. Yesterday, I was in Yellowstone and I visited -- they have a Indian heritage center there -- American Indian heritage. And the person who's there, Kelly Lookinghorse, Lakota said that he had been adopted by a family in Laguna. I said "Well, we're relatives then" and so I'm sure that I have more relatives in this audience than I realize at the moment but hello everyone. And I see that there's Laguna in here represented here at Riverside, so hello relatives as well. (Speaking in Native Tongue)

Greetings and good morning to everyone. Thank you for the beautiful blessing and for the songs as we embark on this journey together. It's an honor to join all of you on the ancestral homelands of the Wichita, Caddo, Delaware, Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache people.

I'm only going to speak briefly because I really am here to listen to all of you. Federal Indian boarding school policies have touched every indigenous person I know. Some are survivors. Some are descendents, but we all carry the trauma in our hearts. My ancestors endured the horrors of the Indian boarding school assimilation policies carried out by the State Department that I now lead.
This is the first time in history that Cabinet Secretary comes to the table with this shared trauma and it's not lost on me. I'm determined to use this position for the good. I launched the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative last year to undertake the comprehensive effort to recognize the legacy of boarding school policies with the goal of addressing their intergenerational impacts and to shed light on the traumas of the past. To do that, we need to tell our stories. Today is part of that journey. Oklahoma is our first stop on the road to healing which will be a yearlong tour across the country to provide indigenous survivors of the Federal Indian boarding school system and their decedents an opportunity to share their experiences.

Through this effort, we want to not only create a platform for people to share, we also help connect communities with trauma and from support and facilitate the collection of a permanent oral history. I want you all to know that I am with you on this journey and I am here to listen. I will listen with you. I will grieve with you, I will weep, 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 it will be done. This is one step among many that we will take to strengthen and rebuild the bones of the Native communities that the Federal Indian boarding schools set out to break. Those debts have the potential to alter the course of our future. I'm grateful to each of you for stepping forward to share your stories. I know it's not an easy task.

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

MR. NEWLAND: (Speaking Native tongue) Madam Secretary, (speaking Native tongue) my name is Bryan Newland or also known as (Incomprehensible) and I had the privilege of serving as Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs under the incredible and courageous leadership of Secretary Haaland. I want to thank our Riverside Indian School team. If you're a BIE
employee, please raise your hand very briefly for -- I want to make sure that we acknowledge you and thank you for all the work that you did to put this together today. I want to say (Speaking in Native tongue) for taking time out of your weekend and summer to join us here today. Many of you have traveled a long ways, both in physical distance and also in time to be here with us today. I'm very grateful that you have shared your time with us here on the Washita River, which is the place -- special that gives this school its name. Today, the Riverside Indian School is known for providing a quality and culturally aware education to young people from across Indian Country. You can see the sign back here where all the students come from. But as the nation's oldest federally operated Indian boarding school, Riverside is also a reminder of a painful time in our history. As we keep investigating the Federal Indian boarding school system and learning about your experiences at specific schools and the overall system, it will paint a picture -- a history that records and documents simply can't do for the rest of the American people. In addition to hearing from you, our next step to identifying marked and unmarked burial sites and cemeteries and determining the total amount of funding that the federal
government spent on the boarding school system. Please raise other considerations as you're speaking today that you think we should take into account as we're continuing our work based on your experiences.

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

So I want to make sure to raise a few points for our conversation today. This listening session is focused on people who survived their experience at federal Indian boarding schools and their families. And we want to make sure that we're hearing directly from them about their experience about your
experiences here today. So I'm going to -- we're going to just rely on everybody's respect and refer to boarding school survivors and their -- and their relatives to take the microphone today. Other folks who wished to provide us with a statement, including tribal leaders, can do so by sending us written statements to the e-mail address provided on the information sheet that you have as part of this event.

And we appreciate everybody providing space for the survivors and families to share their stories. So those of you who want to share today just -- we're just going to ask you to raise your hand. We have folks here who will bring a mic to you. We'll simply first ask that you state your name, your tribal affiliation, and the name of the boarding school or schools that you attended. Before we open it up, I also want to just note that we do have members of the press here who are with us today for the first hour of this event. Give them the interest of the American people and the historic nature of this work. We wanted to make sure that at least a portion of our conversation was open. But after one hour, we're going to take a brief break. Members of the media will be respectfully escorted out of this room to allow space for those of you who don't wish to share
your stories in front of the news cameras. We will, however, have a court reporter here transcribing the conversation today and under federal law, we may have to release the transcript if we're asked to do so.

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

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

And lastly, the survivors of these boarding schools and their families and of this -- the
secretary and I just want to thank you for your courage to come here today and share your stories with us. We want you to know that you're not alone. We're all here alongside you to lift you up, to support you, to tell your story to the American people, and most importantly to help you and your communities and your families to heal.

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

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

My mother had a -- has a good memory of her days at Riverside Indian School, and when I talked to Kiowa elders about their boarding school experience as part of a hot meals program in 1987, the experiences related to me were 50 percent good and 50 percent bad. So I survived and I'm thankful and here's another book of my poem -- a writer and I live in Anadarko with my wife Jo here. So thank you for this opportunity, and thank you for coming to Anadarko and being with us on your journey. Thank you. Aho.

SPEAKER: My name is Donald Neconie and I am a Kiowa from here in Anadarko. My journey here began in 1938. I'm 84 years old. I'm a Marine Corps veteran. Actually, my story begins in St. Patrick's Mission which is south of here. When I started school, my father and mother Oscar and took me by my right had and dropped me off at St. Patrick's and the moment I landed there, they took me downstairs, took all my clothes off and threw a bunch of green stuff all over me and it stung like hell. It stung my eyes. It stung all over me, and when they put the water on me, it stung even worse. They did not care. They did
not, they just said, "If you cry, we will whip you."
And I said "That's okay," because I started crying and
they whipped me and they whipped me and they whipped
and they whipped me into shape, by that I mean I had
to learn it their way. Their ways.

I used to talk Kiowa. I understood it. But
after what they did to me, every time I tried to talk
Kiowa, they put lye in my mouth. And they washed my
mouth. And when I got out of St. Patrick's Mission, I
thought it was over. But then, I landed at Riverside, here. And it started all over again. The same way.

They put the lye on me. They took the -- they took me
down the stairs. They deloused me. They washed my
mouth out with lye to make my stop talking Kiowa. And
it was 12 years of hell.

I landed here in 1948. I didn't leave until in
1950 -- 58, 58. Sorry, 1950, and I started here in
1946. I'm sorry. The days mix up. But those days I
remember going home only twice. I spent 12 years in
this hellhole and that part was like hell. In Kiowa
lodge, it was bad. There were -- we had one matron
for 100 students. 50 girls, 50 boys. Girls on the
other side and boys on the other side. Ms. Wither was
the only matron in charge of us. And when she saw
that we were doing something wrong, we were herded
downstairs by Mr. Eshman. Paddle board, eight feet long, about six feet long. It was so many inches wide and so many inches thick. And he pulled down our clothes and he whipped us, repeated beating -- during the daytime when we would walk and some getting ahead of us would walk and his coveralls would get stuck in his back because the blood would drain from his butt. We were almost all that way.

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

So I'm not going to talk about anything to sugar coat this Riverside Indian School, it may be good now, but it wasn't back then. When they tore down Kiowa lodge, I stood by and I cheered. I laughed when they tore it down. Then, they put (Incomprehensible).
What a relief. I got put into a college -- place where I was treated like a human being. From my time on, I was treated like a human being, but prior to that, I was not. We were sodomized. Men, girls, boys, we were sodomized. And people knew that was going on and did nothing to stop it. When the authorities came, and they said to put us in jail. They didn't put the people that did that to us, they put -- they didn't put them in jail. They didn't do anything to the people and we went through hell again because we were told that if you told anybody, you would get the hell beat out of you. That went on for almost until we were grown. Until about the 10th or 11th grade. Then, it stopped for some reason. But I still feel that pain. I still feel it. What this school did to me and I'm not ready to forgive this school for what it did for anything. And I don't care how much money it takes, I will never, ever forgive this school for what it did to me.

The only good thing that happened to me when I was a veteran, when I joined the Marine Corps, when I got through with the courage from the Marine Corps, little sergeant came up to me and he said, "Why was it so easy for you, all seven, to get through this training so easily?" I said "Sir, if you went to
school where I went to school, you got the hell beat out of you. You got things that you wouldn't even talk about with your own family. You'd make it through too" and I was 1 of 11 children that went through this school, I was the only one that graduated.

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

SPEAKER: My name is Brought (Incomprehensible) I am a Standing Rock Sioux, it's B-R-O-U-G-H-T. I'm an Indian boarding school survivor. I attended the
Pierre Indian School and the Eagle Butte Indian School in South Dakota.

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

We were not allowed to speak unless spoken to. I was punished a lot because I did talk. We were not allowed to talk our language or speak our language...
which I also got punished for that. I was often
brought out into the hallways and they put a brick in
each one of my hands and make me kneel there until
they were satisfied and I would start to slouch down
and they'd come by and smack me with a ruler and tell
me to straighten up. And so, I would be kneeling out
there for hours.

Once, they took me down into the basement. It
was when I first got there when I was stripped down, I
was asking for my clothing back. And they told me I
was going to sit there downstairs on the cement bench
until I complied with what they wanted me to do and I
stayed down there until it was nighttime. They
brought me upstairs, handed me a night gown and told
me to go to bed. They took me -- in the morning, they
took me to the church and asked for me if I was
Catholic or Episcopal and I said I thought they were
the same. I didn't know. They put a metal cross in
my hand and told me I was going to be an Episcopalian
and to go pray for forgiveness for who I was. And
then I -- once I got into 5th -- 6th grade -- 5th
grade, and they transferred me out. Pierre Indian
school wouldn't take me anymore. They considered me
at being unruly, so they sent me to Eagle Butte
Boarding School.
We had beatings and the punishments, I went through a towel line once because of a friend of mine; she was caught going AWOL. They would have us -- they would come through dormitories ringing bells, hand bells. We'd have to -- we'd have hand towels, take them down to the washroom and wet them in hot water and I would see some girls taking open safety pins and just sticking them on the ends of their towels. They took my friend, Lucy, and her friend and they lined all of us girls up in two different -- separate lines and they'd start sending the girls down the line and have them whip them with these wet towels. If you didn't do what they wanted, then they would send you down also, which they did to me because my friend, Lucy, takes it the worst. And I couldn't hit her. And so, they ripped my clothes off at the end and sat me down right here after the girls.

And it was things like this that we all went through. You know. Cutting your hair off and throwing it in your face, putting head lice, and treating you bad -- terrible. And I didn't start talking about this until about two years ago. I've been in counseling since I was age 22. I've gone through, I think, seven different programs that the Bureau of Indian Affairs have set up for Indian
people. I've gone through all of them. My last one was where the Indian education program which I went through in -- from South Dakota, they sent me to Dallas, Texas to go to college. And what they did to us makes you feel so inferior that you don't feel worthy of anything. I didn't even think I was worthy of going to college and I was there for four months and I had to go back home and see a (Incomprehensible) man to talk to him about what I was feeling. And when I went home to South Dakota, he was already expecting me. He told me he was waiting and we talked and we had a ceremony and I went back and he completed my education out and became a lab technologist. But it's things like this, like I said, to this date, I have counseling twice a week and you never get past this. You never forget it. What they did to us was terrible. I don't know how we survived, but I -- I always tell myself, tell my children, those who didn't get to come home, it's time to bring them home, thank you.

SPEAKER: Good morning everyone, my name is Dolores (Incomprehensible). I'm half Kiowa and half Comanche, and I attended a boarding school in Lawton, Oklahoma. Fort Sill Boarding School. Lawton is a farming town and it's -- whatever you believe in,
there's a boarding school right there in the middle. And when they put us there, we had to stay there. But I just want to say a few things and what I do now that helps me is to write. I write about the (Incomprehensible) I write about the -- and a lot of those teachers were -- and I have my master's degree and I've worked at -- mostly with Indians and school age, high school, college. And I had Indian students who -- we only had listened to me and a lot of them are in college and a lot of them are teaching. Well, probably a lot of them are here and some of them speaking. But I've always wanted to do, like a -- like he says, we need to tell. We need to tell what happened. But what they do now, is they'll call the State Department they'll say, Dolores, can you talk to this -- this -- this one was -- wanted me to talk at, it was an American Indian conference in Seattle. And they said, "Talk to them about boarding school, Dolores." I said, "Okay. I can do that." So when it got to be time for the conference, they said, "Okay, Dolores, do you have all of your -- everything set up?" I said, "Yes, I did." So I sat down sat down on the computer and I started typing. And all of the sudden, I started crying and I couldn't stop because she said everything's better coming out. When I
attended the Fort Sill school then I started thinking
of my family. There were eight girls and four boys --
I'm sorry. Eight girls and four boys. And I don't
know why I was selected to go. But I didn't know. I
didn't even know what my name was. I knew my
nickname, but my sister had to teach me what my name
was, so I kept going to school with that name. But
they called me a nickname. But, when I went to Fort
Sill Indian School, we lived in the dorm. It was a
big room -- it seemed like it was big but I know it
wasn't. And there were rows and rows of those -- what
do you call them? They had beds on top of another.
And we were there and a of times, all I had was a
sheet. But sometimes, when I think mostly it's really
hard to realize. But, anyway, the school in Oklahoma
City asked me to write this. And so, I did. And I
want to read it to you. This -- there's two pages.
And so, there are certain smells and sounds that
stimulate my memory and instantly, government boarding
school, where I spent my early years. Today, I caught
the scent of sawdust and it reminded me of the wooden
floors of the school where I spent my formative school
years. The janitor -- the janitor would throw the
dust on to floor and then drag the dust mop back and
forth across the wooden floors. I was only 5 years
old when I enrolled at Fort Sill Indian School. There were eight girls and three boys in my family. And I was, of course, the youngest. My father was seriously ill for several months, so I decided that some of us would attend a boarding school. (Incomprehensible) I never knew why I was selected to go. Many times throughout my lifetime, I have wanted to ask my mother before she died, but I was afraid to. Realistically, I knew that I had food to eat and I had a place to sleep. Emotionally, I felt abandoned, like I was being punished for some reason. I knew that -- I know now that these were normal feelings, but even so, I still wondered why.

I remember my dad taking us to the school. It was very traumatic being there. Even though some of my older sisters were there, I was very lonely. The first experiences with being taken into the cloakroom -- what is a cloak? Who knows what a cloak is? They say go to the cloakroom. It was a linen closet with a high ceiling. We were lined up and taken one by one into the room. They set us up on a high stool -- high stool chair. They took their scissors, and cut off our hair, and filled heads with DDT. This was later banned by the U.S. government as a dangerous pesticide. We looked like little gray
haired women. They dressed us up in flower satin
dresses and black shoes. We were given a toothbrush,
tooth powder, and Vaseline for our skin. We slept in
dormitory rooms in bunk beds. I remember rows and
rows and rows of beds. I didn't know my English name
before I went to the classroom and my sister tried to
teach me how to pronounce it. The only name I ever
answered to was my nickname given to me there at home.
I remember how the other children would make fun of my
last name. My name was (Speaking Native tongue) and
in Comanche, the word for begin is (Speaking Native
tongue) Dolores (Speaking Native tongue).

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

But these are some emotions that we all have when
we go to a boarding school. And I think that the most
traumatic about reading this is they cut off my hair. That's why I let my hair long. How many of you went to school and had your hair cut off by those people and put DDT pesticide in your hair?

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

And another that I will all white school. And there was 12 -- well, not all white, but mostly white. There was -- I was in the 7th grade and there was 12 Indians students in my class. And, you know, things were different there but they were -- still had
similar problems because every time I'd come back to
the 8th grade, 9th grade, 10th, 11th, there would be
no more students -- no more Indian students. And when
I became a senior, there were no Indian students in my
class -- the senior class and I was the only one to
finish. So all these things and all, you know, the
years that gone through my mind, what can I do? Why
are these things happening to me? How can I help? So
that's -- we couldn't go to college because there were
no grants at the time and no family -- in November,
I'll be 79 years old, there's a reason for me to write
a whole letter so I can tell everybody. But, anyway,
I -- I'm determined to help as many young people that
I can to be successful. I don't care who they are.
And even if they've gotten out of school, we still
need to encourage them to go back to school. They
said, "Hey, they're not able to." So when I
graduated, I was very pleased to be able to be go to
college. So -- how many of you know where Durant,
Oklahoma is? There used to be this Oklahoma
Presbyterian college. But, I went down there, it
was -- it had closed. And they opened it up as a dorm
so I was able to go there and stay there in the dorm
and work study and we didn't have grants. And then,
finally, when I did get to move up to Junior, I talked
to the BIA and I asked her to see if I could apply for 
the scholarship, and they said, no, you went to 
Haskell for two years. You already paid enough for 
you.

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

So anyway, I don't want to take up too much time. 
But I really want to talk to any of you, especially 
those of you -- I used to teach here, I was the high 
school counselor here 14 years ago and I was here 
14 years. This place is beautiful. You should have 
seen how it was when they were tearing down the 
buildings; y'all careful now. You might find some A 
holes in this building. But, you know, my mother
couldn't afford children. And when you -- when they start talking to you about school, encourage them to listen. And if you want to, have them call me and I would happily, because there's scholarships available. My grandchildren -- I have four granddaughters. One is graduating from Fort Lewis she wants to be a medical examiner. She got a major and I'm helping to get her a scholarship. How many of you know about the Cobell scholarship? Well, Ms. Cobell, she had -- she was the one that won our -- won our scholarship. How many have ever been, raise your hand. Everybody. But, you know, kids don't know that, about all the scholarships that are available. And you need to ask them, you know, if there's any scholarships they want to look at. Well, ask them what about college, and, like I said, everybody -- I think people are (Incomprehensible) because they always call them. But I really do appreciate our secretary. How many of you saw her and heard about her when she was named secretary? Raise your hand and give her the applause that she deserves. I have something I want to give her. This is very special. This it is lost it; so I'll let someone else too -- have this.

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

JOSEPH SHEWMAKER (405) 426-2968
Roundtree. I'm from the Standing Rock Tribe in North and South Dakota. My mother, Sharon Goodhouse. We are from Wakpala, South Dakota. She is a St. Joseph Chamberlain Boarding School survivor. I have her on the phone. She'd like to tell you her story.

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

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

So that was all uncalled for and later, the next day,
then we heard that it was because we were at the
fence, and we weren't -- we weren't supposed to be
that close to the animals. They never told us that,
but they hit us for it. And they whipped -- they
smiled, they hit us hard. We had bruises on ourselves
from their belts. And at different times, there -- we
weren't the only ones that got whipped. The other
ones got whipped. And at one time too, I saw that
they punished -- they were punishing three girls and
what -- for what, we don't know. We weren't allowed
to have friendships. We were just -- so, anyway, we
saw that -- mopping the floors, supposed to be mopping
the floor with a rag and water and a toothbrush. They
used the toothbrush to scrub the floor and it had a
big floor to do. And they had water, no -- no,
nothing in the water, just the water and a rag, and
that's what we had to use. We saw that.

And then, other things that I saw, I saw when
kids would run away from the school. We were so far
away that back in those days that when they would run
away, they would have long ways to go before they saw
or got picked up by cars or whatever. Anyway, and
when they caught and they brought them back, then,
they would take the girls to the chair and had they
would shave the boys bald-headed. That was in hopes
that they wouldn't do it anymore. And this one girl,
she was from California, I believe. And she didn't
want them to cut her hair because back in those days,
we all had to wear braids. And so, she didn't want
them to cut her hair, so she was fighting with
the nuns to keep her hair. And then, they just
chopped her hair one morning. So they cut a piece of
her earlobe off. And so, the girl was just screaming
and blood and everything was all over, but that didn't
stop them. They finished cutting her hair and they
took her off to the infirmary.

But I saw those kind of things too. And we were
given two tin plates -- I don't know what they -- to
me, they were tin plates with a blanket then, on top
of it. And a -- and a spoon to use and a tin cup for
milk. And sometimes, we'll get a half a glass of that
to drink. And then, we never got special portions or
extra portions. We got a big spoon full of
whatever -- let's say we were having for goulash.
Well, they would give us a big spoon of goulash and a
couple tablespoons of some kind of vegetable to go
with it and our milk and one slice of bread. And
then, for dinner we didn't get nothing else. That was
all of our meals. Mostly, all the time, our breakfast was eat oatmeal. And that was it. We never got no toast or nothing else.

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

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

SPEAKER: (Speaking Native tongue) My name is Ben Barnes. I am chief of the Shawnee Tribe. I'm also a member of the ceremonial community. There are four of us left here in Oklahoma, for -- I want to thank the Secretary and Assistant Secretary for coming to our corner of Indian Country this morning. I come bearing
testimony of my tribal citizens that could not be here this morning.

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

Those weren't the first ones. As early as the Choctaw came, Shawnee citizens were removed from their families and taken to these places to steal from us the legacy of our ancestors. And -- and most recently based on Carlisle, and more recently, the Riverside and Chilocco. These institutions took our tribal communities, the future of our youngest and brightest.
These places that was used to do this to indigenous nations, one of the things that we've come to learn as we explore our legacy in boarding school is where state and federal lands are owned where boarding schools now reside in. Those lands need to revert back to the tribal nations to the direct administration. Those places need to resanctify the constitution.

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

When she did speak up, after not being able to keep quiet any longer, they drugged her up and institutionalized her, sent her to the mental ward, and they tried to do a tubal ligation on her.
Ultimately, it led to issues of personal life, when they took the child -- first child away from her, who only she recently started seeing in the last two years.

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

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

SPEAKER: I just have a short story about -- about my grandfather that was taken to Haskell. And he lived in Fort Cobb, which is about 10 miles -- 15
miles west of here. And they said -- they said
that -- I talked to my mother and my aunt -- and so,
and other people. And they had a big yellow bus that
would go around to all our homes in Anadarko area,
Gracemont and Fort Cobb, and other cities. And every
time that they -- people told other people that the
big yellow bus they have seen coming around their
homes, and they would -- some of them would hide their
children. My grandfather was, like, 5 or 6 years old.
I can't imagine him being taken to Haskell at that
age. And he went with his sister which would -- she
was about a year or so younger and another brother. I
never did really get to know the brother's name, or if
I did, I've forgotten it. But they all went to
Haskell. But the brother, the younger brother, did
not come back. And I have a friend that -- from a
university in Texas was sharing stories on the graves
there at Haskell. And the last I heard from him, he's
still working on it. So the brother must have been
about 3 or 4. And I can't imagine somebody taking
your child at 3 or 4. And then, my grandmother, his
wife, Annie Dodd, her mother would always hide her.
Her mother was like a medicine woman and she hid. And
she knew when that bus was coming and she would hide
her daughter. And they -- they never got my
grandmother. But when she would go to the stores, now, she would go to the stores and she would do like this on what she wanted because she couldn't -- she couldn't say the word.

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

My mother went to St. Patrick's, which is, you know, born out of town. My mother went to a Catholic...
school and -- and I taught here at Riverside for 19 plus years. And I -- and I -- you know, when you get old, you -- you lose your -- you lose your -- what you're talking about. But the -- the most dangerous part I ever saw was in the -- in the dorms, not in the school, but in the dorms. But they were -- they were not too many -- not safe. But I retired out of Riverside.

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

MR. NEWLAND: We're going to hear from one -- one
more and we're going to take a break.

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

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

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

As soon as I entered the building, I was taken to the community bathroom. We had to strip our clothes,
went into the shower, and given a bar of lye soap, and we had to start taking a shower with people watching us. In our home, we're very modest and we never show our naked body, so that was a big shock for me to go through. And after we were done washing our body, we had kerosene poured on our hair just to kill any lice or whatever was in our hair. And after that was done, we stepped out and we were told to sit on a chair, still naked. And our long hair was cut off. And then, after that, we were given clothes and a real harsh towel to wipe with and given for our clothes to wear. That was my first introduction to boarding school. And whenever we went to our class and we tried to speak our language, our elbows, our wrists, whatever, were smacked with a ruler. It is true. We lived through that. It is true. And in order to control our unruliness, our permissive behavior, we would have to stand at detention for long periods of time in the hallway. And it was very hard, I mean, being 5 years old and being introduced to something totally foreign. But I made it through. I made it through. I went to the boarding school till I was about 10 years old, and my mom removed me from there because another bigger kid beat me up for no reason. And after that, she took me to a mission school, which
was just as bad. But, by then, my mother was a single
parent and she couldn't -- she couldn't afford to feed
me. She was living in a shack. So I went to the
mission school and there, I was stripped of my
traditional voice and practices. And it was really
hard. And listening to the older people today talk
about it, it has really bought back a lot of bad
memories that I didn't -- that I didn't want to think
about.

But it's good to talk about it. It's good to
talk about it now. And to let other people know what
we went through. It did happen. It is true. My
husband and I live here in Anadarko now. We're Navajo
people. But we enjoy living here. We're retired.
And about seven, eight years ago, my late friend,
(Incomprehensible), invited me -- she used to work
here as a counselor. And one day, she messaged me and
she told me that, "Sister, I have about 30 Navajo kids
here and they're very lonesome and they miss their
home. Can you come and talk to them?" And I was
like, "Okay." And then, later on, she messaged me
again, "Can you cook meal for them?" I'm like, "Well,
I don't know where you get mutton, but okay." But I
told my father in law, and bless his heart, he was
able to get me some mutton and Blue Bird flour and the
fixings and I came and I made a -- made a big pot of
stew and fry bread for them. And I came and I talked
to -- we met with the students and they were just very
happy. And I just encouraged them and I told them my
story and I told them that this school here and now is
way different than what it was when I went many years
ago as a little girl. And I would come about back,
try to come back twice a year and meet with the Navajo
students and just encourage them and just to let them
know, you know, even though they're far from home, I'm
here and I can encourage them. So (Speaking Native
tongue) Sister and sir, I thank you so much for coming
here and helping to bring -- help us talk about this
and help us begin the healing and I challenge everyone
else here. I see a lot of leaders here. There is
this school, Riverside Indian School, there's
Tahlequah and I'm sure there's other Indian schools.
Go there and encourage these young people. It's us
that has to do something for our young people. We
can't just expect Ms. Haaland to do it all by herself.
We need to go, I mean, I go to the powwows, I go to
the different ceremonies. And, you know, I know that
young people need to learn these -- our ways of doing
things. And the only way we can do that is if we
encourage them. Good job, good job, you did good.
This is what I -- I -- I'm very happy that I'm able to speak today and let y'all know and I'm very proud of who I am. And I'm very glad that I did suffer in boarding school. It was a hard time, but I made it -- I made it through. Thank you.

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

(WHEREUPON, a break was held)

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

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

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

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

That was the only way they -- my dad passed away in 1945 and he never spoke a word of English. Same for my mother. She was from Rainy Mountain Indian School. I loved it here. We've got -- we were treated good. Maybe, if you misbehaved, but I've never been struck in my whole life, I don't -- and I'm thankful for that. We didn't have to put up that and I currently teach a corrective -- corrective program. I teach Kiowa and I -- I under Dr. Rachel Jackson at USAO. And I put -- as much as I can share. I do everything I can to do that and I'm happy to do that. I sing, I dance, so I danced all my life. I like to and I'm not really comfortable to say about where I lived in know how to make -- and you ladies, it's all that don't how to make because and. Because their mother didn't make. There's so many different rules with the different tribes and I can't sit -- I can't sit here. I kind of -- Kiowas do not have any vulgarity in our language. Therefore, it's hard to talk about being attacked in school with mixed company and I have no doubt in my mind that it probably happened in the north that I, in all honesty, I never, ever experienced that here. Riverside produced ladies. Riverside produced good men. My whole tribe
left for Korea when that broke out in the 1950s. That was my junior class. One didn't come back and one was lost as a prisoner of war. Riverside gave two up to Vietnam. So we've done our part in being patriotic and believing in our country. My children are half because Kiowas are so strict about marriage rules, you almost had to marry out of the tribe. And that's the reason so many of us are intermarried. And I see nothing wrong with that. I raised some fine children. There's eight of them. And one of them went to Riverside in the 70s because he wanted to play basketball under Ron Wilco so we had -- I got an award right here at Riverside. I was the school -- grandmother -- and I was -- the best thing, I got a certificate for that because they were my grandchildren and I told stories at night and I knew when they were lonesome. I know what it's like, sharing that. Some of these things that happened here, I just never -- I was not aware of it. And I was here until 1949. I was here when the first five -- students came. I can name every one and tell you their level of education. One is a judge, and the other one is a doctor, and the other one (Incomprehensible) back here there and so -- but it was the summer of 1949 and I had a selfish reason to
come here. That -- I have a -- I never bothered the
superintendent or the principal but I worked with the
historical society of Oklahoma to get this old gym
back here on the register. It's the only building
that qualifies. All the work was done. But, the one
last procedure and I don't know why it was never put
on the register -- Kiowa Tribe, we don't have many
things put on there, and we have a good memories of
this school. That's all I have to say (Speaking
Native tongue) I don't know too much, but I know my
language and I know how to respect any family, thank
you.

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

I want to say, first of all, thank you so much to
everybody that shared and that's going to share. My
great uncle was a code talker. He was a Comanche code
talker. Forth signal division and when the report
came out, my family had talked about what happened in
boarding schools. Very vague references, but when I
read about the report, I was able to put the pieces
together. And it was one of the most painful things
that I've had to read and endure, knowing that that's
what my family went through. But it was also healing
in a way to help me to understand what they went
through and how hard they fought.

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

And so, I went and I approached the resolutions
committee about the report and I shared with them what
had happened. They immediately wanted to respond and
as of today, Southern Baptists are the only church --
denomination in the country that has responded to this
report. And for the first time in the over 100 year
history of Southern Baptist convention, they took a
public stand for Native American people, Native
Alaskans, and Native Hawaiians.

I would like to read that resolution to you. It
was unanimously voted upon by the convention, at
least. It says we're going to ask the Bureau of
Indian Affairs investigative report released in May,
2022. Documents and reports of the United States
maliciously targeted Native American, Alaska Natives,
and Native Hawaiian children. As part of a diabolical
to dispossess these people groups from their native
lands by forced assimilation through the establishment
of mandatory boarding schools. And whereas between
1819 and 18 -- and 1969, federal Indian boarding
school system consisted of 408 federal Indian boarding
schools across 37 states or then territories,
including 21 schools in Alaska and 7 schools in
Hawaii. Whereas the federal government subcontracted
with the religious organizations to operate these
schools in order to accomplish the forced conversion
and assimilation of indigenous children to
Christianity. And whereas degradation and
dehumanization included forced removal of children
from their families, forced child labor, removal of
their tribal identity, confinement, flogging,
withholding food, whipping, slapping, cuffing, as well as discouraging or preventing the use of Native American, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian languages, religions, and culture practices.

Now, therefore, be it resolved. That the messengers from Southern Baptist convention in Anaheim, California, June 14th through the 15th, 2022, encourage Southern Baptists to decry the methods of forced assimilation and conversion. As well as to the dehumanization that fellow image bearers. And be it further resolved that Southern Baptists stand in support of Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians, especially those who are part of our own family and churches as they process the findings of this report and this discern the next steps toward healing. And be it further resolved that the Southern Baptists earnestly pray for the families of those targeted by those atrocities brought to light in this investigation. Be it also resolved that any federal government's policy, former or current, to replace the tribal culture for its own. In an effort to ease their intent to separate tribes from their territory. And be it further resolved, that we declare the atrocities done against these people in the name of religious conversions as reprehensible, betraying The
Great Commission in our efforts to reach all nations with the gospel. And be it further resolved that we stand against forced conversions and distorted missiological practices as contrary to our distinctive beliefs as Baptists in religious liberty and soul-freedom.

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

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

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

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

SPEAKER: Considering I'm so short, I'm going to have to stand over here so everyone can see me. I'd
like to welcome Assistant Secretary and the Secretary here in Anadarko. (Speaking Native tongue) They say that people need to look forward. (Speaking Native tongue) the Caddos descended here in 1958 -- 59. They said that the people went to go look for food and while they were gone there was a bug in the water. He said (Speaking Native tongue) it's all. What is that? It's life. (Speaking Native tongue) means water. Pulled out the black bug.

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

Later on, this was restored by Congress where -- was held in joint ownership with the land that we settled on. The Wichita affiliated Tribe being one of them, with respect to their tribe. The Caddo Nation and Delaware Nation. The Caddo Nation owned 56 percent, 9 percent of all interest away from this land. And court takes us. The reason I'm going to here was -- there's a lot of them. You know, my grandfather he told me a story. He was a World War II vet and he spoke our Indian language and he was put
silent here in riverside Indian cool for talking our language with a Kiowa boy and a Delaware boy. His brother came from (Speaking Native tongue) the place of the soldier checking on a horse. He found them locked in a den in a grate for three or four days. They didn't have hardly anything to drink or nothing to eat. He went home and got my great-great-grandfather, old man Cullen and he got the wagon and carried with his son those boys. When he told me that story, he was crying.

Today, there is a lot of unmarked the graves and cemeteries on this land without any protection from the U.S. Government. We've had to endure going after National Park Service money to identify unmarked cemeteries and graves here on this land as well as on our allotted lands with $0 from the Department of the Interior or Bureau of Indian Affairs related to this region. That is an administrative problem. I went to Riverside Indian School as well. And he were marched to and from -- I'm a product assimilation. My mother was a product during the Vietnam area. It's hard for her to talk about the things she endured, things that we still face. Some of our members went to school here, you know, we don't want to talk it. It's hard some of them to even remember to talk about it. But I
want to thank you for being here and for all the
respect the tribes here and the leaders that are here.
Aho.

God, be with you. God, take care of you, your
families, your loved ones, all the different leaders
here that I've got to know over several years I'm
still a kid, I got a long ways to go. When you leave
here, don't like forget us. Don't forget it. Don't
forget why you're here and the prayers and things that
you said and where you come from, what got you where
you're at. And we know the tribes that you represent,
the things, the places where you've been. So
appreciate you being here. But when you get back up,
where you came from, I've heard our people say when
you go to talk to the great white father up in DC, let
him know we have problems still today. Funding is
huge, mental health. The things gone on here
Riverside -- one of our elders, she didn't experience
that. A lot of people have a lot of respect for her
and everybody in here. I want to thank you for being
here. And if there's anything that we can do help,
please let us know. We have a lot of elected leaders
here and we have people that would really like to say
a lot, but it's really hurtful. And so, we've asked
them too let us take care of them. So thank you for
being here. I just want to say on behalf of our Caddo people and we look forward to working with you I know we've got some stuff to Facetime. Thank you for being here.

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

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

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

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

But I had came from a background that my grandfather was a Cherokee pastor. He spoke it. He wrote it. He sang it. All of his sermons were written in it. But yet, when I was taken from the foster home that summer, I had to leave my little
sister and I went to Jones Academy. And we were not allowed to speak our language. We had to adjust and it was a very huge adjustment. We had no clothing. I think they brought me a box, maybe a four by four or four by eight of clothes and that's all we had. I was walked down the hall and there was no one on this hall. And they said pick out a bed. So I went to the last room and picked the top bunk. And I remember laying there wondering why I was there.

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

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

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

On a personal level, my (Incomprehensible) name or warrior name (Speaking Native tongue) I'm a proud member of Nuyaka Ceremonial Grounds led by -- Arbika -- Sunny Lee but our family is also tied
(Incomprehensible) the Baptist church. So, very much appreciated comments from the minister previously. We very much appreciate all of the heartfelt comments, stories, and perspectives shared here today. I'm a first generation non boarding school member of the family. But my mom was a boarding school survivor and she was born in 1939 in Okemah, Oklahoma. And like many in Muskogee, she went to Eufaula Boarding School in eastern Oklahoma. As a child, I didn't hear much about her experiences. But as somebody said, I heard snippets and certainly the story about having her mouth washed out with lye soap was something mom did talk to us about, having her hair washed out to be treated for lice with kerosene was something mom talked about. There are many other things that he didn't learn about mom's experience so well after her passing. Some of those came from writings that my father had written down from stories that she had told him that I didn't see until he passed. Among those, I knew mom had run away and anybody who's from eastern Oklahoma knows the geography of Eufala and its relationship to Tulsa and Okemah. But I didn't realize that mom had run away eight times before she was finally successful. She went to Eufaula in the 40s, very different place than Eufala is now. Now,
Eufala is run by Muscogee Creek Nation with support from BIE. And for the -- all the reasons that we're discussing today, it means so much to have the Director of BIE here as well as the Secretary and Assistant Secretary and the report produced by the department is ground breaking.

But, in addition to capturing the past, as the report set the stakes, the information being collected is being collected to, hopefully, develop meaningful policy in the future. And it's in that spirit that I want to share a few -- few thoughts. So mom ran away eight times. Each time that she ran away, and she was tracked down by agents. And it's hard to think about in modern -- well, with a modern sensibility. But anyway, who has family from that period verified those agents would sometimes when they were searching the immediate property assisted by (Speaking Native tongue) by -- by dogs. The school actually had assistants with dogs to track down child runaways. My mom ran away, as I said before, seven times and was captured each time. It was on the eighth try when she was successful. And finally, the eighth -- eighth try, I guess the BIA gave up. And she had her arm broken during school. She shared a lot of stories about her classmates moving -- at least one that
didn't make it. Now, this sounds horrible and it was. But, of course, there were friendships made among other folks -- survivors of the school. So I very much appreciate the perspective from the positive side.

Those perspectives were perspectives of survival, perseverance, and the enduring nature of our spirit. On a side note, because of my father work, we landed in Arizona. He was a professor. And although, mom was a transplanted Creek she dedicated her final years of her life trying to preserve the Phoenix Indian School property for embrace -- embracing by and ownership by the Native community of Arizona. She used to talk about some of the handprints that were on some of the concrete portions of the school, of the forced labored children that built that school. And while the school was in the federal government's name, at the time that it closed, I think it finally closed in 1991. It first the children's slavery that built that school. It was her experience as a survivor in Eufaula that fueled her interest in working with Phoenix Indian School survivors and the Arizona community to successfully advocate for at least part of that property to be preserved for public and as a remembrance and recognition, not just of the tragedies.
that occurred there. And there are many, many
tragedies that occurred there. But also in honor of
everyone that went there and their spirit's survival
that came from that experience, just like here in
Oklahoma, you have many tribal leaders who went
through that process and having -- having that school
signify that spirit of survival. And it's just as
important as capturing the dark tragedies.

And that kind of brings us to why these
discussions are important for future policy. And
Muscogee Creek Nation contributed to some of the
testimony in the broken promises report issued by
Congress a few years ago -- a couple years. And in
that report, Creek Nation's testimony charted the --
the impacts of various policies throughout history
Muscogee Creek Nation as well as other nations, and
noted what that while fully categorizing the costs
involved didn't come true, and fully calculated the
amount of effort and expense it would take to address
those costs may be allusive, may be difficult. We
have to try. We have to try and look at what policies
you can implement to rectify this -- this history.
And what is this history? These are terrible,
terrible stories, but they didn't occur in a vacuum.
When you look at 1871, the day Riverside was opened.
That's one of the earlier dates that are out there. There are some other earlier ones. But in the proliferation of boarding schools and Indian schools you see ramp up in 1880s and the 1890s. What did that coincide with? It coincided with our legacy of allotment. It coincided with a number of federal policies that were designed, in the famous words, it coincided -- coincided with allotment policy, took hold and pulverized our governments as nations. Whether it be by land, pulverizing our land, pulverizing our culture, or pulverizing our language.

So these boarding schools went hand in hand with other allotment assimilationist policies that occurred. Now, when you think about the Battle of Little Bighorn. That took place in 1876. It was one of the last moments of one era of policies. You know, you had the removal, then direct Indians wars, and then you moved into assimilation boarding schools and all that. Everything we're talking about today wasn't an accident. It was by design. And so, what are the answers for the future? You know, today happens to be the two-year anniversary of the historic victory of the Muscogee Creek Nation in Oklahoma versus McGirt. Chief Hill has recognized today as sovereignty day for Muscogee Creek Nation. But
sovereignty day isn't just -- sovereignty day isn't just the recognition over the reservation that was affirmed by the Supreme Court and McGirt. It's also about sovereignty over our language, our culture, our food, everything about us that makes us -- makes Native. So if we're looking at answers for the future and how all this information could be correlated processed and translated into actual actionable policy. We know what policies work. The policies of self determination and tribal empowerment are the ones that work. The policies of assimilation, of patriarchy are the ones that don't. This has been proven time and time again.

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

I want to read one paragraph. Two sentences from the statement issued, of course, my phone went out. From the statement issued by Muscogee Creek Nation. Time this -- this important issue -- boarding
school -- school issue to -- sorry. Gosh darnit. I had it pulled up. But basically, it talks about how self determination can't be understood without understanding the boarding school experience. The boarding school experience was a direct -- from self determination. Chief Hill asked me to share some of those stories. I think I offered them about, you know, some things about my mom's personality that I didn't understand until I was much older. Her mom was actually orphaned and grew up in a school similar to hers. Where we now run and manage and follow hopefully it's a new day. But the path that's ever been proven that works is tribal self empowerment. And I'm honored to work under Chief Hill in Muscogee Creek Nation as we fight for that every day.

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

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

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

(Speaking Native tongue)

SPEAKER: My name is Joan Anna Scraper. I'm
Cherokee, Pawnee, Iowa, and Otoe. I'm a second
generation boarding school individual in my family. My mother attended Chilocco Indian Boarding School and I was placed at Seneca Indian Boarding School when was I was 10 years old. I lived there for three years and then I went to Sequoyah High School and graduated from Sequoyah in 1977.

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

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

JOSEPH SHEWMAKER (405)426-2968
through such traumatic experiences. I just honestly don't even know what else to say except our hearts need to heal. We do deserve our language. We deserve to have those families that we lost.

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

SPEAKER: My name is (Incomprehensible). Chickasaw. I've heard of the ages of some of the survivors at 5 years old. That's when I went to the Indian school. I could speak Chickasaw and I spoke English. I was an interpreter for my grandma because she -- when we went to the store. And so, one day, the government woman come to the house and said it's time for me to go to school. She said, "No, she's too little." But the government woman said, "No, her daddy's already signed the papers for her to go to school, so she has to go." So that day a walked out of my grandma's house and went to school. When I come back, I could hardly speak Chickasaw anymore and grandma would tell others "She's a white girl now. She can't talk in Chickasaw no more." Anyway it -- that's -- I went to four boarding schools. And the
first one I went, my brothers and sisters were there
so it was pretty great -- wasn't bad for me because
they'd -- protecting me, I guess.

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

MR. NEWLAND: We have, I think, one speaker over
here. There's a young lady in the front who's had her
hand raised for a while. And then, we'll take a break and we'll continue again. We'll -- after our next few speakers, just a short restroom break and catch your breath.

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

And one day in July, these two, big, green government cars drove up. One drove up close to our little wooden house. And this big white man gets out. And the other car kinda stayed on the dirt road behind the house. So these were traumatic moments for me
because I didn't know what was going on. I was running around barefoot, playing with my cousin and my brother, who was two years older than I. And this man stopped to talk to my mom and dad and I noticed my mom was crying. And so, they called me up there and this man picked me up, put me in the car and I'm crying, my mom was crying, my dad was crying. And then, they went to my brother. And they had to pull him. He pulled them and then set him in the car. We didn't even have time to tell mom and dad goodbye.

So they took us to Fort Sill Indian School in Lawton. And I cried all the way. They took my brother and I to Fort Sill. And they took my brother immediately up -- some big boy took him up to get him ready, you know, do his hair and clothing and everything. And I'm left there with this man by myself, just a little old girl, you know, and I'm -- I hadn't ever been around any -- any man by myself and that was frightening in itself. So about two and a half hours later, it was getting dark outside. This big girl came and got me. And she took me up on that chair, "Come," and so, she took me across the field between the boys and girls dorm and took me out to the girls dorm and took all my clothes off, put me on a table and she put a towel around my neck. And she
poured kerosene on my hair and it burned real bad.
Some got in eyes. And so, she wrapped my head up with
something and I sat there for, maybe 10 or 15 minutes
with my head just burning -- something terrible.
And in a little while, she could grab -- gather
some clothes -- clothing for me. A towel, a
washcloth, and soap, she gets a big brush, the kind I
use to clean my floor or something hard. She gets
this big ol' long brush about this long, and then the
lye soap. And it's pretty big and long and narrow. I
haven't told my kids, my granddaughter, my daughters
about this because it hurts. And so, they -- she
takes me down. There's nobody else's in the building
but her and I. I know that they're all mad and I
didn't know she was my relative at the time. So she
takes me down, puts me in a cold shower, makes me sit
on the floor, rubs my knees with lye soap across like
that. She tells me to put your arms up and rubs my
arms and elbows. And then, she starts to wash the
stuff out of my hair and she burns my eyes. And so,
finally, after she makes me go like this so she could
wipe my bottom and all the other things that -- that,
you know, Comanches are real -- we just don't go
around half naked or let anybody touch us. So then,
anyway, she takes my upstairs after all of that where
she teaches me how to brush my teeth. She said, "Brush your teeth like this," and there's a row of little water spigots and we used those to wash our face and brush our teeth in. And then, we use the great big showers to wash our whole bodies. And there are six or seven girls in there I leaned later on. But I'm there by myself. And so, she takes me upstairs to the room -- to the -- what did you call those? Dorms? Places where we slept. Dorms. Dorms. And she puts me in one of the beds and tells me to -- this is where I was going to sleep. There's nobody else her, just me by myself. I never been away from home. And she turns all the lights off. She goes in the room and locks the door for herself. And I'm the only one in the whole girls dorm for two months. By myself. And I -- she takes me to meals and I have to eat up every -- every little morsel of food on my plate or I can't get up.

And that was my first time ever being under the control of someone else with like. That was so rough. And when all the kids came in, I started making friends. Well, that was the good part. But we had to clean floors with toothbrushes. If a big girl above us didn't like us or we rubbed her the wrong way, we were -- we had to clean floors with toothbrushes and
soap. There was so many bad experiences. I don't talk about it to my kids. Today is the first time I'm talking about it and it still brings tears to my eyes.

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

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

SPEAKER: Thank you. My name is Catherine Parker. I'm not a Comanche Parker. I was secondary captive but -- but, yeah, for myself, you know, I...
didn't understand a lot of things growing up, you know, the lies of my mom and her actions. She was -- she was a very loving mother, but never told us, I love you. It was just understood. Rarely hugged us as kids. But we knew she loved us. It was something inside of us that knew that. She was very regimented when it came to cleaning, when it came to dressing, when it came to grooming herself, anything like that. All the -- we had rules and lots of rules. She was very -- a very regimented mom. But she was also loving. She taught us lot of things, you know.

But there are still things, even now, that I'm learning about her life. She was always afraid. She was scared all the time. I didn't know why she was afraid. She was, you know, she would say, be careful, you know, don't go by yourself, which is, you know, now, during this day, during this day and time, who doesn't tell your children that. But she was always afraid of everything and which put that fear in all of her children. We are all very scared of different things because of what, you know, we saw her do, you know, our mom. So, you know, just keep in mind that it doesn't stop right here -- that the ones that came and experience the trauma, that that trauma just keeps passing down from one generation to the next. And you
don't even know that you're even in trauma until you
get old enough to understand it, then look at yourself
and say, "Wait, why am I so afraid of everything? Why
am I so conscientious of that -- what white people
think?" Seriously, "Why do I feel like I have to let
them go past me before I start walking?" I mean, you
got to stand up for yourself. You have to remember
that there's a lot of things that we do as the
secondary person to that trauma. That we do -- we
don't even realize that we do it. And there's much
more to that. Someone needs to research that
secondary part. It won't be me. But I just thank you
all for coming. And, you know, our honored guests.
Thank you for this opportunity.

SPEAKER: (Speaking Native tongue) for being
here. My name is Andrea Longoria. I have six
children, ten grandchildren, and one
great-granddaughter. My grandmother was Ernestine
Shamayne. And Andrew Harrington, Caddo and Cheyenne.
They were the -- my -- my grandma. There was 12
siblings and they all went to boarding school here at
St. Patrick's and here at Riverside. And 11 of the 12
children were taken away. And the baby, Ernestine
Shamayne was too little and she couldn't be taken.
And when all was said and done, all women, children
that grew up to be adults were sterilized or chose not to have children because of the trauma they suffered here. Now Ernestine, the baby -- not coming here. She had one child. That whole family that -- it was wiped out for not being able to have children. Which is my grandmother. But two -- two years after she met mother, she was murdered. So my Grandma Irene Shamayne took my kid out of in California because her because my uncles were part of the relocation program as well, the assimilation. And came back and took my mother. And so, my mother was raised in San Francisco. And then, my mother had four children and we were born and race in San Francisco. As a mother of six children and a grandmother of ten, it has been hard to heal from the pain that my family almost didn't survive if it wasn't for Ernestine Shamayne. And I'm here for them. A lot of the stories, especially the one this morning. I don't know if it was the first or second person, the gentleman. My grandma Irene would bring us here, I think around 11 years old, would come here and she would share stories and she told us everything. She told us about the delousing and the powder, the poisonous power that was thrown on them. And she brought us, actually, here to the school and showed us where their hair was cut in
the basement. And she didn't hold anything back. And I always wonder why she was so adamant about telling me -- us these stories of her own journey and my uncle's. And I didn't realize at the time what she was actually doing.

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

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

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

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

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

Our the people -- tried to get wiped out, our Cheyenne people. Over in Sand Creek, Sand Creek Massacre. Then, they put us here in Oklahoma. When they put us here in Oklahoma, the boarding schools were established. You've heard a lot of the stories. The people here in Oklahoma, in the western part of Oklahoma know how long-winded I am, so I'm just going to try to be brief instead of talking for a long, long time. When they put us here in the northwest part of Oklahoma, our religion was the sun dance, Cheyenne
people, we had the sun dance ritual ceremony where we
go in there and we fast for so many days and we
pierce. And the (Incomprehensible) there in northwest
Oklahoma -- just to practice our religion, and they
say that when we pierced ourself, we were trying to
kill ourselves. And so, they took a lot of our
children a lot of our grandparents and parents and put
them in boarding schools and took the, what they
thought was the rough ones, they put them up in Fort
Mary and took the prisoners up there -- a lot of my
granddaughters love it there -- Roman Nose. The
decedents -- five generations back on my father's
side, Black Bear's. I'm a Cheyenne. Five generations
back, Roman Nose, on my mother's side, I'm Cheyenne. I
was married in Lame Deer, Montana to a northern
Cheyenne girl for 46 years. She passed away five
years ago. We -- I don't know how we get together,
but we were both products of a boarding school. I
graduated here in 1971, and she went to Flandreau,
South Dakota. And she graduated from St. Labre
Boarding School in Ashland, Montana. And I come here
today to -- to stand up for all the students that came
here to Riverside that were -- that were tortured, who
were going through a lot of atrocities. I've always
wondered -- that cemetery up there, the Indian

JOSEPH SHEWMAKER (405)426-2968
cemetery where there's a lot of children buried up there. But, for some reason, all those records are lost. So we do not know how many children died since 19 -- 1871, that are buried here. We looked across the nation here to find in residential schools and boarding schools where children are found buried in mass graves. We don't know how many's buried here. But I want to say, today, that on behalf of all the students, on behalf of all the parents, on behalf all the stories that have been told today, I want to say is -- it is an Indian tradition -- we have a lot of sovereign nations here today. And in the Indian tradition, your being here today, the Secretary, your being here shows us respect. Is it shows me respect to come out from way up there, you come down here to Riverside Indian School. And to sit here and you patiently listen to us. And I want to say thank you for doing that. And I made my speech right here. I just want to say (Speaking Native tongue) I'll turn this over to the Governor and Lieutenant Governor.

SPEAKER: Thank you. First and foremost, I just want to say thank you to the, as we know as WCD, the Wichita, Caddo, Delawares for letting us come to their our land and hold this meeting. It's sometimes proper to say thank you to those tribes. I just want to say
thank you to allow other tribes to come to your
property and have this meeting. I want to say thank
you to Secretary of the Interior, Haaland. I know we
met her when we were running for Congress in
Albuquerque. It's good to see that you've made it to
this point because -- not -- had the other had
representation, and I don't believe, maybe, a
secretary of the interior that actually visited with a
tribe in this magnitude before. And the Assistant
Secretary, as well, Bryan Newland.

I got to think that you're a great asset to
Indian Country. Great asset to us. And I think what
we're doing here is -- is a great benefit to all the
tribes. It is part of the healing process to talk
about it and discuss it. I was going to say I'm not
product of a boarding school. But my parents and --
and my uncles and everybody -- my cousins all. And I
said some of the things that were brought to and told
to us and the things that happened to us or what they
did in boarding school. I said, "Now, I know where
the kerosene came from." I said, "I know when we were
kids, we always had to wash our hair with kerosene."
I said, "I never knew where that came from. So now I
know where that came from. When my hands were slapped
with a ruler, I know where that came from."
So a lot of things that were taught and did to my parents -- my parents and my relatives, it was all brought town to us. Although we didn't attend, it was the still turned down, the emotional -- they were deprived emotionally because when you left your parents as a 4 our 5, 6 year old -- 8 year old kid, you had to become emotionally strong. I think some of us can testify that as we had -- one lady over here said that there was no emotion, not even between my grandparents, I tell them and I say, I don't think I've ever hugged my grandma. I've seen her, I've been around for her, I took her to the store. I did all those things. We know we cared for each other. We know we respected each other, but I never hugged my grandmother. I mean, she's gone now, but I didn't understand where that came from. But some of us are that product of those people who are hardened or, you know, for people who were abused and neglected. So it's still filtered down to my generation, you know, I don't do that to -- treat my son that way. We always say we love each other, we hug each other and we did all those things but I never did beat him because that's what boarding school did to our parents and grandparents and things like that. So we still have that after effect. Although they're not here, they're
not -- they can't testify. We remember we heard this.

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

SPEAKER: I'll try to be pretty brief with this. My grandmother went to a boarding school in Arlington. One of the first things she always told me is that she had her mouth washed out with soap because some girl named Diane said she spoke Navajo and she said, "I didn't do it. Didn't do it." She was always adamant that she didn't do it. But My grandmother went to
boarding school, my dad went to boarding school. My grandmother didn't talk about it much, but my aunt did.

About a year ago, she came to my office, closed the door. Her daughter was there. She asked her daughter to sit out on the foyer, and she told me all the things that had happened to her back at Concho Boarding School. And, you know, she saw crying. She was 85 years old and I sat there and listened the best as I could. But one thing that my grandma said that I want to -- when I was 5 years old, my dad used to come home from work and we'd all come up and jump in his arms and at night, we'd kiss him goodnight and I'd go to bed. But when I was 5, my dad said, "Men don't kiss. We shake hands." And so, from that point on from 5 years old forward, I never hugged my dad, and when I met him and came to the front door, my sisters got to, they got to jump all over him. But I didn't get to? And I think that was an effect of -- my grandmother, later in her life, told me that she wasn't a very good mother because she didn't know how to be a mother. All she knew how to be was a matron. And so, she couldn't pass that down to her son and her son couldn't pass that down to me. But when my grandmother was getting ready to pass way, when she
was older, she said -- she was 85 years old when she goes, "I didn't say tribal words, but that man told the people that did." So it a lasting effect on her 80 years later today that she got her mouth washed out with soap so that she would quit talking to him.

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

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

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

What I would like to focus on what my two
colleagues mentioned. The residual effects on our
citizens. I'm a retired educator, working primarily
in Indian education. And over the years I've worked
at a public school setting. That's where over
95 percent of our students attend, and they are the
ones that are the lasting legacy of the influence of
the cultural genocide that our people have experienced
they have made it through the public school setting
without an understanding of what their parents, their
the grandparents have experienced. And we need to do
more because it's not just a problem with the
Department of the Interior. It's also a problem with
the Department of Education. I urge you to
collaborate with Secretary Cardona so that they can
impact the broader state of education. And I'm
thankful for my colleague, Director Dearman. The work
that I had done with him to reform and -- to reform
improve the education of our boarding school systems. He's a good man. He came from Riverside. He has a good vision. I'm thankful he's been able to lead as long as he has. And I look forward continued good things from him. But we need to collaborate with our departments of education. I worked regularly with -- in New Mexico with Secretary (Incomprehensible) and others in the Indian Education Division to address the issues in -- in your state.

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

So I look forward to the recommendations and the policy changes. Although we've been moving in a good
direction the last decade or so, but there's still
much to recognize in terms of what -- in terms of what
have been inflicted upon our Indian citizens. And so,
I appreciate your presence and I'm that I thankful
people have spoken to give their prospective.

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

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

SPEAKER: Hello my name is Wisdom. I'm a proud
member of the Chickasaw Nation. I went to boarding
school and I'm a proud veteran. I'd like to address
the commission about the healing process to the
(Speaking Native tongue) veterans in the military.

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

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

JOSEPH SHEWMAKER (405)426-2968
Country will know that a red star family -- will learn
from this commission what I red star family is. And
again, it has to be a healing song. But once it
starts, I know it'll -- it'll -- it'll catch. It'll
spread like wildfire. And when this commission's
gone, that song can still be there. So that's -- if
you can just communicate that, someone made a request
that there be an honoring song -- a healing song for
red star family so Indian Country will know what red
star families are. Aho.

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

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

And it -- I did a little bit of research on it
and I'd like to send you this calendar that I did.
Before I was the chairwoman, I was our cultural
leader. And so, I would do the calendar every year
and the last one I did, I did it on Carlisle Indian
School. And I tried not to make it sad but you
couldn't help but be sad because of the survivors that
made home. We had over 30 -- 30 kids still there at
Carlisle, Pennsylvania. They were -- they -- they
moved them from their -- when they were -- when they
died, they didn't -- they buried them in a certain
area. And when the government decided that they
needed area, they moved them to another area. And
at -- I've never been there. I've seen pictures of
the graves that are there. We have a lot of unknown
graves that are Apaches. So we don't know, but my --
my whole thing is, how do we know that those are our
people. They -- I mean, how did they -- how did they
transfer? How can you transfer buried people -- kids
to another area it be correct, it be the identity of
these -- of our people that we lost there?

So a few years ago, I went to the -- probably
about 10 years ago, I went to the area -- I was IHS --
in Oklahoma City. And there was some people there.
And I know there was -- I know that they had some
funds to transfer people -- our people back to their
original homelands. And I know that there was some in
North Dakota. I think that they just recently
(Incomprehensible) them there. And -- but when we
were talking in this discussion of these people that
was there, I asked if there was any babies that were
buried there and they said, "No." But I know that
there was one. My -- my -- my ancestors in Colorado,
Chief Loco, they had grandson who was my
great-grandfather, his name was Talbot Gooday. He was one of the people that they took -- one of the things that they -- they, you know, my -- my -- not in any history records, it's by history of my family that they tell us that the -- when they took them from fort -- Florida to Carlisle, they took prominent children to that school to make an example out of them. That they -- that they showed them the rest of the tribes that, you know, they -- this is what is you're going to become, you know, and they had to cut their hair and they couldn't talk their language. There's a photo that they took of some of our Apache children and I'm sure some of you have, maybe, have seen them, before and after picture. They, you know, they were -- they -- they had long hair and they cut their clothes they had their traditional clothes on. And the next picture they showed of them, six months later, they're -- they're wearing these wool outfits and they cut their hair and none of them are smiling. None -- none of them -- neither picture, none of them are smiling. But it's just -- I guess it's -- and they were really thought about the trauma that these kids suffered. I -- you know, stories that we've heard that they took some of our kids, that -- that were at Carlisle. And then, they send them to these
white people's homes in Pennsylvania and they were,
basically, their slaves. They worked, they worked,
they worked 24/7 at these houses and people never saw
them again.

So, you know, it's -- it's -- I guess, you know,
I just want, you know, to make sure that they aren't
forgotten. I know we haven't forgotten them, it's
just -- I think we need to really address that in your
initiative. I'm really glad that you did that.

Started this, and so, you know, like we said, if
there's anything that we need to do to help you as
tribal leaders, let us know because we're -- that's
what we -- that's what we do. We try to help as many
people, not only our people, but the rest of the
people. I have -- I have good friends that are
different tribes and, you know, we try to help each
other in any way that we can and support each other as
much as we can. And I just want to thank you for
coming today.

SPEAKER: Okay. Hello, my name
(Incomprehensible). I'm really nervous. I'm just
going to read this off my phone. Thank you to all you
who are here and have shared and to those of you who
haven't shared, but are here. Being in a historically
traumatic place for our people can be triggering and
very painful. But I hope you know that sharing your truths does make a powerful difference. I did have one recommendation, maybe, in future for a tour but if need be, you guys could open or close with this nudge. It might be very helpful. My grandmother, my mother, and my sister all went to boarding school. My mother has a lot of stories to share. But one in picture that really hit me hard was that some of the priests, the staff members would take young boys and put them in a circle and fight them like animals for their own satisfaction. I don't know. But my uncle was one of those kids and he was -- he was in a fight against another kid and he won. And the staff member beat him up until he was unconscious. And they just drug from the blacktop and down into a basement. And my mother didn't get to see him for a long time after that. She didn't know if he was alive or dead. A couple years later, he tried to take his own life at boarding school by drinking cleaner.

I think the most damning is that our family dynamics have been shattered. They've been destroyed. In my own family, we've got members who are estranged. We've got trauma that we continue to carry. We have addiction issues, history of abuse, and our children's legacy, our inheritances were stolen, our ways, our
languages, our integrity, and our lands. And these issues continue to affect us to this day. My family and I have launched a fundraiser to purchase a ground penetrating radar and we reached that goal. It is our own set, it can be used to check for unmarked graves at residential sites. We actually launched this three weeks before madam secretary announced her own investigation. I read the report from the front to back and I narrated it for other people to listen to. It's on Youtube at (Incomprehensible) networks. If you want to put it on, it's about three hours long and you can listen to it. My partner and I went and got certified to operate as well as data to use the technology. I know there's an of landowner and processes and procedures. So how do we change the rules so that we may search for our children's without the (Incomprehensible) office taking our names? Are there not laws protecting Indian names and graves or does that not apply here? How do we do a meaningful investigation in time for others to be validated in their experiences. I'm not college educated. I'm no lawyer or politician or important person, but I am byproduct of this system. One that has deeply affected my family. It has not deeply affected me and I feel called to do something about it. I want to say
thank you to you two and your teams who are doing hard, meaningful work. In just the report, I had to take several breaks and it took days takes to get through. So I know what you guys are carrying and what everybody here is carrying. It probably never feels like enough. I know that that's how I feel about the work that I do. But we can't let this fizzle out. We're not asking for anything other than to be involved and to be heard and to be seen. These lands could be -- should be indigenous led because we are indigenous. I know that things like this take time, but my mother is 71. She deserves answers. And our people's suffering, our children's suffering deserves to be acknowledged. Thank you.

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

SPEAKER: (Incomprehensible)

MR. NEWLAND: (Incomprehensible) I just wanted to say that your work is enough. And everybody who's carrying this work. The part of, you know, in this -- this work between generations is enough. And your work is important and you're important to your family and your people in your community. And please -- I'm grateful for you standing up to speak, but don't
diminish who you are and your experience and the work that you're doing. Everybody is here to help carry this weight together. So thank you for that.

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

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

JOSEPH SHEWMAKER (405) 426-2968
(Incomprehensible). My sisters were in Santa Fe, like I was no longer part of her family. But she goes, because I depended on them to be their sisters. So when my parents got to my younger brother and myself, we were the youngest two. They just said no more. It stops. No more Indian school for my kids. So we could be in public schools and went on to college. But it changed my family dynamic, like someone was saying earlier, and how we heal from that. And I thank you. I apologize for my addressing you because I also know both of you personally. And in these -- in these roles and these places that you are now. That's the answer to the prayers. It is a big assistant. You're putting your -- to help handle this and I'm glad Assistant Secretary is by your side. This is heavy, the heaviest in this room. I can feel it in my heart. But I want to say something about -- let me just finish this part up because I -- I think it's important to hear from the survivors as well. Absolutely. I got to get my (Incomprehensible) iPhone won't recognize me. It's the truth.

So the United Indian Nations, when we started, we worked with NABSE. We had an event last month. So they -- when we started going on social media, of all different things that we would be discussing, hearing
the survivors' stories. This woman that reached out
to me from Pennsylvania, and started talking to me
about the Martinsburg Indian School. Now, this was a
BIA school that they let a German man -- it was almost
like contract -- he was a contractor. And he said, "I
got a big building. I can take some Indian students
on." We didn't even know this because he -- because
there was 50 Osages and 50 Oneidas from Green Bay that
went to the school. That school only lasted three
years under that contract. He lost his contract.
Some of the stories that some of the townspeople
would, like we'd heard earlier, they go to school all
day. And then, they became workforce for the local
community. But there are two Osage students that died
there that we know of. The right one was Henry Ward
Beacher. But back home, he was known as (Speaking
Native tongue) there's Mary Gibson (Speaking Native
tongue) to me. Those are names that probably haven't
been spoken since 1988. Excuse me. We want -- we
want them back home. Memorial Day, no one seen those
graves. So we will continue to be supportive of your
efforts with the United Indian Nations. When you want
to use our platform, you let us know because the tour
doesn't end here. I wish that you could have heard
the other stories as well. And again, I just thank

JOSEPH SHEWMAKER (405) 426-2968
you all for being here. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Hello, my name is Carol Jean Castro Flores. I have -- I started school here when I was 6 years old and my mother had come to school here too. She attended here -- I just wanted to speak just a little bit. My mother's no longer here. But she had -- he went to school, my father had not come. But my grandfather and grandmother had to pull her out of school here when my grandmother got sick with cancer. So they took my mother out of school, which was in the 9th grade. So she never did get to come back to school. She never finished. And I'm just thankful that before she left that she -- they had formed the first Indian club here. And I have a picture of the lady, Solomon Buxton. And I'm thankful for that. And my mother -- my mother has been gone since -- I think it was in '98. And there's -- we were -- I am the oldest out of the eight children. So I have one brother left. And, anyway I go -- I -- I hate to say this, but I ran off from Riverside when I was -- I think I was about, like, 8 years old, maybe 7. And I ran off with one of my relatives and her son. I'm sorry, her friend and they were older than me. And it was almost time for summer, to be out of school -- on this school. I was still -- and it was summer and --
but I was so long from my mother. And -- and so I was
going to go with them. I was in the girls building
and they had a -- a fire escape, the kind that you
slide -- slide down. And we waited until about
midnight and had to slide down on a blanket. And so,
when we get down there, there was three of us. And we
went -- we just walked to town and across the -- went
down on the -- bridge. And there was an apartment
that they had. I don't know whose -- I think it was a
friend that had the relative there within that
apartment. She wasn't there, but, anyway, we sat and
that morning, we heard a knock on the door. And I
don't know how they found out, but they found us there
and they brought us back to the school and we got
punished. And I don't know exactly what happened to
the girls. But with me, the principal, she -- all she
did was, she whipped my hands, and tapped me with a
ruler, and patted my hands. And I was surprised that
it wasn't worse than that. And I was so thankful.
And my mother got home with some things, but I -- but
I'd like a lot of the others that have gone through
boarding schools of what had happened. So I probably
talked about it, but my mother never did. And I used
to wonder why too, why my mother never -- she never
did tell me this. She, you know, that she loved me or
anything like that. And I didn't know what was going
on about that nowadays. I have children, I've always
told them -- I'll hug them and tell them that I love
them. And knowing that there is really, really love.
And my daughter's the one that told me about -- about
the Secretary of Interior coming over here and I only
found out about two or three days ago. If it were not
for her, I would not be here today. But I was really
happy and -- and I am -- I am so thankful that I was
able to take a picture with her. And the lady up
there on the right, I'm so thankful for her, for
getting me in so I could take a picture. And I
thought that would never happen for me, to take a
picture? We were at -- even if I could just say hello
and shake hands and say I'm pleased to meet you, and
I'm so thankful that I did come listen to -- I knew a
lot of the students that had gone to the -- the
boarding schools and the men too. And I know her -- a
lot -- a lot of them that are -- that had passed on.
And I was looking around to see if I could recognize
some -- some of them. But I -- there are -- I guess
they had gone on. And I'm, right now, I'm 83 years
old. In February I'll be 84. And, actually, I never
thought that I would make it -- past 30 or so and here
I am. So the Lord is not ready to take me so I am
happy. And at first, and when I lost my husband and -- and since 2014. But I have a daughter here and my -- her name is Joy and I just want to you --

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

SPEAKER: Thank you. Good afternoon, Secretary Haaland and Assistant Secretary Newland. My name is Walter Echohawk. My Pawnee name is (Speaking Native tongue) which means good horse and I'm here today as the President of Pawnee Business Council. I have with me, a Pawnee delegation here. That includes our Principal Chief, Mr. Patrick Leading Fox and Mr. Matt Lee. And we want to welcome you to the State of Oklahoma. We thank you for coming, especially from hearing these stories today. Sitting here all day and listening to these stories, it's really hard to find the words to express my feelings and clearly, the boarding school days were days of heartbreak. And a lot of that trauma remains today, embedded in this generation. And I, myself, have not -- was not a boarding school student. But I did want to add a word on behalf of my grandfather, Delmar Echohawk, one of my grandfathers. And he, in 1907, shipped off to Carlisle, Pennsylvania Indian School. And his records indicate that he was a runaway and he came all the way back to Oklahoma as a teenager. So now, he made it all the way home from Pennsylvania back to the Pawnee
preservation. And he -- his records say that he was a deserter. But he, no sooner, got home in 1918. Sent him back to Carlisle. When I think that every person in this room has their families -- have been touched by, you know, by these -- that era. So I'm very glad that you're engaging on this investigation and on the trial towards reconciliation and healing. And, you know, on the Pawnee reservation where I work today, you know, my office is one of the tribal offices is the former Pawnee Indian Boarding School. And it's a historic district. Most of our buildings there, they were boarding schools open for about 80 years. So three generations of our people went to Pawnee Indian Boarding School.

Today, we have our tribal headquarters in those -- those facilities. And one of the unique things that I think about boarding schools is that there's no cemetery there. But we do know that most of the schools happen to have cemeteries, you know. And over the 80-year period that -- we know that some of those students died. Where are they buried? And so, I'd like to have an answer in your investigation. You, what -- what -- if you can find the records of those students that attended over that 80-year period of what happened to the ones that passed away and
where are -- where were they, you know, we've heard
rumors when I was a younger person that they were --
many graves where children were buried beneath some of
the buildings there. When we had GPS work done, we
haven't found any of these unmarked graves. But we're
wanting to know where -- where the children are buried
so that they could -- we can, at least, identify where
their final resting places are. But, excuse me, so
that would be one request on behalf of the Pawnee
Nation would be to help us retrieve those records of
those students, you know, the archives, you know, so
we can figure out what happened on our children that
passed away. I've heard stories that -- that at the
Pawnee Indian Boarding School, where all of our folks
went, you know, we -- we've got one sitting right here
that for speaking the Pawnee language, the practice
there was to take the children and put them in a
gunnysack and hang them up in a tree or hang them up
on a wall there in the dormitory. And sometimes, the
trees would have more than one kid, you know, hanging,
hanging in a gunnysack all night. And so, there has
been trauma and I think the question is, we're on a
path here towards healing, and reconciliation, and
healing. And I hope that that would be the product --
that the end product of your work here on your journey

JOSEPH SHEWMAKER (405) 426-2968
as you go across your country. And so, what my
question is, what -- how do we heal a painful past?
And I know in that process, our wisdom traditions
teach us that -- that one of the ingredients in
healing process is -- at some stage in that process,
is to perform acts of atonement. And so, my question
is, what acts have atonement will the Bureau of Indian
Affairs do for inflicting pain of this nature that is
still with us today. And we know that we can't turn
back the hands of time. But the acts of atonement
that our wisdom traditions call for is to do
everything in our power to try to make things right
and wipe the slate clean. And so, it seems to me is
that one of the things that I hope that you would
consider recommending is an act of atonement in this
healing process would be to get the funding for about
each and every tribe for to restore our languages so
that the generations of Pawnee Indian Boarding School
here, hang kids in a sack for speaking their language.
We -- today, our counsel that declared the Pawnee
language a state of emergency, as an endangered
language. We don't have resources. We don't have the
resources from the government to really save our --
our endangered language. And so, I think, because
that was practiced nationally by BIA to stamp out our
language in these institutions. One act of atonement would be to restore those languages and that falls, to me, on the shoulders of the BIA these are BIA schools, and they need to step up and restore these languages to their former state of proficiency. And I don't know a dime comes out of the BIA to do that. But I think it falls on the shoulders of BIA to restore the languages that were trying to be stamped out.

My other thought on acts of atonement is that when we look back on that day, basically, what we're look -- looking at, the treatment of the children, and the destruction of their culture and damage to their family. These are human right violations. And apparently, we didn't have the kinds of human rights that we see today in modern, international human rights law. But they need to be taken to children under the UN genocide convention, taking the kids is an act of genocide. And so, I think that one step of atonement is to restore the human rights of Native people so this process will never be repeated again. And of course, we know that the UN, United Nations' declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples is an international document handed down by the UN that lays out the human rights of indigenous peoples worldwide, including Native American human rights in our country.
And Canadian, this past summer, the National Parliament passed the national statute too endorse and incorporate provisions of that human declaration in the Canadian law. We need to do the same thing here in the United States. And I think that would be a fitting act of atonement, I think it should emanate from the Department of the Interior under your leadership as a step that could be taken to restore the human rights so that this process is never repeated -- repeated again. So I just offer those remarks and I wish you the best on your journey here. You have the best wish I'm sure from everyone in the room here on this journey. Certainly on -- from the Pawnee Nation. And we thank you for taking the time out of your busy work, you know, to turn your attention to addressing, some people will say, though, this is ancient past, let's -- let's forget but you -- we've seen in this room, you know, that -- that the harm and the trauma is still with us today. So I thank you for looking at and I wish you the best.

Thanks.

SPEAKER: (Speaking Native tongue) Hello, my name is Joanna James, I'm a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation. I'm the granddaughter of (Incomprehensible) and the great-granddaughter of (Incomprehensible). I
want to thank you for being here today and taking the
time to listen to everything that we have to say. My
grandmother was a boarding school student at this
boarding school, which is how my family ended up in
Anadarko. I was born in if Lawton Hospital and raised
in this community until I was 10.

My grandmother didn't share a lot of her stories
in the boarding school which was something I hear lot
of our elders. But one of the things I know is that
they did put the children in different rooms. So she
was a Chickasaw, they put her in rooms with other
children from other tribes so that the children would
have to learn to speak English. But our kiddoes were
smart. And so, instead of speaking English, they
taught each other their language. And so, growing up
I don't know how many languages my grandmother
learned, but I know, growing up, she could speak
five -- it's a Kiowa and Comanche which comes in handy
because now, I have grandkids and they are Chickasaw
and Kiowa. And so, I didn't get to learn Chickasaw
because that was taken away from us. When my grandson
was born two years ago, I was in the room and my first
words to him were (Speaking Native tongue) it's,
"Hello grandson, I love you." And those were the
first words he heard. And I don't speak a lot of
Kiowa so I apologize to any Kiowas in the room, but I did say (Speaking Native tongue) "Thank you, creator." And so, that's the best I could do, he needed to hear both of those languages.

And so, there's something healing about that, but I want to bring that up because when we talked about what we can do and going forward. I'm grateful to have my education and my doctorate study is in federal Indian policy and the boarding schools and how are we going to help our and education today? So the -- so we carried this pain for long time and we don't want our children to carry it. I don't want my kids to have to carry that pain. And I'm -- so that we need education. We know that suicide is really high in our communities, our children ages 10 to 24. It's the second leading cause of death for them. And it's because they're walking in the world and in an education system where they -- they try to get rid of their people. The system was not created for us. And so, what can we need to do a better job of creating systems and educational spaces for children where my grandson can walk into that room Chickasaw and Kiowa, not having to code-switch. And I know that many, probably know that term. But, you know, it's when we have to walk into a room and we have to act like
something other than we are. I also had the privilege
of working for the State of Oklahoma for five years as
the travel liaison for the Department of Mental
Health. It is exhausting being walking into a room
and code-switching. I don't want to see that happen
for our grand -- our grandkids and their grandkids.

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

And I worked in Anadarko when we have suicide
contagion that was over the suicide prevention grant
at that time. And we had powwows. (Incomprehensible)
went to state that year in Anadarko, I went to state
that year and I feel that creator was stepping me in
because when that happened, and we had our children
encompassed in their culture and they were protected.
And they had access to their -- to their elders and
their people. So we need more funding to go straight
to our tribes so that they can do those things and
have those programs that we know that our are
protected for our children. And just as we heal, you
know, as we stand here today, we're healing our
ancestors, but we're also healing our descendants.
And so, again, thank you for this space, and thank you
for all of the elders that shared their stories,
today. And you are speaking for my grandmother, as
she's no longer with us. As you are telling these
stories, so thank you.

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

My grandmother -- I am a product of the
relocation. We left here in Anadarko, Anadarko is in
Caddo where it's from the Caddo Nation -- people. And
being raised here in Dallas, Texas, my grandmother was
fluent Caddo speaking. Her and my father, I hear
every day, every day talk Caddo. My mother, in
Comanche, would pray in Comanche. But she didn't
really have anyone there to speak her language to
other than people at church that, you know, that she
was congregating with my grandmother -- I'm thankful
that I came here today because I, too, am being healed
from being here. My grandmother, she was -- she was
born 1900. She had two birthdays. 1889 and -- the
turn of the century, she would have been 122 years old
if she was here today. But, as it was, my father went
to school here in the 40s. Well, I didn't think it
was going to be this difficult to talk. But I wanted
to share because I have a four daughters, and
grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and I want them
to know as well. So as it was, my grandmother passed
away here in Dallas. But we brought her back here to
be buried in 1972. And she was in a nursing home
there right outside of Dallas when she expired. So as
it was, we were here for Indian Hills powwow when word
came to us. And so, we moved here -- moved here to
Anadarko and I've never left. So I (Incomprehensible)
Kiowa here. I'm married to an Apache. For 47 years,
I've been married to an Apache. But I did ask father
once -- I said, "How come we don't talk Caddo?" And
he was Caddo and Delaware (Incomprehensible) it means
he was here. Well, he said, "Remember when your
grandmother took you to visit her in the nursing
home?" I said, "Yes." I was probably about, maybe
12, 13 years old. And she was in complete
she couldn't fend for yourself, we bathed her and fed her, they took care of her. And when my father was in the war, she would yarn him some socks. And she sat on that and it caused her to be paralyzed. So I grew up to take care of her. There was nine of us. Anyway, back to that question to my father, I asked him. I said, "How come we don't talk Caddo? Why didn't you teach us?" I said, "I hear it and understand it." He said, "Well, you remember we went to visit her?" He said, "Over there in that nursing home?" It was in Arlington somewhere. I said, "Yes." And he said, "She asked me. She told me not to bring you no more, even though I had all my (Incomprehensible). I slept with her, we shared the same room, combed her hair, bathed her, took care of her, fed her, and he said -- he told me, he said, "I have to keep that promise." He said, "She didn't want you to know -- any of our time -- she didn't want you to go through the things that she went through." I said I didn't know what he was talking about. I said, "What did she go through?" He said, "Well, when we go to Anadarko." He said, "I'm going to show you." He said, "Since you asked" he said, "I'm going to show you." So sure enough, out there -- it was out there at St. Patrick's when you're going out towards uptown,
there used to be a drive-in over there. He said, "You see that school?" I said, "Yes." Drove around and kind of crumbled down and he said, "that's where she went too school. That's where she said things -- things that were done to her that she don't want to be done to you or your brothers and your sisters."

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

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

My mother, she went to school at Fort Sill Indian School and Chilocco. And she wouldn't tell me because I was growing up in Dallas, and I see couples in the park and they'd be hugging, holding -- walking, and holding hands, walking around and all that. And I told my parents one day, I said, "Why don't we do that? We don't hold hands." And we had a big family, big ol' kitchen table and my dad came up and said, "You come here. You stand right there." He said, "I'll tell you something, Indians, we don't hold
hands. Indians, we don't hug." Well, I didn't know what he meant by that. He said, "We pet. We pet one another," he said, "because when you start hugging and holding," he said, "you're going to have a big family like this." I said, "Okay." So that got me quiet, asking me more regarding that. He'll come back here -- when my mother and grandmother passed in '72 -- residency here, oh I was happy because I was going to be among Indians. You know, there are no Indians in Dallas, Texas, just very few at that time in the 60s. So they said, "You can go to school over here, but I think you want here at Riverside." Well, I was just happy. You know, isn't there Indians over there? Well, I was disappointed because I couldn't get in. Riverside only had to have 22 credits. I already had that and I was in the 10th grade. I had about almost 30 credits. So I ended up going to Anadarko. I graduated out of there. But, you know, they really tried to put me into the other boarding school in Eastern Oklahoma, (Incomprehensible). Still, I had too many credits to go in. So I kind of missed out on the boarding school, so to speak. My husband, he's retired from Riverside, but he loved me, so he said an arsenal. And he went on out to Sidney, graduated from there. Okay. (Incomprehensible) being
healed today because when that elder gentleman, the second speaker spoke, talking about at St. Patrick's and what they did to him, I could only visualize that happening to my grandmother, having die -- lye soap in her mouth and in her hair. She was only 90 pounds and she, probably, was only 4'11". But it helped me to understand little bit more today being human. Right now, I'm secretary to the local chapter of (Incomprehensible) Indian capital. And there was a few that's here, but they left, because they went to go meet with the mother of a tribal member that was murdered by the (Incomprehensible) a couple weeks ago. And the mother is needing some help. But before I close, I have something for you, Secretary of State, I don't know -- you're from out west. This is -- we call it Indian perfume and we have seen here from our sacred mountain in Longhorn in Oklahoma City. And thank you for coming and that's one of our T-shirts. So thank you for allowing me and spending your time.

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

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

SPEAKER: Hello, my name is Larine Morgan, sorry, and I want to thank you Secretary and Assistant Secretary for being here today. My name is Larine Morgan and I am a member of the Cheyenne Arapaho tribes of Oklahoma. I work as a governmental affairs officer for Governor Wassana. What I wanted to kind of talk about today -- I am also a boarding school graduate. I attended Carter Seminary, which was granted to the Chickasaw Nation. I don't have
anything horrific that actually happened to me during that time. But I did suffer from separation anxiety, being away from my family. And like some of the other people have talked about, becoming regimented, which I turned that into a positive in my life as far as working and I love to clean, so. But I came from a family, my grandparents and great-grandparents attended boarding schools as well as my parents. My parents met at Chilocco Boarding School. My father is Otoe-Missouria and my mother is Cheyenne Arapaho. So I am -- I feel like I am kind of a product of the Chilocco Indian Boarding School.

One of the things that I wanted to kind of touch base on today regarding the boarding schools is the intergenerational trauma. As an employee of the Cheyenne Arapaho Tribes, I have worked in various positions, including social services. I've been a caseworker. I've worked in Indian Child Welfare. I've been in social services as an executive director. And I call kind of want to talk about some of the issues that, not only the boarding school survivors face, including, you know, they suffer from mental illness, drug and alcohol, substance abuse, they suffer from a variety of economic barriers and just a lot of life's hardships. And some of the things that
I have recognized over the years and working with our tribal population is that many of our tribal members come from broken homes. And I believe that stems from, you know, the older generations that attended boarding schools. They suffer the traumas as well as, you know, the ones that have grown up their whole lifetime in the boarding schools, they didn't have that -- they didn't have a functional family foundation to where they learn to express, you know, love or they didn't have their mother's love, or they didn't have the role model of a functional and positive father, and a home. They didn't grow up with their siblings. So they don't have that family relationship. And so, when they grow up and they become parents, a lot of times, the family unit fails. And it fails and in a lot of, you know, it passes on from generation to generation to where we are today, that we have a high rate of children in Indian Child Welfare and foster care. Because it, you know, we have the bureau here and have the BIA social worker that was here (Incomprehensible) that I have worked with previously and, you know, the high rates of foster children in our tribes, not only our tribes, but the tribes of Oklahoma. It is really at a critical high, I believe. And that is -- that is an
after effect of the boarding schools,
intergenerational trauma, and historical trauma.

It's just kind of rolling over from generation to
generation. These traumas, I feel like the, you know,
the things that are our grandparents had experienced,
you know, the -- like we've heard today. Some of the
families didn't know how to express love in a positive
way. They didn't know how to -- you know, because
they are traumatized over the years. They didn't, you
know, they didn't feel comfortable being physically,
you know, hugging their children or hugging their
family members or telling their children and their
family members that they love them. Which, in turn,
traumatized the children growing up. So that --
that -- and then their children have issues, and we
see a lot of drug and alcohol abuse in -- in children
and even in people of my age and generation wondering
why their parents didn't love them, didn't care for
them, didn't seemingly encourage them to do things
like, you know, go off to college or -- or to better
themselves. You know, our Indian people are in a
really sad state of affairs. I hate to say, as far as
the -- barriers they experience because of the
boarding school experience. And now, you know, us as
tribal governments, and our tribal leaders are left to
try and, you know, deal with the -- the every day
occurrences that happen in our tribes, including the
foster children, the placement of the Indian Child
Welfare, tribal members depending upon the tribe, you
know, and the high unemployment rates, and, you know,
the -- the drug addiction, alcoholism, domestic
violence, and child abuse. So I just wanted to bring
that point up and to let you know that, you know,
that's another area. It -- it spans out further than
just a survivor. You know, the grandparents and
parents that have suffered, you know, there's the
children and the grandchildren, generation to
generation. And I hope, you know, that somehow, we
can, you know, maybe find solutions as far as more
mental health treatment options, more dollars to help
address some of these issues, and even just talking
about it. I know in our tribe, we're trying to do
more for mental health awareness that I think
education and coming from the top, especially the
leaders, and saying that, you know, it's okay to --
that this has happened, but, you know, there's a road
to healing and to having some solutions and -- and for
the tribal members that we can pass down. And I do
want to say that, you know, I have -- I'm the last
boarding school generation at my family because my
children did not attend boarding school, and I wouldn't have them go even though my experience wasn't, you know, that bad. But due to, you know, the separation anxiety that I experienced before I went to boarding school. I never had anxiety about being away from anybody. But now, as an adult, you know, I can honestly say that -- that I do have that, especially with my children, and that my feeling, you know, come from going off to boarding school and that's something I deal with personally. But I wouldn't want that for my children. And besides that, I wouldn't let them go anywhere, keep them close to me.

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

SPEAKER: (Speaking Native tongue) Madam Secretary (Speaking Native tongue) I work for the Cherokee Nation, Language Department. I wanted to tell you a little bit of some of the experiences that I had. My father was talking in Cherokee in the Dwight Mission. He's -- he was a -- a boarding school survivor. And I had the honor to grow up and the elder's home. I was the seventh child and my father
was born in 1929. And so, I was kind of the oops that happened later on in life. And I was very fortunate to understand and hear some of the things that he had to teach us. My grandmother was in 1899. I remember her and some of the things that she had. In 2003, I went to work for the Cherokee Nation Child. At that time, I went to work for Indian Child Welfare. Over the course of the next 11, 12 years, I had to testify as an expert witness in at least 33 different states.

Madam Secretary, I've been fighting different states, I've been spit on, I've been yelled at, I've been cussed at by judges. I've looked to courts with bail money because I thought, for sure, I will be I would be thrown in jail by now. Fighting for our kids, some of the things that I've seen firsthand of how they still have the Indian problem. And some of the things that these elders have told me has been breathtaking. From the molestation of -- different guards making them molest their kids. The hurt, the pain they feel, the beatings. The one elder, I remember him talking to me about what was happening to him. He lifted his hand and showed me the stub where his pinkie used to be and told me about -- that's when I stopped speaking my language. When they cut this off. I went back to work and they would ask me, why
do we have to do this? I had several stab wounds, show them my pinkie. I remember as a young worker having a case in Oklahoma City, standing in front of, I believe it was Judge Stewart (Incomprehensible) we didn't want to lose our tribe. And I -- one of the older social workers, after I got done, he pulled me aside and wanted to talk to me in the back room, started crying, and he wouldn't tell me how when had she first started working for Oklahoma DHS, how she -- her and her supervisor had binoculars, how they watched Native families' homes. And the mother left and they would whisk in the steal the babies, and never tell, never tell what happened to them. Can you imagine just walking away from your babies and coming back and never knowing where they went. Never. That day she was crying, and asked me for forgiveness, they made, me do it.

This young man was in the middle of that. I remember my -- some of -- what some of my elders told me. (Speaking Native tongue) To be (Incomprehensible) on another's existence is to find the reason to like or love, to hold on to one another, to humanity and never let go, to treat another as sacred. But that day, I said I grabbed on to because this was my teachers. And not (Speaking Native tongue) I know
that's the truth. Even though I'm heavy hearted today, talking about this. So I remember hugging her and praying with her in spite of what she's done because my elders felt that it was -- that told that the (Speaking Native tongue) people that rose above, we wasn't supposed to let this get it we were supposed to rise above. A few years later, one of the last cases I was involved in was the baby Veronica case. And despite everything we did, we still lost that baby. And it's -- I remember us naming that baby. I remember us praying with it. Dustin, the father, the grandparents showed us, irregardless, this is what happens when you fight against the United States. Just two weeks ago, madam Secretary in the rule against Native tribes in the case, from what I can tell, they invited other people to make a case against us that was -- waived the rule against us. It scares us to death because there's an Indian Child Welfare case there and this Court scares us because we're afraid that we're not going to be able to protect our babies. A lot was said today about the language program, the different languages and sacred languages. There's -- our transcribe has really, really worked on them, just trying to save our language.

Madam Secretary, it is very commendable had the
honor to be with you in first statement, and my kids
had the honor to meet you. They still talk about you.
And for a moment there, when you walked past through,
you watched our babies speak their language. I
watched the tears and I was able to see your heart and
your person. We believe in you as a Native people.
We're doing everything in our power to try so save the
language. We currently have 26 programs that are --
are language projects that we're doing simultaneously,
trying to save our language. We're building the
language center which is a 52,000
square foot center which will house all of our
students (Incomprehensible). We're making plans for
another one. The list goes on with what we're trying
to do. We've got (Incomprehensible) that's moving
right next door we're -- speakers and Native family
learners, the whole families is going to be side by
side. We're trying to build a new generation of first
language Cherokee speakers. We're even putting in the
curriculum that babies on born in the language
village, with we're going to do, elders standing up in
the porch, waiting to hold that baby and promise them
our language. We're starting our babies at six weeks
old to speak our language, all the way through junior
high. And luckily, some of the things that Mr.
Dearman is doing with BIE, we've got a grant where we're building the track on the way around the BIE school. Saving the language. We've got college programs, four years, we're trying to go from six weeks old to the doctorates in our language. And it's going to take a lot. There's more than just a $300,000 (Incomprehensible) grant. They've done more damage to us than that. Our language is our image. We've lost 150 speakers last year. We lost 134 the year before, 119 the year before. We lost 70 to covid. And right now, we're building, roughly, 24 speakers a year. And we're losing 150. But we're getting ready for our first language speakers, and the word is needed, that how things are going in the court systems, how things are going in the United States. We build first language speakers to get a new generation. It was prophesied that this would happen. That generation may go through what these folks went through because it's still here. And it's even greater than our people. They -- we're going to have to come back unbrainwash them, what these schools have done, madam Secretary. The community isn't there. Our tribe has seen (Incomprehensible) we've started 13 different demographics in Cherokees just to figure out how to activate the language (Incomprehensible). How
to get them behind this, and I see other tribes, although I haven't seen their demographics in -- in their community. But there's a lot of things you have to do in order to get people behind you because this is so engrained in these people. And the resources that hasn't happened -- their leadership, that has to be involved. And I can go madam Secretary, I've come to honor and to stand before you today. I want you to know that I (Speaking Native tongue) My boy wanted you to let you know they said hello.

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

SPEAKER: Madam Secretary, Assistant Secretary Newland, I just want thank you for being here today. Nice -- it's good to be here. (Incomprehensible) Wichita Caddo Delaware territory. I just want to say on behalf of my brother my sister, Veronica and our family. You know, my name is Wilson Kirk, I was named after my grandfather, his name was Wilson Kirk. And we never understood where that name came from until not long ago. So Wilson Kirk was a full blood Osage. He was a -- didn't speak English. And he started at boarding school when he was a boy. His name was (Speaking Native tongue) meaning five dear. And he
went to school and he became Wilson Kirk. And one of our relatives, they did research no long ago and found out that that was -- he went to school and his teacher's name Ellen Kirk and she said, you know, "I've got a brother named Wilson, so now, your name is Wilson Kirk." And now, our Osage family is the Kirk family.

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

So even though my, you know, in hearing my grandmother and my dad and their siblings speak Osage, in fact, they spoke (Speaking Native tongue). They would do that and, but they didn't want several people talking about it. A lot of people have seen stories
of their family, they would talk and say we wouldn't understand. So tried to pick up words and phrases of what they were saying because when they were saying something they didn't us to hear because it might have been saying something about somebody or they were teasing or it was something serious, they didn't want us to know about. So we're trying to reclaim that language. This is my family and me little sisters.

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

I'd like to ask you if you would consider something. Coming up in just a few weeks, the pope is
coming to Canada and he's going to -- they say he's
didn't go to apologize, again, for what happened at
the residential schools in Canada and whether that
applies here or not, we don't know. But, not getting
into a discussion of faith or Christianity or not
saying all that stuff, the mission of this is, for my
family, is to find out what happened with my grandpa,
and to what happened to the people like him that went
through that. They tried to strip him of everything
he knew. And, fortunately, I'm proud that he resisted
after he got out of school. But finding out what
happened to him, we can continue to heal. Would you
consider using your position in government that's --
we're proud of you that you would use that to call on
the pope and make the churches to open their doors to
all the information that they hold. I know that
you've done that with this historic report and effort.
You've done a remarkable job, the two of you did. I
know it's painful to hear these stories. But there's
so much more out there we don't know that's in the --
the buildings all across this country and Canada. And
so, if -- if you might think about the influence of
your position to call on the churches and the other
institutions and the private institutions to open
their doors to tribes and archives and organizations
like NABSE to make the information available so we can find out more about them. I want to know more about what happened to my grandpa and his folks and what happened at the Catholic schools. There's just a little bit of information about that. But somewhere, that might exist and your good work, the two of you and you -- your remarkable staff that you've had work with us on the report. That influence in government can go beyond your own agency and go to these other non governmental institutions that have information that might say something more about our grandpa, or more about my grandpa, or why they had to -- things they endured so we can understand those of you and we can move on best. Thank you.

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

SPEAKER: My name is Augustina Juanito Rodriguez. I went to (Incomprehensible) seminary school in 1948. I was 6 years old when a lady by the name of Ms. Walkins came by my house and told my parents that I would be going is to (Incomprehensible) Seminary. When I went there all the way -- they sent us by bus. And my sister told me, "Don't talk your language. Don't -- you have to behave yourself." She was trying
to (Incomprehensible). I had no idea what she was talking about. So we went in there and they gave us tooth powder -- toothpaste and, you know, a nightgown. And they put us into a little room with bunk beds. And I had -- they had a little box where we kept our personal stuff, and I brought with me, a little doll that my grandmother had given me. And so, anyway, we were -- I had -- I didn't know the English language. So what I would do is, I would follow -- the other girls were doing something I didn't know how to speak English. So I would follow what they would do. If they made their beds, I made my bed. I got dressed when they got -- you know, everything and I learned from them, you know. Then, we had to march down the halls and single files to the dining room. And then, we would sit out at these little tables and we had two girls on each end, older girls that watched us, you know, to make sure we ate our food. But we would go back -- march on to bed. It seemed like my -- the times that I remember was all the time when we marched. We went to the school, we marched to the school in single file. You couldn't get out of line or you'd get in trouble. Then, we'd March up the stairs to the school and notice are teachers. And they stood at the podium there, and they watched us.
They never smiled they had cold eyes. They never blinked. And we would go into the classroom, and then, we would sit there all day. And then, finally, we would be released and everybody took us back to our dormitories in a single file. It seemed like we were always in a single file. We had a big playground with a few swings and a slide. But nobody ever played. We were too busy being quiet because they said you can't be noisy here, you have to be quiet. So we went out there and we would sit in the grass. They didn't even get up on the slides and the swings. We didn't play tag. We didn't do none of those things. Most of time, we just sat.

And then, eventually, we had go in. Well, I didn't know what my sister meant when she said, "Don't speak your language ever. Don't say it." Well, what happened one day when we went there to lunch, when we came back to the dorms -- to the dorm room, there was my little doll laying in the floor. And so, that made me angry. And I said, in my language, I forgot and spoke my language. "Who did this to my doll? Who did it?" I wanted to know. I was very angry. This was the only connection I had with my grandmother. And so, I said, "Who did this?" Well, obviously, the matron, her name was Ms. Malina. She said -- she
heard and she came, and she grabbed me. And she took me town to the hallways to her office. When she got me there, she said, "Put your hands out." And I, being obedient, I put my hands out and she pulled out of her drawer, a ruler. And she and hit my hands, but the bone side. And so, what I would do -- I would pull my -- pull my hand behind my back, she would jerk them out again, and then, she'd hit me again. I did it again, tried to protect my hands, and she, you know. I'm not going to win, so I stuck both of my hands out and I let her beat them. Then, she -- when she got done beating me, she pushed me out the door and I went back to my room. I thought my hands were broken but they weren't. They were all bruised up -- bruised up. And I took my little doll, and I laid down in my bed, and I fell asleep crying.

When I woke up the next morning, my eyes was cold. I looked like an (Incomprehensible) or something and I looked around at the room. Nobody didn't even want to look me. Not one of the girls in that room. And I felt bad. I was the one that had come and had to sit for talking in my own language. And nobody talked to me after that. But I got over it eventually. But that was our life, marching back and forth, forever being quiet, and that's the way our
life was. Just going back and forth, going out to the
playground and playing quietly. We didn't want to get
loud, oh, no. There was consequences for that. And
that's the way it was. I left out a lot of details
that I could tell you, but I don't want to take up too
much time. Okay. So thank you.

SPEAKER: (Speaking Native tongue) Hello, my name
is Natalie (Incomprehensible). I'm a Choctaw.
Listening to all these stories, I can really relate.

My grandparents went to boarding school, and I knew
that he spoke Choctaw, but it wasn't where we could
hear it. They were punished when they were in
boarding school, so they didn't pass that down to
their children. And the end result is, we don't know
it. And they didn't want their children to be
punished like they were.

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

The other is that I ran away. I was only, like, 6 or 7 years old and I don't remember a lot after that. But there was a reason I ran away. After that, my parents never sent me back. So I just see how this trauma can (Incomprehensible) to hurt our people. Even though people say we need to get over it, it still -- it affected me. And I'm, you know, here and how it affected the kids. When you look at the lack of parenting skills they had, the lack of nurturing that you don't get in the boarding schools, then I understand why our parents were the way they were, and the lack of not saying I love you, the lack of affection. It just has an impact. So one of the things that I'd really like to see is that our tribes and the federal government do everything we can. You know, we hear a lot about reparations and things like that. Well, they owe the Native people. They took a lot from the Native people. And sometimes, we are the ones that kind of get left out of everything. So that really is important. The other thing is, we can't get past things when it continues to happen. The broken promises that attack on or sovereignty, the taking of our children by state agencies. It still happens
today. And they're placing non-Native homes away from their culture. So that just continues the path of assimilation. The whole goal is assimilate and Christianize. And they've done a very good job of that in some ways. And so, it takes a lot -- it takes us beyond the ground, trying to re -- I guess, encourage all of our tribal citizens to it take into -- upon their hands to try to revive everything that we have lost. Growing up, I didn't realize the connection until I went to the Indigenous People's Law Program, and they had a course, it's religion culture (Incomprehensible) and we had to do our own autobiography and how we was raised, how are -- how it -- how that religion, how that culture connected, and how we connected to that. And so, that opened my eyes a lot about what's going on with me and trying to identify with who I am as an individual, for those things that were stolen from me. So it's bee -- it's been a process and it's been a journey. But, I'm getting there. I'm slowly learning the language. It's very hard as you get older to learn a language. It is. You know, the more I try, the better I'll get, I guess.

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

JOSEPH SHEWMAKER (405) 426-2968
The attack on our sovereignty with that Supreme Court ruling was -- that was not based on a law is very terrifying. As tribal nations, and I'm going to (Incomprehensible). I'm sorry if I said that wrong, what they said is, you know, that the Judge (Incomprehensible) said that the trail was a promise. We expected the federal government, who is supposed to be our guardian, and do what's in the best interest of tribes to uphold those treaties and the federal Indian policies that are there to protect us from this states. And that's where we really need to work on. States have been on the (Incomprehensible) but continue to take our children, they continue to take anything else our lands, and things like that, the taxation and whatever. So we need our tribes to step up. And do what they need to do to protect us, but also to protect our children. When we go into those court systems, state agencies should not be the main person, it should be us as tribal people, should be the ones that's in there, saying this is what we need for our children, not letting them take custody and placing them anywhere they want to place them, because if we continue those patterns of assimilation and we should not be doing that. So you, y'all have the power to make some change, y'all have the power to
rule the Supreme Court again, who is determined to
legislate from the bench, which is not their job and,
to make these tribes, empower our tribes to be able to
take care of our people and our lands. Our lands are
not glorified playgrounds. We are people, we are
human, and we need to be recognized as sovereign --
tribal sovereign nations (Speaking Native tongue)

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

And so, I would go out on the weekends to spend
them with my grandmother and I would tape record her.
And I would just write, and a lot of my papers that I
turned in were based on her life and the things that
she used to tell me about. She never said anything
bad about boarding schools. She went to a Catholic
boarding school in Santa Fe, New Mexico. And the
other thing she really talked about there was how
lonely she was; right. But she did say -- she talked
about when the priest came around to collect the
children, she said. And put them on a train and send
to Santa Fe, so there was a lot of Laguna who went
there. And her dad was only able to visit her twice
during the five years that she was gone. She left the
Village when she was eight years old. And because all
we had was a horse and a wagon. It was the only
method of transportation. And so, he was only able to
visit her twice. That's when she met my grandfather,
Mr. Main. She was from Laguna Pueblo. And it seems
like they really helped each other because they knew
what each had gone through. They were both Pueblo so
we had the same belief systems as far as our religion
is concerned. And they were -- they were part of the
assimilation policies to the extent that they left
Laguna after they were -- actually I think they
left -- my grandfather left to go to Winslow because
he knew my grandmother was moving there, he sort of
followed her there. They got married in Winslow, and
he worked on the railroad for 45 years
(Incomprehensible). But, I think that experience
bonded them together, in a way that I would never
understand. But, in a way, that helped all of us to
be a strong family. And my grandfather, he realized how important our traditions were and that generation of people, even though they lived away from (Incomprehensible) for 45 years at an Indian camp at Winslow where there were rows of boxcars. And so, all the Laguna people, they lived in these boxcars and worked on a railroad. They had the community there, even though it was sort of separated from the rest of the town. They had feast days. They had their outdoor -- outdoor up ovens, they all baked bread together? They -- they -- they had deer suppers like we do in the village if somebody got a deer, they would make deer stew and the whole village would come and participate. I saw my first ceremonies at the Indian camp in Winslow when I was about 3 years old. And it was all because I think my grandfather and the -- and the people of his generation and my grandmothers recognized how important our traditions were had to carry on, that there was a time in our history where children were taken and those things weren't handed down. And so, they spent their lives, 45 years away from our community ensuring that I was able to learn about our traditions, to know the songs, to know what it meant to dance, and hearing those songs and create a community together. And so, I
think they went through unimaginable trauma that they
never shared with us. And I think it's because they
wanted us to not be burdened by it somehow. I mean,
it manifests itself in many ways. But I feel
incredibly grateful that I have what I have because of
my grandparents and the children in their generation
who really took the brunt of assimilation but
recognize what they could do to make sure that we had
some, you know, future. So I -- I just thought I
would share that with you. Thank you for sharing your
story with me and with us and know that we are all
dedicated to making sure that we can make this effort
truly healing for people. That's what our intention
is that we want to do that. And I hope that by
letting go some of what you shared today, that it can
be healing and not return. So that -- that is my
hope. And just know that we will continue to do the
best work we can to make sure that this is meaningful
to you. But thank you all so much, Bryan and I
appreciate you coming.

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