

CITY OF SEATTLE
RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION relating to the acknowledgment of the various harms and ongoing historical and inter-generational traumas impacting American Indian, 1st Nations and Alaskan Natives for the forcible removal of Indian children and subsequent abuse and neglect resulting from the United States' American Indian Boarding School Policy during the 19th & 20th Centuries; supporting American Indian and Alaskan Native communities efforts in calling on the United States Congress to commission a study and report on the United States responsibility and role in adopting and implementing an American Indian Boarding School Policy; and committing to work with the local American Indian and Alaskan Natives in efforts of reconciliation in addressing the impacts of genocide, historical trauma, language and cultural loss.

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle recognizes that Seattle is built upon the homelands and villages of the Indigenous Peoples' of the region; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle was declared to be a Human Rights City on December 10, 2012 committing itself to protect, respect and fulfill the full range on inherent human rights for all as set for in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and numerous other international human rights treaties; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle passed the Indigenous Peoples' Day resolution on October 6, 2014 to celebrate the thriving cultures and values of Indigenous Peoples'; and promote the well-being of Seattle's Native American, Alaskan Native and other American Indigenous Peoples; and

WHEREAS, in 2013 the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, representing 59 Tribes from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Northern California, Western Montana and some Alaskan Tribes, passed Resolution #13-32 to "support the enactment of a bill by the United States Congress to create a Commission on American Indian Boarding School Policy"; and

WHEREAS, the United States, at the urging of and in support of the Christian Churches of that time, adopted the Indian Civilization Fund Act of 1819 to provide financial support for church run schools to "civilize" Native American children through an education program intended to eradicate Native American culture and later adopted a Boarding School Policy for the purpose of eradication of Native American culture and language; and

WHEREAS, between 1869 and the 1960s at least 100,000 Native American children were removed from their homes and families, often involuntarily, and placed in far away Boarding Schools that were funded and operated by the federal government and Christian churches, where those children were shamed for being Native American; punished for speaking their tribal language; banned from engaging in any traditional, spiritual, or cultural tribal practices; shorn of long hair and stripped of traditional clothing; and severely neglected,

subjected to harsh discipline and corporal punishment, and physically, sexually and mentally abused; and

WHEREAS, Article II: Section (E) of the United Nations definition of genocide, as defined in international law in the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide*, states “*Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group*” as an act of genocide; and

WHEREAS, these prevailing practices involved Native American children who were overseen but not parented; who were bullied and assaulted not only by adults but also by older children under the modeling and instruction of the school caretakers and staff; who witnessed other children suffer physical, sexual and mental abuse, including punishment by physical restraints, beatings, and isolation in inhospitable surroundings such as unlighted and unventilated cellars and outbuildings designed as “jails”; and

WHEREAS, only 20 of the over 300 distinct Native American, Alaskan Native and other American Indigenous Peoples’ languages are estimated to survive by 2050, with the majority being extinguished and lost particularly as a result of the United States’ American Indian Boarding School Policy, which included a prohibition against Native children speaking their tribal languages; and

WHEREAS, Native American children who were indigenous to the Pacific Northwest and lands known today as the City of Seattle were forcibly removed from their homes and families and transported to regional boarding schools, including Tulalip Boarding School, Cushman Boarding School (later Cushman Hospital), and Chemawa Boarding School; there they were forced to speak English and otherwise treated inhumanely as set forth above, the effects of all of which Indigenous Peoples in the greater Seattle area and throughout the Pacific Northwest in profound ways to this day; and

WHEREAS, these Native American children, their children and now their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, have become the legacy of the United States Indian boarding schools and the federal policy that established and sustained those schools, and the trauma these Native American children suffered has gone unrecognized and unresolved and has instead passed onto each subsequent generation; the resulting historical and intergenerational trauma pervades, undermines and devastates Native American individuals, families, and communities to this day; and

WHEREAS, the United States never has offered a meaningful apology, or offered to provide any redress to, Native American, Alaskan Native and other American Indigenous Peoples for the generations of harm caused by United States Indian boarding schools and the federal policy that established and sustained those schools; and

WHEREAS, the facts and history about the pervasive and continuing harm and trauma caused by the United States’ American Indian Boarding School Policy are poorly understood by the American public or the United States Congress or the Executive Branch; and

WHEREAS, in order to begin a healing process to address the harm and trauma suffered by, Native American, Alaskan Native and other American Indigenous Peoples as a result of the United States' American Indian Boarding School Policy, a comprehensive national study of the Policy and its impacts is needed, which study should include complete documentation of the events that took place at each of the boarding schools; the fate of each of the Native students; the gathering of testimony from those who attended the schools; and recommendations to Congress for truth, healing, reconciliation, redress and justice; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

Section 1: The City of Seattle, in effort to promote truth, healing, reconciliation redress and justice, does hereby acknowledges the various harms, acts of genocide and ongoing historical and inter-generational trauma to Native American, Alaskan Native and other American Indigenous Peoples resulting from the United States' American Indian Boarding School Policy; and

Section 2: The City of Seattle strongly encourages the Seattle Public Schools to include both the history of the Boarding School Era and the teaching of Native American, Alaskan Native and other American Indigenous Peoples' languages in school curriculum; and

Section 3: The City of Seattle does hereby encourage the United States Congress and Executive Branch to accept responsibility for United States' American Indian Boarding School Policy and its various harms and ongoing historical and inter-generational trauma to Native American, Alaskan Native and other American Indigenous Peoples, and to take meaningful steps to promote truth and healing, and to provide and fund reconciliation, redress and justice for those harms; and

Section 4: The City of Seattle does hereby support the enactment by the United States Congress of legislation to conduct a comprehensive study and report on the United State' American Indian Boarding School Policy and to conduct hearings on boarding school abuses and their continuing impacts on Native American, Alaskan Native and other American Indigenous Peoples, all of which is intended to promote truth and healing and to provide and fund reconciliation, redress and justice. The study and report should include a plan and design to gather information and take recommendations from experts; to consult with and take recommendations from affected Native American, Alaskan Native and other Indigenous Peoples, especially to understand and address the impacts historical and inter-generational trauma; to support Native American, Alaskan Native and other American Indigenous Peoples language revitalization efforts; to raise public awareness and provide public education about federal boarding school practices and their various harms and ongoing effects; and to recommend and support modes of truth, healing, reconciliation, redress and justice in ways that are consistent with the traditions, practices and cultures of Native American, Alaskan Native and other American Indigenous Peoples.