
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

"THE ROAD TO HEALING" TOUR

NOVEMBER 5, 2023

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

BOZEMAN, MONTANA

REPORTED BY: EMILY K. NILES, RMR, CRC, CRR

1 BOZEMAN, MONTANA, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2023;

2 10:23 A.M.

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4 (Opening ceremony.)

5 MS. CRUZADO: Good morning. And welcome to
6 your university, Montana State. I'm Waded Cruzado, and
7 I'm honored to serve as president of this institution.
8 This morning we are pleased to welcome you and to
9 welcome our U.S. Secretary of the Interior to this
10 important event, Road to Heal.

11 As we begin this event, I acknowledge and
12 honor with respect the indigenous nations on whose
13 traditional homelands Montana State University now
14 stands and whose historical and cultural relationships
15 with the land continue to this day.

16 It is our distinct privilege to have many
17 important guests with us here today, and we want every
18 individual to feel recognized and welcome. To all of
19 you who have made the journey to be part of this event,
20 thank you for your presence.

21 We would also like to give a special welcome

22 to all the Tribal elders and the members of the Cultural
23 Oversight Committee that are with us here today. Would
24 all of them please stand and recognized.

25 [APPLAUSE]

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1 MS. CRUZADO: Thank you.

2 We have come together today to confront the
3 troubled legacy of the federal Indian boarding school
4 system. Between 1819 and the 1970s, the United States
5 established and supported Indian boarding schools across
6 the nation. The purpose of these federal schools was to
7 culturally assimilate American Indian, Alaska Native,
8 and Native Hawaiian children by forcibly removing them
9 from their families, communities, languages, religions,
10 traditions, and cultural beliefs. While children
11 attended federal boarding schools, many endured physical
12 and emotional abuse. In some cases -- in too many
13 cases -- they died. These policies and practices
14 created trauma that has spanned generations. Here,
15 today, we seek to shed light on these experiences and
16 the consequences they have had until today.

17 On behalf of the faculty, students, staff,
18 alumni, and neighbors of Montana State University, I
19 thank you for coming here to share your personal

20 stories.

21 Before introducing Secretary Haaland, I'd like
22 to talk briefly about Montana State University. Montana
23 State University was established by the Montana
24 Legislature in 1893 as the first institution of higher
25 education as the land-grant university of the state of

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1 Montana. We were founded by virtue of the Morrill Act
2 of 1862, which instructed Congress to establish one
3 public university in each state and territory of the
4 union for the purpose of educating the sons and
5 daughters of the working families of America.

6 Almost 100 years after Montana State
7 University's founding, in 1994, Tribal leaders of the
8 state of Montana and the nation, and the president of
9 Montana State University, Michael Malone, played an
10 essential role in the passage of the Equity in
11 Educational Land-Grant Status, which granted the
12 designation of land-grant institution to 29 Tribal
13 Colleges, including all seven Tribal Colleges in
14 Montana. At eight, the state of Montana has the largest
15 number of land-grant institutions of higher education in
16 the nation. MSU President Bill Tietz, Michael Malone,
17 and Geoff Gamble played an instrumental role in

18 cementing our commitment to Indigenous peoples, and
19 we're truly grateful for the trust that students and
20 their families put in us by making Montana State their
21 university of choice.

22 This fall, as Montana State University set an
23 all-time record in enrollment with 16,978 students, a
24 25 percent growth since 2010, we also registered a
25 record 817 Native American and Alaska Native students, a

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1 300 percent growth in that same period of time. MSU
2 wants to be a home for all our students, and we are
3 dedicated to providing resources and support to make
4 sure that every student who chooses MSU has the
5 opportunity to succeed.

6 And now it is my honor to introduce Secretary
7 Deb Haaland. Secretary Haaland is an enrolled member of
8 the Pueblo of Laguna in New Mexico, and she's the first
9 Native American to serve as Cabinet secretary.

10 Throughout her career, Secretary Haaland has broken
11 barriers and opened the doors of opportunity for future
12 generations. She was elected one of the first Native
13 American women to serve in Congress and was the first
14 Native American woman to lead a state political party in
15 the country.

16 Secretary Haaland was raised in a military
17 family, and she's an alumna of the University of New
18 Mexico, with both a B.A. and a J.D.

19 Please join me in welcoming U.S. Secretary of
20 Interior Deb Haaland.

21 [APPLAUSE]

22 SECRETARY HAALAND: Thank you. Thank you all
23 so much. Thank you, Madam President, and thank you all
24 for being here. I'm really happy to be back in Montana
25 (Native Language). I am from the Turquoise Clan, and my

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1 name is Crushed Turquoise.

2 I thank you so much for the drum and the
3 singers who are here too, and the Honor Guard to start
4 us out in a good way. I'm really happy to join you on
5 your ancestral homelands.

6 I will speak briefly because I'm here to
7 listen to all of you. Your voices are important to me,
8 and I thank you for your willingness to share your
9 stories. And I recognize, too, that there's some of you
10 who won't share at all, but you'll just be here to
11 support your people in your community, and that's okay
12 and that's wonderful too. So thank you all for being
13 here.

14 Federal Indian boarding school policies have
15 impacted every Indigenous person I know. Some are
16 survivors, some are descendants, but we all carry this
17 painful legacy in our hearts. Deeply ingrained in so
18 many of us is the trauma that these policies and these
19 places have inflicted. My ancestors and many of yours
20 endured the horrors of the Indian boarding school
21 assimilation policies carried out by the same department
22 that I now lead. This is the first time in history a
23 United States Cabinet secretary comes to the table with
24 that shared trauma. That is not lost on me, and I am
25 determined to use my position for the good of the

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1 people.

2 I launched the Federal Indian Boarding School
3 Initiative in 2021 to undertake a comprehensive effort
4 to recognize the legacy of boarding school policies,
5 with the goal of addressing their intergenerational
6 impacts and to shed light on the traumas of the past.
7 In Montana alone there were 16 boarding schools, leaving
8 intergenerational impacts that persist in the
9 communities represented here today. It is my
10 department's duty to address the shared trauma that so
11 many of us carry, and to do that we need to tell our

12 stories, and today is part of that journey.

13 Through the Road to Healing, our goal is to
14 create opportunities for people to share their stories,
15 but also to help connect communities with
16 trauma-informed support and to facilitate the collection
17 of a permanent oral history. This is the 12th stop and
18 the final stop on the Road to Healing, which is a
19 yearlong tour across the country to provide Indigenous
20 survivors of the Federal Indian boarding school system
21 and their descendants an opportunity to make known their
22 experiences. It has been an incredible opportunity to
23 share with folks from across the country and one that
24 has left an indelible mark on how we will proceed with
25 our work.

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1 I want you all to know that I'm with you on
2 this journey. I will listen, I will grieve with you. I
3 will weep and I will feel your pain. As we mourn what
4 has been lost or what has been taken from us, please
5 know that we have so much to gain. The healing that can
6 help our communities will not be done overnight, but it
7 will be done. This is one step among many that we will
8 take to strengthen and rebuild the bonds with the Native
9 communities that Federal Indian boarding school policies

10 set out to break. Those steps have the potential to
11 alter the course of our future. I am grateful to each
12 of you for stepping forward to share your stories. I
13 know it's not easy.

14 Now I'll turn the floor over to Principal
15 Deputy Assistant Secretary -- and my dear friend and my
16 valued and honored colleague -- Wikipan Garriott, who
17 will outline today's agenda and begin our session.

18 Thank you all so much again for being here.

19 [APPLAUSE]

20 MR. GARRIOTT: Thank you, Madam Secretary.

21 (Native Language.)

22 Greetings and thanks to each and every one of
23 you and good heart. My name is (Native Language), the
24 Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs.
25 I am a citizen of the Sicangu Oyate, also known as the

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1 Rosebud Sioux Tribe.

2 Thank you for joining us today at Montana
3 State University, an important land-grant institution of
4 the West. And thank you to President Cruzado, the honor
5 guard and the Bobcat Singers for providing a powerful
6 opening.

7 We know that MSU is taking an intentional and

8 smart investment in Native students today to become
9 leaders for their Tribes, for Montana, and the U.S. But
10 in the past they, vicariously through treatment by the
11 U.S. and religious institutions, removed Native children
12 from their families and territories to enter the Indian
13 boarding school system, creating a great void here in
14 the Rocky Mountains.

15 This history is deeply personal to me, as I am
16 a fourth-generation boarding school attendee. My
17 experience is far different, though, than that of my
18 mother and grandparents. In fact, my stepmother -- my
19 stepfather, who was from the Crow Nation, met my mother
20 at the Flandreau Indian boarding school in South Dakota.
21 My grandmother and mother often shared their difficult
22 stories about their experiences, which impacted our
23 lives daily, from the very food that we ate, how we
24 dressed, and even how we hugged one another in our home.

25 As we keep investigating the federal Indian

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1 boarding school system, learning about your experiences
2 at specific schools and the overall system, it paints a
3 history that records cannot fully provide.

4 In addition to hearing from you, our next
5 steps include identifying marked and unmarked burial

6 sites and determining the total amount of federal
7 support for the boarding school system. We also
8 encourage folks to raise other considerations you think
9 we need to make based on your experiences.

10 I want to acknowledge IHS Director Tso and her
11 team that is supporting this conversation with
12 trauma-informed mental health supports. And thank you
13 to Shelly Lowe from the National Endowment for
14 Humanities, which is helping us to share survivor
15 experiences across the globe.

16 We also have Tony Dearman, who is with us
17 today, director of the Bureau of Indian Education, which
18 is playing a critical role ensuring our children receive
19 an education that integrates our cultures. We
20 appreciate Tribal leaders here and their support for
21 survivors from across Montana and beyond.

22 There are a few points we want to keep in mind
23 for our conversation today. This is an opportunity for
24 survivors of Indian boarding schools to tell the federal
25 government directly about their experiences. Other

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1 folks who wish to provide us with a statement, including
2 Tribal leaders, can do so by sending an e-mail to the
3 address provided on the information sheet that was

4 handed out.

5 We appreciate you providing the space for
6 survivors to tell their stories. To make a comment,
7 please raise your hand and a team member will bring a
8 mic to you. Begin by stating your name, Tribal
9 identity, and the name or the names of the Indian
10 boarding school that you want to share about.

11 Please note that members of the media will be
12 present for the first hour of today's event. During the
13 break, the media -- our friends from the media will be
14 leaving, and the remainder of the day will be closed to
15 the press.

16 Also note: A court reporter will be
17 transcribing our visit today, and a full transcript of
18 the event may be released if requested under a public
19 records request.

20 We plan to hear from you until late this
21 afternoon and hope to learn from as many survivors as we
22 can today.

23 We know that this is a conversation that
24 involves difficult memories and experiences.
25 Trauma-informed support is available here on site.

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1 Smudging is also available. Please see an attendant in

2 the back of the room to talk to -- with someone. We
3 have the IHS providers, who can raise their hands. If
4 you're feeling a need or you're having a difficult time,
5 you can seek those two gentleman out. We can do our
6 best to help you. And we will also connect survivors
7 and their families with follow-up support if it's
8 requested.

9 To the survivors and their families, thank you
10 for the courage -- for taking the courage to speak with
11 us. Remember that you are not alone. We are here
12 alongside you and hope that together we can start to
13 heal.

14 With that, we will now open the floor. Will
15 we have our mic runners raise their hand? We'll have
16 our mic runners, and again, if you have something to
17 share, please raise your hand and we'll get the mic to
18 you.

19 MR. ARCHAMBAULT: Yeah, my name is Donovan
20 Archambault. I'm an enrolled member of Assiniboine
21 Tribe at Fort Benton, Montana. I went to Pierre Indian
22 school in 1950, '51, and '52. And when I was leaving,
23 my mother said, "You'll be going to a place where you'll
24 have three good meals, a place to sleep, nice bed, warm.
25 You won't have to chop wood, haul water, and you just --

1 you'll be taken care of." Well, that was a lie. She
2 went to boarding school also. She went to Flandreau.
3 And so when I got to Pierre, the first thing that
4 happened to me was I got beat up because I didn't say
5 the right thing or I said the wrong thing. And that was
6 their method of teaching you.

7 It was probably the most brutal time of my
8 whole life. I became a very angry person. I stayed
9 drunk for 25 years, and it all stemmed from the trauma I
10 think that we suffered at Pierre, Pierre Indian school.
11 I don't know if there's anybody in here that went to
12 Pierre.

13 Is there anybody in here that went to Pierre
14 Indian school back in the '50s? '60s?

15 It was like a prison. You marched everywhere.
16 You had boundaries. You had people looking to make sure
17 you didn't get out of bounds. No smoking. You fixed
18 your bed -- I went to the Army in 1959 and I got in the
19 Army. I fixed my bed the same way I did at Pierre 20
20 years earlier.

21 And so things hadn't changed from the time of
22 Pratt, when he said, "Kill the Indian and save the man."
23 That was the beginning of our education. I think I was
24 ten or eleven years old, and the things that they took

25 from me, they stole from me.

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1 I have a master's degree in education also,
2 but I lost my language. I lost some of my cultural
3 ways. After I sobered up -- I was 40 years old when I
4 sobered up. I began to go back to learn what my
5 religion was all about. I learned how to sing. I had
6 my own drum group. Went all -- to all the powwows in
7 Montana, Washington, Wyoming, Idaho, Colorado. But I
8 had to relearn the things that I was taught when --
9 before I was ten years old. I never ever forgot the
10 songs. I forgot the language because you couldn't even
11 say "how." You say something like that, some matron or
12 somebody would slap you upside the head with a ruler or
13 something, make you quit talking your language.

14 So to me, education was like a double-edged
15 sword. You know, when I look at it today, when I look
16 at it the old way and the new way, the old way served us
17 pretty well. And the old way was what we learned from
18 our grandparents. Our grandparents were our Head Start
19 and kindergarten, and in some cases our total education.
20 But they taught us the things that we had to know in
21 life in order to survive. And they taught us with four
22 little words: good, bad, right, and wrong. They didn't

23 have a stick there if you missed that word. They didn't
24 pound it into you. They repeated it. I'm kind of a
25 hard-headed guy, and sometimes it took my grandmother a

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1 hundred times to show me what I had to know, but I
2 finally got it without getting beat up. And that's a
3 different setting, I think, from education today than
4 what it was when I was a little boy. I think we have to
5 go back to some of that. We have to get rid of the
6 45-minute class, because what we've learned to do was
7 teach a bunch of failures. Our dropout rates went sky
8 high. Alcoholism, drug abuse, suicide, things we never
9 heard of. I never heard of suicide until I came home
10 from the Army.

11 The boarding school I think is something that
12 tore my whole family apart. I have two -- two of my
13 sisters committed suicide. Three of us almost drank
14 ourselves to death. One's a pedophile because of what
15 the priest did to us. I reported it one time what the
16 priest did to us in catechism. All I did was get beat
17 up. Matron took a shoe, started hitting me. Hit my
18 nose, bleeding. Gave me a scar on my forehead. But I
19 had to tell somebody. When I did tell somebody, that's
20 what my answer was: That's my Father. You don't talk

21 about this. So I never said another word about it. I
22 kept it in me.

23 And like I said, that anger grew. I became an
24 alcoholic. I'm still suffering from it. I have it
25 under control pretty much, but I think that the

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1 United States owes us something. You know, in all the
2 things that I've come to receive from them, I still
3 can't erase the things that they did to me. And I hope
4 that some of the families that experienced this have
5 come to our road map and lead a somewhat normal life.

6 Like I said, it took me 40 years to put my
7 feet back on the ground and stop believing in Christ and
8 the Lord and the Holy Spirit and all of these kind of
9 things that they tried to pound into me in boarding
10 school. But I had to go back to my Sun Dance and sweat
11 lodge and my elders telling me what I needed to know
12 about the higher power. And without that, I think I
13 would have had -- I would probably still be drunk.

14 And if any of you are still suffering, find
15 someone that you believe in, someone that you trust. I
16 have my wife. She heard my whole story and she made it
17 easier and easier. And a lot of times I retold the
18 stories over and over, but she tends me until I get back

19 on my feet. I came back to life.

20 I served 16 years on our Tribal Council. I
21 served three years as a chairman. I went and I got my
22 master's degree in education. So we can do it because
23 we're resilient people. Whatever's tough to come, we
24 become tougher. Go find your purpose. Find your
25 purpose in life and go do it.

17

1 Thank you.

2 [APPLAUSE]

3 MS. WEBBER: Okay. Good morning. I am
4 Senator Susan Webber. I represent Senate District 8 in
5 the Montana State Senate. I carried -- I am a survivor.
6 I attended Cut Bank Creek boarding school in Browning,
7 starting from 1965.

8 I just want to tell you I carried SJ 6, which
9 was a State Joint Resolution to request from the
10 Congress a day of remembrance for the children that died
11 in boarding school, the children that survived in
12 boarding school, and their descendants. All of us have
13 residual effects of what happened back then. There's --
14 to me, there's two different eras of boarding schools:
15 The ones my mother, my grandmother, my great-grandmother
16 went to, and the one I went to.

17 I am -- my generation on Blackfeet is probably
18 the last generation that had to go to boarding school.
19 The reason why we had to go, there was a big flood. The
20 flood of '64 wiped out all of the homes that lived along
21 the rivers of Birch Creek, Two Medicine, Badger, and we
22 had no place to go. We were homeless. So we all had to
23 go to boarding school. Families had to go to boarding
24 school. My cousins went to boarding school. I went to
25 boarding school. My brothers and I went to boarding

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1 school. So we had a different type of boarding school
2 than the ones that my mother, my grandmother, my
3 great-grandmother went to. I'm just saying them, but my
4 grandfathers also went. So I come from a long line of
5 people that were institutionalized and brutalized.

6 You know, we never talked about it. I went to
7 boarding school at Cut Bank Boarding School. Most of
8 the brutality came from other students, you know, not so
9 much as the matrons, not so much as those people. Even
10 though we were told a total lie, it came from other
11 students that also had this history that I had.

12 When I was having children, my husband and I
13 was having children -- I'm just going to tell you about
14 this because it's a residual effect of what happened to

15 all of these people that went before me to boarding
16 school. I had him be the disciplinarian. He never grew
17 up in a boarding-school-type family. My mother, when we
18 were growing up, she was the most beautiful person.
19 Creative, you know, caring. But when you got out of
20 line, discipline was quick and brutal. Where did she
21 get that from? Well, her mother went to Holy Family
22 Mission in Two Medicine on the Blackfeet Indian
23 Reservation. My -- her -- my grandmother on the other
24 side went to Fort Shaw. So where did that come from?
25 That's learned behavior. So I broke that cycle. I

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1 would not brutalize my children. If I took the
2 discipline, I would hurt them. And that's not something
3 I wanted.

4 So right now we're talking about this topic.
5 We need to heal. But we also need to recognize that the
6 things that are -- that we're experiencing on
7 reservations or within just our own little families have
8 a flash point. That's the boarding schools, and that's
9 where that's -- that was learned. Prior to that, you
10 know, if a child got out of line in Blackfeet -- and I
11 can only speak for Blackfeet -- they would be dumped in
12 cold water. You knew that that would happen, right?

13 You know, if you got out of line. So you didn't get out
14 of line. Water is cold.

15 But the thing is, is that the difference
16 between what we're experiencing today and we're talking
17 about today, you know, I -- talking about the
18 brutalization of children or the -- that you had to
19 fight in boarding school, but the thing was that was
20 taught. That came down from other -- from all of us
21 because -- because I did a study on Fort Shaw boarding
22 school, and there was 495 Blackfeet children that
23 attended there from 1892 to 1910. There was Crow
24 children. There was Cheyenne children. There were Fort
25 Peck, from Fort Peck, Fort Bel- -- actually, the Fort

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1 Peck students were the first ones there because their
2 school burned down, but -- in 1892. But anyway, that
3 was -- that came from somewhere.

4 But I just applaud you for coming. I really
5 thank you. And I thank you for all your words, all your
6 opening your heart and opening your experiences to us.

7 Just a little caveat I have to say. Thank
8 you. Today is the Elouise Cobell Proclamation of her
9 recognition. This is her birthday. And she won the
10 biggest lawsuit ever, for \$3.4 billion, for

11 mismanagement of Tribal funds. And I thank you for
12 being here on her day.

13 [APPLAUSE]

14 MS. WEBBER: Thank you.

15 MR. GARRIOTT: Do we have others? Please
16 raise your hand. Another one here.

17 MR. POCHA: Good morning. I'm Daniel Pocha.
18 I'm a member of Little Shell Tribe of Montana. I'm an
19 elder. I'm also chairman of the Elder Society for the
20 Little Shell Tribe. We're the landless Indians of
21 Montana. We didn't have the reservation. But we have
22 family that are scattered throughout the country and all
23 over the state, and I'm just going to talk about a
24 couple of them relatives of mine. And they had
25 completely -- a little different outcomes of their

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1 experiences in the boarding school.

2 First, my uncle's mother was Belle Johnson,
3 and she went to the Fort Shaw Indian school. And she
4 was actually cochairman of their basketball team, and
5 she went on to be the world champion -- first world
6 champion basketball team in the world. And she went up
7 to St. Louis in 1904 to the World's Fair, and they did
8 exhibitions of their ability to play foo -- basketball.

9 But then afterwards, they were put on display and showed
10 how they were educated little angels and how well the
11 boarding schools came. And she got a good education.
12 She went on to be one of the first RNs on the Blackfoot
13 Reservation. Her son became a Tribal chairman. Because
14 she got a good education because of her ability on the
15 basketball court.

16 But my grandmother went to St. Peter's
17 Mission, and it was tough. She was just a poor Indian
18 that didn't have a land. Didn't have a Tribal Council
19 behind them. Because we spent 157 years looking for
20 that recognition. And in 2019, we became the
21 574th recognized Tribe. But she was married out of
22 St. Peter's Mission at a very young age to my
23 great-grandfather, who was much older than her. And she
24 tells stories of sending her husband off to work in the
25 morning and then getting out her dolls and playthings

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1 and being the little girl yet. With a very, very poor
2 education, she was probably lucky to have had
3 second-grade education. She could sign her name, but
4 she couldn't read a document. And it's really hard to
5 come out of poverty when you don't have any other tools.

6 And I spent my lifetime advocating for Native

7 Americans, and Urban Indians in particular. Being
8 Little Shell, we were Urban Indians. When I was born
9 and raised in Helena, Montana, and about the only
10 advantage of being mixed blood in an urban environment
11 like that is you can play cowboys and Indians by
12 yourself, but it seemed like even at a young age Tonto
13 was losing all the time. But I've also spent that time
14 advocating for us, trying to educate people about our
15 needs.

16 My father died at 53 years of age, which is
17 kind of heartbreaking, except when he died the average
18 age for a Native American male was only 50 years old.
19 He was an old man. And that still hasn't improved too
20 much. I think we still die 16 years younger than our
21 nonnatives. But in doing the things I've done, I've
22 advocated for the poor, and I see stuff like this start,
23 and I see what an advantage we can do by educating our
24 young people and how they can move forward. And I would
25 like to see, if nothing else came out of this, that

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1 maybe there would be the opportunity to educate our
2 children in the proper way, make them to where they can
3 sit in that chair, they can be doctors and lawyers and
4 especially teachers.

5 And with that, I travel around doing powwows,
6 and I always give our tiny tots a toy, a gift for
7 dancing. And it's a replica, it's a silver round of the
8 Indian Head nickel, and I give this to you, and there
9 are two things on this: the Indian head and the
10 buffalo. And those were two things the U.S. government
11 tried to make extinct. But we're here to tell you we're
12 alive and well and the buffalo are making a rebound. So
13 thank you for your help.

14 [APPLAUSE]

15 MR. GARRIOTT: Do we have another?

16 MS. LITTLE EAGLE: (Native Language.) My name
17 is Silver Little Eagle. I'm a Tribal Council rep for
18 Northern Cheyenne Tribe, and I brought with me here
19 Micah Ed [phonetic], Adeline Fox, and Mary Ann
20 Russell [phonetic], Sandra Sangrine [phonetic], and
21 Myrna Burgess.

22 Prior to my council term, I worked at our
23 elderly program, and I worked through the hard times,
24 through COVID. Of course that was hard, having to lose
25 a lot of my grandparents. So -- but from that hard time

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1 I realized that our biggest value and asset is our
2 elders, our survivors, and we're here. We're relearning

3 our language because of them. So thank you, Deb
4 Haaland, for having love for our people.

5 MS. LITTLE EAGLE: Micah, would you like to
6 say some words?

7 MICAHA: These are some of our elders that were
8 able to come. This is Jackie Tang [phonetic] and
9 Myrna Burgess, Adeline Fox, Sandra Sangrine, Mary Ann
10 Russell, and Marsha Small [phonetic].

11 [APPLAUSE]

12 MICAHA: (Native Language.) I'd like to thank
13 everyone here for being here, for our special visit with
14 our Secretary of the Interior. I'm glad that she's here
15 to listen to us. I just want to just say a few words
16 and talk about our own experiences of our past boarding
17 schools. I just want to say thank you to my
18 granddaughter, Silver Little Eagle, and Teresa and her
19 helpers for bringing us here. It's an honor to be here.
20 And our bus drivers, I'd like to recognize them.
21 They're the best drivers.

22 [APPLAUSE]

23 MICAHA: We can't forget them, because they
24 protected us all the way over here.

25 First of all, I would like to say, and I would

1 like to share the Cheyenne language. I would like to
2 share that, and I would like to say a prayer in Cheyenne
3 because we're survivors. We're here to be part of
4 healing that our people are going through. It's not
5 easy sometimes, but we still have to live by it one day
6 at a time. And I say that because a lot of us are
7 recovery people now, and I can relate to people when
8 they speak about recovery because I have been there.
9 Forty-nine years of recovery. I want to start with a
10 prayer before I say my words. I want to say it in
11 Cheyenne, in my language. And if you can just be
12 patient and just listen to my prayer, because our
13 language is very, very important and it's very sacred to
14 us because we're all trying to revive -- we talk about
15 revitalization of, saving our languages because we had
16 lost them, our past generations. And today our younger
17 generations are losing it. And I wanted to say a
18 Northern Cheyenne prayer right now.

19 Let us pray. (Native Language.) Amen.

20 I want to talk a little bit about St. Labre.
21 My first day of school. My first day of school was
22 sent -- I was sent there. I was sent there to learn how
23 to speak English. And my grandfather at the time, when
24 he told us to get on a bus first day of school, this bus
25 came. It was a small "Yellow Big Car" we called it in

1 Cheyenne. It came to pick us up at the gate. And when
2 it came, it was something new to us, something new that
3 we went to get on there, and we didn't know what to
4 expect or what was going to happen. But we got on a
5 bus. And my grandpa was on a wagon and took our little
6 suitcases off, my brother and I, and when we got on, I
7 got off the wagon to go get on the bus. My grandpa's
8 last words were, "We're going to experience some
9 things," in Cheyenne. He was talking Cheyenne. We're
10 going to probably get our haircuts, because a lot of our
11 Cheyenne people got our haircuts. He said, "When they
12 go away to school," he said, "they get haircuts." He
13 said our hair is very sacred. Culturally, our hair is
14 sacred. "We do not cut our hair, but they're going to
15 do that to you. You get there, your black braids are
16 not going to come home." And that was hard. My braids
17 got cut off. Excuse me. Just remembering what happened
18 to some of us first day of school.

19 And then he instructed me not to speak
20 Cheyenne in front of them, in front of the nuns. And I
21 accidentally did, because my friend, she was speaking
22 English and she was cussing, a couple in English,
23 cussing. But I turned around and told. She asked me

24 who those nuns were, and I didn't know. I didn't know.
25 I told her in English. And then in Cheyenne I said,

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1 (Native Language), real loud like that. And those nuns
2 heard me speak Cheyenne. And her and I got -- we got in
3 trouble. We got our mouths washed out with lye soap.
4 And that was the first time I ever saw lye soap. My
5 grandma had always used her other kinds of medicine
6 soap. And that's all we have had. And it just seemed
7 like something new, this lye soap. Never seen that lye
8 soap for many, many years anymore. And the one day I
9 went down to Amish and it was there. It just brought
10 back memories of that lye soap. The soap was trying to
11 take away my language.

12 And this feeling, that feeling. I just wanted
13 to challenge even more that I don't want no one taking
14 away our language, our Cheyenne language. And just to
15 get even with, I kept going to school, kept going to
16 school, learning their language. Got my college degree.
17 Went to work. Got on the Tribal Council last twelve
18 years of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. Being a national
19 delegate many times to go to Washington, D.C., speak for
20 my people, talking to Congress, talking to senators.
21 You know, I had to challenge those because I learned

22 English. I learned to speak English. But I still had
23 my Cheyenne language. I still could speak my language.

24 The Father Emmett, he always want me to come
25 back and teach at St. Labre. He said come back. You

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1 know, they paid for my school. They paid for my
2 college. St. Labre paid for me to go to school because
3 my mother, my grandma went to school there. They --
4 1884, when it first came in, my grandma, she talked
5 about her mother. She talked about how she learned to
6 say her name in English at that log cabin. And my
7 mother, she learned how to do her perfect penmanship.
8 They had real perfect penmanship. They can read or
9 write good. I've seen their letters. Pencil writing.
10 But those kind of things, we learned that.

11 But we get home on weekend. We go boarding on
12 Sundays to Friday, we get home on weekends, we didn't
13 lose our language. Everybody spoke language. I mean
14 Cheyenne language. And everybody told each other by
15 their names, Cheyenne names. We knew each other by our
16 Cheyenne names, and we always greeted each other by our
17 Cheyenne names. And we talked about each other. We
18 talked about each other by our Cheyenne names. And
19 sometimes those were fun, humorous. But we never lost

20 it, going home on weekend. You know, Grandpa was happy
21 that we didn't, we didn't lose our Cheyenne language.

22 So when I went back, retired from Northern
23 Cheyenne Tribe, I went back and I told Father Emmett,
24 and Father Emmett wanted me to come back, come to work
25 at St. Labre. So then I applied over there and I got

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1 hired. So I got hired. Northern Cheyenne language
2 teacher. I got certified to be a teacher. I cherish
3 that. And teach Cheyenne language.

4 And then I went up to visit Father Emmett and
5 I told him that. I said, "Father, I got hired at
6 St. Labre. I retired from the Tribe." I said, "I got
7 hired. I'm a Cheyenne language teacher." I said, "Do
8 you think Sister Floret [phonetic] turned over?" And he
9 started laughing at me. I went like this (gesture).

10 But you know the challenge of saving our
11 languages, it's really important that it's sacred. Our
12 hair is sacred. I don't cut my hair just to be cutting
13 it, just to be beautiful. The only time I try to
14 encourage my family not to cut their hair unless they
15 really have to for traditional reasons. The only time
16 we cut our hair, especially when we lose a loved one,
17 that's only time we cut our hair. And we still believe

18 in that. Some of our culture's sacred ways, our
19 traditions are still really strict with the Northern
20 Cheyenne people.

21 We got sent to Washington. I told him go
22 visit Carlisle. I hear so much about Carlisle when I
23 was on a Tribal Council. Some of the ones that went
24 there, they spoke English. Some of them came home and
25 they talk about some of the ones that they didn't come

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1 home. The older generation. And I listened to them. I
2 worked with the elders for twelve years, twelve
3 executive years on a Tribal Council. That was one duty.
4 I served on there. I was a liaison between the Northern
5 Cheyenne Tribal Council Culture Committee, and they were
6 the elders. They're all gone now. But I represented
7 them.

8 And Northern Cheyenne government and U.S.
9 government always sent for -- sent us the
10 Forest Service, BLM, National Parks Service. They sent
11 those people to us to come and get our Northern Cheyenne
12 elders to take them to sacred sites, to go historic
13 sites, to go identify different objects, sacred objects.

14 I worked at the Medicine Wheel, Bighorn
15 Mountains. They come up there, all of these different

16 Tribes from all over, to identify, to come and pray, to
17 come and fast. Those things are still with us. Sacred
18 ceremonies are still with us.

19 A lot of our traditional people are prayer
20 people. Our Native people are prayer people. We pray.
21 We pray before we do anything. We eat, we pray. We
22 have gathering, we pray. Those kind of beliefs are
23 still with us. It hasn't been taken away from us. But
24 our younger generation, a lot of them lost their
25 language. Our grandchildren, our great-grandchildren.

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1 But that's up to us now, us elders that are here right
2 now, my people right here, we need to pass it on. We
3 need to teach our children to speak it.

4 There was once, when I was on the Tribal
5 Council, Tribal culture commission elder said -- I don't
6 know if it's okay to name that person, because it was so
7 honored. It was Honorable Elder Ted Rice [phonetic].
8 He's deceased now. Tribal Council commission. And he
9 told us at the meeting that we need to start teaching
10 our students at schools Cheyenne language. He said
11 write books. Start writing. Teach them. Today's kids
12 are learning to hold board members. They are learning
13 to read. You go to libraries, you go to stores,

14 bookstores. There's Spanish books. There's French
15 books. Go read those things. He said we need to teach
16 our students how to read our own languages.

17 So because these younger people are learning
18 it that way, especially like to see something in front
19 of them. Hands-on teaching. And that's the way I teach
20 at school today. I am a Cheyenne reading and writing
21 teacher, and because we want to challenge what's out
22 there, what's out in the world, teach our students to
23 learn that. We got a lot of challenges out there. But
24 maybe I'm getting carried away like I did at one time.

25 [LAUGHTER]

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1 MICAHA: Thank you for listening to me.

2 [APPLAUSE]

3 MR. GARRIOTT: Thank you. And there will be a
4 time later this afternoon for folks that have gifts that
5 we can do that. We want to make sure that we give as
6 much opportunity to boarding school survivors to share
7 their stories. We don't -- we're not -- intentionally
8 not set any time limits, but we do want to make sure
9 that as many folks have an opportunity to share as
10 possible.

11 MS. BURGESS: Is it on?

12 Hello. (Native Language.) I'm a Northern
13 Cheyenne (Native Language). My Indian name means Night
14 Wandering Woman. I made a few notes, so I won't be here
15 that long. My other name is Myrna Burgess.

16 I'm a chief's child, and I wanted to share a
17 little bit about St. Labre boarding school.

18 You know, the Cheyennes said as long as the
19 water flows and the grass grows, we won't lose our
20 Cheyenne culture, our Indian ways. And I don't know if
21 I still believe that, because they're doing all kind of
22 things to soft the water that flows through our
23 reservation, and all the white people are starting to
24 buy the land. You know, they -- I don't know why they
25 still call it the reservation if we're not going to stop

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1 them.

2 I went to school, and despite all the trauma
3 and pain we suffered for our homeland, we have
4 overlooked that and suffered again in the boarding
5 schools. I remember, because I thought that was life.
6 I thought that was life that was going to be better for
7 me on the reserva- -- in the boarding schools, because I
8 grew up in a small village of Birney, Montana, and we
9 only had about 15 families living there. And we lived

10 in one-room log cabins with no water, no electricity,
11 and we drank river water. So I guess it was good for
12 me, the river water. We washed all our clothes down at
13 the river during the summer. It doesn't mean that we
14 didn't wash them during the winter, but . . .

15 [LAUGHTER]

16 MS. NIGHT WANDERING WOMAN: But we took loads,
17 wagonloads of laundry down to the river, and all my
18 aunties would wash their clothes in the river on the
19 rocks; and we would hang them over the willow trees that
20 would grow in there, while we fished. We lived off
21 wildlife. I never knew you bought meat from a market.
22 We lived off the deer, the rabbits, pheasants, prairie
23 dogs. When we were six years old, our parents sent us
24 out with rifles to go look for river game, and they just
25 told us to point the river -- I mean, the rifle to the

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1 ground so we wouldn't shoot one another. And they were
2 just .22 rifles, but we learned how they use them.

3 And after I went to school at St. Labre, you
4 know, they took away our language, or tried to. They
5 took away our culture. But we never forgot our culture.
6 I grew up believing in all our Cheyenne healing and
7 doctoring and the sacred ceremonies that we were still

8 able to have. You know, they took the Sun Dance away
9 from the Cheyenne people. They couldn't have Sun Dances
10 there anymore for a while. But people started
11 practicing out of town in the hills. And we still had
12 sweat and peyote meetings.

13 And our grandma was an Indian doctor, Cheyenne
14 doctor, and we often went out picking her medicine so
15 she could heal people. I never -- we never sent hardly
16 anyone to the clinic. And the first person that I knew
17 that died from not going to the clinic, they took all us
18 kids -- there was eleven kids in our family, and we
19 lived in three separate log houses. And we went to see
20 him to say good-bye. And then they dressed him up and
21 took him up in the hills and buried him. That was the
22 first death I had ever seen there.

23 And when I came to live there during the
24 summer to visit my relatives and my grandmother, you
25 know, I didn't see anyone die there, but they sent us --

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1 I went to school in Birney. We went to school in a
2 garage, and it was a house with a garage, I guess. But
3 I went to school there from the first to the fifth
4 grade. I went one grade each higher each day -- from
5 the second grade to the third grade, fourth grade, and

6 fifth grade -- in one month. So when I was -- I was --
7 I went to school with the seniors at St. Labre in 1963
8 or '64. I was 15-year-old. And they wouldn't give me a
9 diploma, because they said I was too young and I would
10 have to come back the next year after I turned 16.

11 But they -- you know, we used to talk Cheyenne
12 on purpose because we couldn't understand what they were
13 telling us in English when I first went there, and my
14 friend and I would speak Cheyenne to see who was going
15 to hit us. They would have a ruler, and they would slap
16 us on the top of the hands; and if you kept talking
17 Cheyenne, they would turn our hand this way and slap us
18 on the palms of our hands. And if you kept talking
19 Cheyenne, they would hit you on the back or on the head.
20 And that was child abuse right there. But no one ever
21 went to jail from St. Labre. So . . .

22 And I still know my language. I speak my
23 language today. And I try to share it with the
24 children. I do culture presentations. I'm a culture
25 consultant for the children, and I do videos. So if

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1 anyone wants to see them, you can order them from online
2 Memorial College Culture Preservation. I not only do
3 the language, but I also do different things,

4 moccasin-making. I cook traditional foods. I teach
5 them how to dry food. What berries to pick. And I do
6 storytelling. And that's to share with the younger
7 children so they want -- won't forget.

8 I've taken over 2,000 foster children and -- I
9 don't take them anymore. I'm a senior core Volunteers
10 of America for the past 16 years. I still work with
11 Head Start and the Boys & Girls Club. I volunteer. I
12 work during the school year for Head Start and in
13 culture presentations there. I'm there all day with the
14 kids and I sing to them. And one of the teachers tell
15 me, "Myrna, what kind of song are you singing?"

16 I said, "I don't know, but they all dance to
17 it."

18 [LAUGHTER]

19 MS. NIGHT WANDERING WOMAN: I kind of made it
20 up, and I have a small hand drum, and I use the hand
21 drum, and I dance with the kids and teach them different
22 kinds of dances. They can -- I Don't do the fancy shawl
23 dance anymore. I fall over if I turn too fast. But
24 they do the snake dance and round dance and war dance,
25 and they all sing with me, some of those kids, and they

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1 have drums too. And that's really good. I'm very proud

2 of those children that hear me and listen to me. And I
3 do the same thing at the Boys & Girls Club, and I'm
4 happy to share my Cheyenne culture with them.

5 And I thank everyone that came here and hope
6 you can make a difference in some children's lives.

7 [APPLAUSE]

8 MR. GARRIOTT: Thank you.

9 I believe we have someone on this side of the
10 room?

11 MR. MORIGEAU: My name is Shane Morigeau,
12 member of the Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Tribal
13 attorney for the Tribes and state senator. Honored to
14 serve with Senator Webber and was grateful for her bill
15 that she mentioned earlier last session. It's hard to
16 believe that some people actually voted against that
17 particular bill, but that's the world we live in here,
18 still, to this day in Montana.

19 My grandmother on my mom's side, she was
20 sexually abused at the St. Ignatius Mission school. And
21 we're very proud of her because she went on to be a
22 nurse in World War II. And just like a lot of victims,
23 she's no longer here with us today, and we don't have
24 the opportunity to hear her full story and the breadth
25 of the impacts that that abuse had on her and our

1 family. But I think it's important that we obviously
2 talk about this so it doesn't happen to our young people
3 and that people are held accountable and can't get away
4 with it.

5 And I know there's no doubt that this abuse
6 had lifelong and mental impacts on her, and, as was
7 already mentioned by Senator Webber, those impacts
8 trickled down to my mother and our family. It impacted
9 her ability to function day to day. It drove her into
10 depression. And it's really a hard thing to swallow to
11 see someone be abused and yet never get justice, to pass
12 and never have seen that justice occur. Which I think
13 says something about how our lives are valued as Native
14 people in this country.

15 Her experiences and her story were why I
16 brought legislation last session to eliminate the
17 statute of limitations for child sex abuse in Montana.
18 And unfortunately, too many legislators chose to protect
19 corporations and molesters over our children. And they
20 chose to -- refused to hear and listen to these stories
21 of how those -- that abuse impacts people day to day.
22 So as long as I'm a legislator, I'm going to continue to
23 bring this legislation forward until it's passed so that
24 no one can ever get away with abusing a child, no matter

25 how much time passes. And I'd ask you all for your

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1 support in that effort moving forward here in Montana,
2 and I'd ask that you all pursue legislation, support
3 efforts that give children the same lifelong protections
4 so the clocks of justice don't run out on them.

5 And I do have a Tribal councilwoman, Jennifer
6 Finley, who has a story that she would like to share
7 with you all as well. (Native Language.)

8 [APPLAUSE]

9 MS. FINLEY: So my name is Jennifer Finley,
10 and I'm on the Tribal Council of the Kootenai Tribes,
11 and I don't speak my language, through no fault of my
12 own.

13 Both my grandparents on my dad's side went to
14 the Ursuline boarding school in St. Ignatius, both full
15 bloods, both spoke Salish as their first language. The
16 first dreams they had were in Salish, not in English. I
17 will never have the privilege of having a dream in
18 Salish. And that is not my fault.

19 And so my grandmother died when she was 96.
20 And my daughter's here with me today. When I told my
21 grandmother that my daughter was going to go to boarding
22 school in New Hampshire, which is a very prestigious

23 thing, it's one of the best schools in the country, my
24 grandmother broke down crying and she was mad at me.
25 Because in her mind, the boarding school was the

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1 Ursulines, and she didn't understand that I was sending
2 my daughter away to a boarding school and that it was a
3 good thing. And it's something that she didn't talk
4 about a lot.

5 But in our community, we are feeling every day
6 the ripple effects the boarding school caused. We are
7 still dealing with the collateral damage that the
8 boarding school caused. And one thing that we don't
9 talk about in our community and I think in a lot of
10 Native communities is the rampant sexual abuse that
11 happens. And that is a direct result of the boarding
12 schools. And whether or not people were directly
13 victimized, the rage, the other damages that co-occur
14 with that kind of abuse are still rampant in our
15 community. And when we talk about historical trauma, I
16 always think if only that's all we had. But we have
17 fresh trauma piled on it every single day with the
18 weight -- along with the weight of our historical
19 trauma.

20 And right now we have a fentanyl epidemic on

21 our reservation, and before that it was meth, and before
22 that it was alcohol. And we are always going to have
23 drug epidemics on the reservation until we deal with the
24 root cause, which is trauma. And that was directly
25 caused by the boarding schools.

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1 And it's not like we didn't have trauma before
2 boarding schools. We had wars with other Tribes; the
3 Blackfeet were our enemy. We had to survive in really
4 harsh conditions. And we had trauma, but we had
5 cultural practices in place to deal with it and to keep
6 our hearts strong. And one of the worst things that the
7 boarding schools did is it dismantled our systems that
8 kept our hearts strong.

9 And my youngest son goes to a BIE school on
10 the reservation. Two Eagle River School is the only BIE
11 school on the Flathead Reservation. And cultural
12 languages and cultural classes are not funded by the
13 BIE. So our Tribe believes in revitalizing our
14 language. It's the only all-Indian school on the
15 reservation. So we use our own Tribal dollars to fund
16 language classes at the BIE school. And that's really
17 essential. I think the BIE schools should fund language
18 and culture programs, and I think the federal government

19 should fund treatment centers on every reservation.

20 [APPLAUSE]

21 MS. FINLEY: Because treatment centers are
22 part of our justice in cleaning up the mess that was
23 caused by the trauma of boarding schools. (Native
24 Language.)

25 [APPLAUSE]

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1 MR. GARRIOTT: Thank you.

2 Someone else?

3 MS. TANG: (Native Language.) Good morning.
4 My name is Jackie Tang [phonetic] and I'm from
5 Northern Cheyenne.

6 In 1961, I was placed in a BIA boarding school
7 in Busby, Montana. It was called Tongue River Boarding
8 School. I was seven years old, and I stayed there for
9 six years, and I went to school from the -- well, it was
10 fenced. It was fenced off from the village where we
11 lived, and we went to school from -- the school was
12 right there by the boarding school. They destroyed the
13 dorms now. They're no longer there. But I -- we were
14 placed there, I and my sister, because -- well, I never
15 knew why we were placed there, but I figured it was
16 because we were poor. We didn't have -- we lived in a

17 one-room log cabin with a dirt floor, but that was where
18 my grandma did her medicine. The stove was in the
19 middle.

20 And they were -- medicine man would come and
21 visit with her, and I couldn't walk between the fire and
22 the medicine man. And she did -- they did their
23 ceremonies. They would put food, pieces of food around
24 the house -- I mean, log cabin, and people would come
25 and ask my grandma to interpret their dreams. They

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1 would give her dry meat or other stuff. Blankets.

2 She was a Sun Dance woman. And, I don't
3 know -- I had an aunt that would -- that had -- her
4 husband worked with BIA as the night watchman, and she
5 told my -- she taught my grandma that our ceremonies
6 were not good, that there was teachings or something.
7 So my grandma, every time the Sun Dances came by, she
8 would lock -- lock herself in the house along with me,
9 and that way nobody would come and ask her to be the
10 lady to sit in the Sun Dance.

11 But the summertime they -- my grandma was to
12 the -- to Kirby; it's like a rural area. There we would
13 pick berries and mushrooms and plums, and it was like a
14 summer home. But we stayed there during the summer.

15 And then when school would start, my grandma would take
16 me to the hills and would see the truant officer come,
17 and he would be calling me by my English name, and my
18 grandma would say, "Don't look back. Don't listen to
19 him, because when they put you in school and take you
20 away from me."

21 So we would walk the hills, and sometimes we
22 would walk to Busby and visit her families and visit her
23 friends and walk back to the house early. And then one
24 day, they came after me. My sister, she was a couple
25 years older than me. The professor of the boarding

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1 school, they bought us clothes and a little suitcase to
2 put our clothes in. They took us to the boarding
3 school. I think I was seven years old. And my grandma
4 said that, you know, they'll feed you and they'll feed
5 you good food and take care of you.

6 When we got to the boarding school, they cut
7 off our hair like really short, both me and my sister.
8 And so we, I guess, stayed there. They received kids
9 from different reservations: Fort Peck, Fort Belknap,
10 Salish Kootenai, Browning. If they were from Wyoming,
11 they sent them from Shoshone and Arapaho. But they were
12 mostly teenagers that they sent. And once I asked one

13 of them why they sent them, and they said that they
14 thought that they were crazy or something. They were --
15 their parents were court-ordered to send them to the
16 boarding school.

17 Anyway, the dorms were run by a non-Indian
18 lady and her husband. He was a teacher at a school in
19 Lame Deer or from Busby, Montana.

20 Anyway, I went to school there, I think it was
21 first grade that we all went to school, and we -- we, my
22 sister Barb didn't get to go home during the week. But
23 the ones from Lame Deer and Birney, and they got to go
24 home, but we didn't get to go home during the week. So
25 we had to spend the weekends at the dorms. And the

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1 matrons were half non-Indian, and they were kind of mean
2 to us. If we were -- at night, they would come and
3 hover over both of us and shine their flashlights on us.
4 I don't know why. Just to scare us, I guess. Because
5 the dorms, the lights were off. We turned off all the
6 lights, and they did that every once in a while, pulled
7 the sheets off and shined the flashlight on us. And if
8 we weren't good, if you were messing around when the
9 lights were off, they would take us and punish us and
10 put us in the basement. And the lights were all off in

11 the basement, and we'd have to sit on the steps. The
12 line of light for the door is we would sit right there
13 by it because we were afraid of the dark, and sometimes
14 they would forget about us and they wouldn't --
15 sometimes they would forget that they had put us down in
16 the basement. Wouldn't get out of there until early
17 morning, and it was -- maybe that's why I'm afraid of
18 the dark now. I don't know. I leave the light on in my
19 bedroom. Even today.

20 That was a -- that was hurt -- hard for me. I
21 still think about those nights when I had to sit in the
22 basement. I was afraid of the dark. And I survived
23 there for -- the dorms for six years. And they finally
24 built my grandma a house, and now that she had a house
25 like non-Indians, and got to move in there, and I got

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1 kicked out of the dorms.

2 But the most ironic thing is when I was in
3 high school, they hired me to work in the dorms, and
4 they put me with the young kids. And they -- at night,
5 we would overhear them crying, and I would go comfort
6 them, because I knew how it was to be without your
7 family.

8 And then the other thing, I became a matron

9 too. They hired me when I was out of high school. So I
10 became a matron. And wasn't that many dorm people
11 there, dorm kids there. But I treated them good, and I
12 didn't treat them bad like I was taught -- I mean
13 treated when I was younger.

14 And right now, I -- anyway, I grew up, and I'm
15 a -- I became a social worker. I've been a social
16 worker for 27 years. I tried to help my people. And I
17 know that our own people do this stuff to us to -- not
18 all the matrons were bad, but there was some that
19 weren't -- that treated us okay. But there was those
20 that were mean to us. And I have a master's degree in
21 social work, and I did work for the BIA and I retired
22 from there. And then I went back and worked for the
23 Tribe again as a human services director. I retired
24 again several years ago. But I try to help my people in
25 any way I can. Thank you.

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1 [APPLAUSE]

2 MR. KILLSBACK: This is -- I'm Dion Killsback.
3 And my twin is Damion Killsback. He's a high official
4 with Indian Health Services. And so I'm obviously a
5 descendant of a survivor. And what my mom -- you know,
6 she's being nice, and shared with us a lot of stories.

7 And I think that, you know, what you got here, I'll
8 share a little bit. You know, she talks about the
9 truant officer. It was get up before dark, get out the
10 door, make sure you have your food with you, because if
11 you don't, they're going to get you. And my mom, she
12 said they never got to sleep in. And then one day her
13 sister didn't get up. She was tired. And she said,
14 Okay, well, maybe we'll sleep in just a little bit this
15 once. And it took one mistake for them to get her. And
16 my grandma said, "I lost you, my girl. They got you."
17 And when they came and got her, they brought her a
18 suitcase, and she said, all of the things that BIA told
19 her was, You're going to have a bed. You're going to
20 have food. You're not going to live on dirt. You'll
21 have clean clothes. You won't smell like wood -- wood
22 fire. And my grandma was depressed because she said, "I
23 lost my girl. They got you."

24 And my mom, she said for the longest time she
25 didn't understand what that meant. And she said that it

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1 meant they were going to break her spirit.

2 So my mom, she did the best she could. And
3 she raised me and my brothers to be doctors, lawyers.
4 And she taught us that English was the only language we

5 had to learn. We didn't need to learn Cheyenne. We
6 needed to live off the reservation because that was the
7 world that she was preparing us for. Our way of life
8 was going to die. Our language was going to die. They
9 were going to take our land. They were going to take
10 our water. It was just a matter of time. We needed to
11 accept that. It's inevitable.

12 Look what they did when we killed Custer.
13 They took us to Oklahoma, and we had to fight back our
14 way from Darlington, Punished Woman Creek, to Fort
15 Robinson, just to get our land back. We're the only
16 Tribe to have to leave our reservation because we
17 defeated the cavalry and to get our land back. They
18 were going to punish us by putting a boarding school on
19 the east side and on the west side, Tongue River and
20 St. Labre.

21 You talk about corporations. St. Labre is a
22 corporation today. They have the most beautiful campus.
23 They put my kids through school and college, and now
24 they say we want to hire your -- to come back and teach
25 Cheyenne. We were wrong 40, 50 years ago. We shouldn't

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1 have beat you. We shouldn't have punished you for
2 speaking your language. You know what? We'll even

3 engage on our own healing tour. Let's talk about --
4 let's have our own sessions now about boarding schools.

5 So me and my brothers, we've had to take and
6 teach our mom that it's okay to be Cheyenne. We're
7 proud to be Cheyenne. We had to take the lessons that
8 we learned from our men, our menfolk, and relearn them
9 ourselves and value our culture and our language. And
10 that's what we're doing.

11 My mother is a survivor. We are too. And so
12 I want to thank Wizi and Deb for being here. You guys
13 are lawyers, and your history is very similar to ours.
14 But when you talk about the things that we want,
15 legislation's good, but I always equate this to the
16 Holocaust. Where's the commission to go after those
17 Nazis that killed 6 million Jews? We have the same type
18 of action of assimilating our people, and we have
19 priests and school patrons and matrons out there that
20 are still alive. Where's that energy to find them and
21 hold them accountable?

22 And Secretary, you also have the authority to
23 give that land back to all those schools, those
24 churches. It's in your authority to grant that land
25 back to our people, to our Tribes. They may have

1 churches on there, they may have swimming pools, they
2 may have classrooms. But that's Tribal land. The U.S.
3 government didn't conduct a study and come up with
4 recommendations and say, Oh, let's think about boarding
5 schools. But we're doing that now. Let's collect data.
6 Let's find out how many Indians have died. Let's how
7 many -- find out how many Indians have gone to boarding
8 school. What type of resources were put to take in our
9 culture, to changing our government so that we no longer
10 rely on our traditional forms of government, so that we
11 have to model a democratic popularity contest. That's
12 not our way.

13 So the values of our people and our culture
14 still exist, and you've heard it from our (Native
15 Language), our elders. We need accountability for the
16 government, the same type of energy and resources that
17 you as the government put to assimilate and kill us and
18 convert us. We need that same energy and resources to
19 preserve it and maintain it in the future.

20 Our elders won't be here that long. And we're
21 struggling to maintain our language and our culture.
22 And you're in an area in Bozeman, Montana, where the
23 Blackfeet and the Cheyenne killed settlers coming to
24 Bozeman on the Bozeman Trail. This is the hotspot.
25 This is where the Indigenous people here fought the U.S.

1 government to maintain their land and their lifestyle
2 and their culture. We're the last holdouts. The East
3 Coast and West Coast were already taken.

4 We have a presence of BIA and IHS on our
5 reservations. Billions of dollars. And we still have
6 oppression. And just as Susan said, we've become our
7 own oppressors. We have been taught by priests, by
8 government officials how to oppress and instill the
9 bureaucracy in our systems, which you are in charge of.
10 We have Director Tso here from IHS. We had no idea she
11 was coming. The Blackfeet Tribe has been trying to get
12 a meeting with her for a year, so that we could hold IHS
13 to their word for the pedophile of Dr. Weber and his
14 atrocities to the Blackfeet.

15 They committed to a community center, and it
16 takes Secretary Deb Haaland to come and talk about a
17 healing tour for her to come to Montana, when we can't
18 even get a meeting. We have to go directly to our
19 congressman to get a special appropriation to fund a
20 youth center. Our attempts with Director Tso have been
21 met with, Oh, there's an application process. Oh,
22 there's a waiting list. We're sorry, we didn't get it
23 to you. Oh, that was a previous administration.

24 This is the type of government bureaucracy,
25 the slow wheels. There was no slow wheels when the

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1 cavalry was coming to take our land. No slow wheels to
2 put our parents and our grandparents into boarding
3 schools.

4 You take IHS and BIA, there's a handful of
5 those billions of dollars on our reservation, and you
6 put -- just like the matrons, you give them a good job,
7 you give them a house. That's maybe 10, 20 families.
8 And guess what? Those 10, 20 families thrive. All the
9 rest are poor. And those 10, 20, they maintain that
10 foothold of control in our government, in our IHS, in
11 our schools. That's not a community. That creates a
12 division of has and has-nots. And that's what we have,
13 and that's why we oppress each other.

14 I appreciate Janine and Curtis for being here
15 from Labre. They're doing their work and they represent
16 the Apsáalooké. But for our (Native Language), we see
17 the Apsáalooké as allies with the U.S. government when
18 they were there at the Battle of Big Horn. They run our
19 St. Labre. There's no Cheyennes in the upper
20 administration. Our Cheyennes are students, cooks, and
21 groundskeepers. But you can put us on posters and you

22 can send it out donations to all these people and
23 collect millions of dollars because they're a
24 corporation.
25 So as you deal with these boarding school

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1 issues, we want that accountability. We want that same
2 energy to reverse the atrocities of the government
3 policies against our people so that my children, our
4 grandchildren can continue to live our way. Our way of
5 life. (Native Language.)

6 [APPLAUSE]

7 MR. GARRIOTT: Thank you. We'll have time for
8 one more and then we will break for lunch.

9 MS. CERTAIN WOMAN: (Native Language.)

10 I wanted to say good morning to each and every
11 one of you. My Arapaho name is Certain [phonetic]
12 Woman. I am from the Northern Arapaho Tribe. I come
13 from the Alajas clan. I currently am the cochair of the
14 Roads and Repurposes Council. I also am a descendant of
15 a survivor (Native Language).

16 We went to Carlisle. My grandfather, his
17 Arapaho name was Stone. He went to Carlisle. When he
18 was eight years old, he went over there. His mother was
19 blind. She had to be taken care of by other people.

20 His father was a (Native language). They moved back,
21 back to their Arapaho people. And so it was just -- I
22 guess it was the best thing, they thought, for him to be
23 sent to Carlisle. He stayed there until he was 17 years
24 old. He went back home. Back then, they didn't
25 graduate. And so he went back home. However, he went

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1 back to the school, became employed. He was the health
2 instructor, P.E. instructor. He also -- he ended up
3 marrying the school nurse over there (Native Language),
4 white woman. They moved back to Wyoming. Had two
5 children.

6 But because of all the trauma, all their rage,
7 I hear that. I hear that today. The anger, the hurt.
8 He had -- he carried on that stuff with him. And so, of
9 course, you know, he struggled with alcohol, because
10 there, then, that was something too that was given to
11 you. I guess that was an honor back then, for you to
12 drink alcohol. My grandfather used that. He ended up
13 being divorced. His first wife, she was a nurse, so she
14 worked for a doctor in Riverton. And she threw him in
15 jail.

16 She had my two -- the youngest -- their
17 youngest child at two years old died. He's buried out

18 in Fort Washington, Wyoming. My oldest uncle -- after
19 she threw my grandpa in jail, she took off with the
20 doctor; they moved away. And their solution for my
21 uncle was to put him in boarding school. So he went to
22 boarding school.

23 He then, after that, after he graduated, he
24 joined the U.S. Air Force. My uncle also end up
25 marrying (Native Language), a white woman. They

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1 continued to have children.

2 The good thing for my oldest uncle, he -- his
3 name was Bruce Junior. It was originally Gold
4 Spot [phonetic], original -- his original name. But
5 when Gunther Grousach [phonetic] was in the hospital
6 over in Colorado there, he spelled it to
7 Grossbach [phonetic], which is German. And so we
8 carried that name, family surname, for a while. Uncle
9 Bruce end up retiring and lieutenant colonel in the
10 military. And finally, when he was moving from Texas
11 over to Washington to be restationed, he finally stopped
12 on Wind River Reservation to look for his dad. Never
13 met his dad. Never met my grandpa.

14 My grandpa continued on. And then with his
15 second wife, my dad's mother, she end up dying in

16 childbirth. And so my dad and his two siblings were
17 raised by their maternal grandfather, until he died.
18 And by then my Grandpa Bruce was remarried, and they
19 continued to have four other children.

20 His third wife, my Grandma Martha, she told
21 about a time when some people had come to the
22 reservation and found him and asked him -- them to go
23 with them to Rawlins -- Rawlins, Wyoming. So they got
24 on with him and went. At that time he -- the next
25 day -- well, somebody knocked on the door, and it was

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1 his fellow student, Jim Thorpe. And he got to visit
2 with him and collaborate with him. My Grandpa Bruce
3 played football with Jim Thorpe while he was there.

4 My Grandpa Bruce came back 1930. The Indian
5 agent really was influential in trying to form our
6 government. It was a traditional government where our
7 people gathered. At that time, people nominated people
8 who they wanted to be our leaders, our Tribal leaders,
9 our spokespeople. However, at the time, the Indian
10 agent really wanted -- really wanted to get our
11 students, our men that was exposed to the English
12 language. So at that time, in 1930, our first form of
13 government was -- consisted of three, what they call the

14 old-timers, what they call the School Boys. My grandpa
15 was one of them. There was him and Tom
16 Christman [phonetic], and an Indian man named Friday.
17 The rest, the other three, were traditional elders.
18 That's how we became -- our Tribal government became.

19 My dad also, because he was raised generally
20 by his grandpa, and by then, by the time that had
21 happened, he was -- he went to school at Blanchard,
22 Blanchard Indian School. And because he wasn't really
23 as close to his dad and his stepmother, and he was
24 older, he chose to stay there. And he worked there
25 throughout the summer.

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1 My dad end up having tuberculosis when he was
2 a junior in high school. So he was not able to
3 graduate. He come back home. However, through all the
4 struggles that he had, he also became a Tribal leader.
5 Spent nine years on the business council. And I am the
6 third generation of our family to serve on the Tribal
7 Council.

8 I agree with everything the young man that had
9 said here. We always -- they always talk about land
10 acknowledgment. And apologies. However, we don't need
11 that. We need changed policies. We need Congress. We

12 need legislators. We need Deb Haaland, BIA. We need
13 you guys to help us in all our endeavors. As some in
14 Wind River, the eastern Shoshones, you know, the
15 Arapaho. We are taking over (inaudible). However, we
16 are getting pushback from BIA. Any way that they choose
17 not to help us, they will. And so we are working with
18 it. We are fighting, currently fighting legally with
19 the oil companies, oil producers that do not like that
20 goal.

21 So we are trying, we -- other areas, IHS, our
22 healthcare, we are 638. We 638. We have our own. We
23 get our own direct funding. We're going to be getting
24 our own direct funding regarding our child protection
25 department, family services. We are working and moving

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1 ahead. However, we need all the people, Deb Haaland and
2 all these things, these people and these places to help
3 push us along so we're not oppressed, we're not
4 oppressed no longer. They tell us -- they tell us and
5 expect us to become self-sufficient but only where they
6 want us to be. And then they continue to hold us down.

7 So I'm glad, I'm real thankful that you're
8 here and you're listening to all this, because each and
9 every one of us here are affected by the

10 intergenerational trauma that has been inflicted on our
11 Indigenous peoples. Many of our Tribes.

12 On the Wind River, we had a Catholic boarding
13 school, St. Stevens. There's stories told that one of
14 the elders, when he was younger he worked for them. His
15 duty was to beat the children when they taught the
16 language. And the stories that he told and the regrets
17 that he had to live with because he did that. So what
18 he turned around and did, he was one of the champions
19 into language revitalization on our reservation. His
20 name was Pias Mosk [phonetic]. And so without his
21 efforts, our language efforts revitalization would not
22 be where it is currently. Currently on the Wind River,
23 within the Northern Arapaho, we have less than 50 fluent
24 speakers at this moment out of 10,600 Tribal members.
25 So we are really -- it's an emergency situation right

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1 now.

2 We also have struggled regarding our
3 ceremonies, our traditions. However, we still have
4 those. We're fortunate. We're fortunate that we still
5 have our Sacred Bundle. At the time when they were
6 banned, we had an Episcopal Father who took it upon
7 himself to take our Sacred Bundle and hide it so they

8 couldn't come and take it from us. When it was safe, he
9 brought it back. And so we still have our Sacred
10 Bundle. We still have our songs. We're losing our
11 language, though. We're losing our language.

12 I want to also talk about in my family, and I
13 can only speak for my family, because of what happened
14 with my Grandpa Bruce. He wasn't ever taught what it
15 was to really be a provider, a protector in the
16 traditional sense. So he -- my father also struggled
17 with the same thing. He was raised by his grandfather,
18 and then raised by the boarding school. That is a
19 common problem. I don't know if anybody else, any other
20 Tribal nations see this, but I see that as a problem
21 within our own people. Our men are no longer provider
22 and protectors for our people no longer, and we need to
23 change that. All the answers come within us.

24 And I want to -- I just want to say I respect
25 each and every one of you that have shared your stories,

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1 and if there's anything, any questions that any of you
2 want to talk about or would like to, you know, visit
3 with us about, I'm open. Thank you. Aho.

4 [APPLAUSE]

5 MR. GARRIOTT: Thank you. At this time we're

6 going to take a break. This is also the time when we
7 asked our friends from the press to depart and the rest
8 moving forward will be closed to the press.

9 The university has kindly provided lunch, and
10 that's available in Ballroom B, and we will be returning
11 shortly, and we'll have a photo line for those who would
12 like to take a photo with the Secretary. So just as
13 everyone goes, also just a reminder, you know, make sure
14 you drink water. Breathe. With as much listening, it's
15 important to keep yourself in a good place because of
16 the difficult things that we're discussing. So we'll be
17 back shortly. And thanks, everybody.

18 (RECESS TAKEN)

19 MR. GARRIOTT: Okay. We are going to continue
20 our discussion, continue working to -- for the next
21 hour, couple hours or so. We would like to continue to
22 hear from boarding schools, their descendants of
23 boarding school survivors, continuing to hear about the
24 impacts the boarding school had on individuals and their
25 families, and continue to hear about their experiences.

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1 So get our mic runners in place and the same
2 process as before. Just raise your hand and the mic
3 runners will find you, and from there we'll go for an

4 hour or so and take a break, and then come back and
5 continue.

6 All right. Do we have somebody? It sounds
7 like we have -- right there. Okay.

8 MR. WEATHERWAX: Okay. (Native Language.) My
9 name is Marvin Weatherwax, Jr. I'm a member of the
10 Blackfeet Business Tribal Council. I'm a member of the
11 Montana State Legislature and the House District 15. I
12 also am a member of the Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs
13 Council, as well as the UN delegate for the Blackfoot
14 Tribe. One more title, sorry. I am the chairman of the
15 Coalition of Large Tribes.

16 My -- I guess I do have a -- I'm listening to
17 all these stories. I thought, jeez, how am I anything
18 like these people? I went to boarding school myself.
19 My grandmother, my dad's mom, she went to Holy Family
20 Mission, which is just down east of our place, probably
21 about 8 miles, maybe, and it was toward the end of --
22 toward the end, when the school was starting to shut
23 down and things weren't too -- you know, going too much.
24 But she lost three friends, and she didn't know where
25 they went to. And she was told that they -- her one

1 friend, the nun told her that her friend went to the

2 moon. Her other friend, the nun told her, well, she ran
3 away and got married. And then the other friend, she
4 said that she went swimming and never came back. So my
5 grandma lost a lot of friends like that, and she didn't
6 know what was going on.

7 But she had it easy, because her grandpa who
8 raised her was actually a carpenter at the Holy Family
9 Mission. So she was able to go home every day, since
10 she just lived down the road. So she'd go back, go back
11 to school the next day, and another friend would be
12 missing. So she always had it in her mind that, my
13 grandkids, they're not going to -- those old ways
14 undone.

15 She spoke the language my dad speaks, all my
16 uncles. And my dad still teaches the language, but --
17 and it was my first language until my uncle, who didn't
18 like me because I was a grandma baby, taught me how to
19 speak English. And I think that was his way of being
20 mean.

21 But the big thing about this boarding school
22 thing is, it robbed our kids. It robbed our people.
23 Our language. And, you know, I believe that if we can
24 get the -- you know, as you know, the -- they called it
25 the Indian Appropriations Act of 1922 [sic] gave the

1 interior secretary the power to give patents on land for
2 the -- for the sole purpose of residential schools or
3 missions. But at the end of that, it says that when the
4 land is no longer used for those missions that it was
5 supposed to revert back to the Tribes. Well, the power
6 to revert that back is actually the Secretary of the
7 Interior's, I guess, duty, I would say.

8 But our people have lost our language. We've
9 lost our culture. Some of our people are waking up and
10 some of our people are kind of accepting this. We don't
11 know where it came from, but now we're starting to
12 accept that it came from the boarding school. Boarding
13 school issues. And, you know, like myself, I went to
14 boarding school. I went on to graduate Indian school
15 for four years, and honestly, my boarding school
16 experience was awesome. It was great. But, you know,
17 our -- some of our ancestors and people that, in the
18 past, they didn't have such a great thing. And, you
19 know, we have people that existed on our reservation
20 that you don't -- you never hear their names. You don't
21 know that they even existed, because they weren't given
22 a chance to live into adulthood because of these
23 schools.

24 What I kind of find, I guess what you call

25 ironic, is it's kind of perpetuated by the people that

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1 escaped their country to escape religious persecution
2 but then come here and do that to us.

3 So I guess I stood up to talk and say that,
4 you know, the land-back issue is real, and I believe
5 it's justified and to give our kids to actually know
6 that we survived an attempt to annihilate us. You know,
7 I think their attempt is a failed attempt to get rid of
8 all of us, and, you know, we're all still here. You
9 know, the smallpox, residential school, all these things
10 that happened, they slowed us down, but they're not --
11 they haven't gotten rid of us. And our languages are
12 coming back. Our ceremonies are coming back. And we're
13 all starting to wake up and remember who we are.

14 So I think the appropriate ending to this
15 whole ordeal would be to get that land back that they
16 were -- that was taken through the '14 Patent or however
17 it was gotten, and for the government, U.S. government,
18 to help us to revitalize our languages.

19 The [away from microphone], I've sent letters
20 to ask them to help us to become at least 25 percent
21 fluent in our communities. That way, we can build from
22 there.

23 So, you know, as I said before, I did have an
24 awesome boarding school experience. One of my
25 classmates is here too. Where's she at? Oh, she left.

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1 She said, "Don't mention my name." But you know why.
2 I've heard the -- I've heard some pretty
3 terrible stories over the years about these schools and
4 about the relatives across the line, across the border.
5 You know, their -- they -- their residential school era
6 just ended recently and -- so ours ended, you know,
7 quite a while ago. And when I told our chiefs and some
8 of the elders where we're at with the language, you
9 folks are on your way there because our residential
10 school era ended, you know, quite a while before yours.
11 So, you know, let's work together and try to get our
12 language back.

13 So, you know, I know all the Tribes that have
14 been affected by -- actually every Tribe has been
15 affected by the residential school. And I would hope
16 that we could somehow get -- you know, find something to
17 help us with this trauma that was caused to our
18 families. Like a lot of us who grew up with this trauma
19 and we don't even know where it came from. And, you
20 know, we do have to probably try to find a way to deal

21 with this generational grieving that's happening
22 throughout all Indian country. Our -- you know, our
23 people are all hurting and we don't know, or we're all
24 in survival mode, and I would hope that we someday
25 realize that we can stop and do something else. I mean,

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1 we can do so -- we can do better for ourselves.

2 You know, as you might know, I think I told
3 you before, I'm not a talker. But some issues are so
4 important and so -- they're so important that, you know,
5 everybody needs to speak, and we all pretty much have
6 the same stories, and I would just hope that we can get
7 some good happening. But I thank you.

8 MR. GARRIOTT: Thank you.

9 [APPLAUSE]

10 MS. WHITEMAN-ARMSTRONG: Hello. My name is
11 Rae Tall Whiteman-Armstrong, and I'm from the Blackfeet
12 Reservation. And I am an educator at a Catholic school,
13 and I teach sixth, seventh, and eighth grade social
14 studies and ELA.

15 I'm here because for the past three years I've
16 been teaching my students why it's important to know
17 about or ensure they -- and the reconciliation and the
18 94 Calls to Action that our Canadian Tribes -- because

19 we're four sister Tribes -- are currently doing and
20 implementing. And I always teach my students the real
21 history, not just the westernized model. But I teach --
22 I feel like I have an obligation to teach them the real
23 history of what happened to our people and why it's
24 important. It's important for us to recognize and
25 remember what happened in boarding schools, because if

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1 they like to think about it or not, it still affects my
2 students every single day in a classroom. If that
3 classroom -- I could have 20 students with 20 different
4 backgrounds with an ACE score -- Adverse Childhood
5 Experience -- of an 8 or higher.

6 So my trauma -- like I am trauma-informed.
7 And I always try to say -- like me and my husband, who
8 have worked with students for 20-plus years, we were
9 trauma-informed before "trauma-informed" was a coined
10 term. So we treated students; we had the after-school
11 programs. We did the awareness. We were there. We
12 were their safe place. And we still are. And so I feel
13 like, right now, my students -- and I'm going to e-mail
14 their letters, because they have letters and it would
15 take too long, because some of my students are
16 long-winded and they're very -- I think they're going to

17 be the future politicians and lawyers and all of that.

18 But they're -- they know what the trauma has
19 done to them. They know what the trauma has handed --
20 what the intergenerational trauma that's handed down to
21 them, that is unfairly handed down to them. And they
22 know that they are up against so many mountains. And so
23 working at a Catholic school and having that insight and
24 working with my students -- like, for example, one of my
25 students was sitting there and I said, "Let's count how

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1 many heartbeats we have a minute." And so we're all
2 sitting there. They're all shouting out how many
3 heartbeats they have a minute: 55, 45, 65. And one of
4 my students says, "I think I need to do mine again."

5 And I said "Why?"

6 And he said, "Well, mine was 125."

7 And I said, "Let's try it again." And I said,
8 "Just take a few deep breaths." And I said, "And let's
9 try it again."

10 So he tried it again and it went down probably
11 five.

12 And so that student is sitting in my class
13 trying to learn ELA and social studies with the heart
14 rate of a fight-or-flight.

15 And so I was talking about trauma, and I teach
16 them about trauma and I teach them historical trauma. I
17 teach them trauma-informed practices. Mindfulness and
18 all of that stuff. And then I'm telling him, "This
19 isn't your fault."

20 And then he's sitting there and he's like,
21 "But why is my heart rate so high?"

22 And I said, "This could be anything. This
23 could be about your childhood. This could be anything."

24 And so we were talking about trauma and all
25 the traumas that are handed down and everything, and he

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1 was like, "Well, how do I heal that?" And he said, "Or
2 how do I" -- because he's a very -- like he's a thinker.
3 He's always thinking about how to get himself better,
4 also, as a student. And so I start telling him some
5 things and how we could monitor it. But this is the
6 stuff, even now, that we have to come to terms with.
7 Our people are dying 20 to 40 years younger than a
8 non-Native.

9 And I always say, like, okay, we can -- if we
10 do the science behind the trauma, I have to prepare my
11 students not just for the classroom, but living outside
12 the classroom. Because my boys are at a higher rate out

13 of 22 -- by the age of 22, they have a 75 percent rate
14 of being hit or beat up to the point where they would
15 have to go to the hospital. My girls have a higher
16 rate, two out of three girls are going to be sexually
17 molested or raped by the age of 18. And so I'm always
18 teaching my students about all of this stuff, teaching
19 them about -- but at the end of the day, we need action
20 above talk.

21 I always teach my students like, what, are we
22 going to keep talking about it? Or are we going to make
23 a difference? And my words are always -- and if you
24 ever did come to Browning, I'm always about action.
25 People want stuff for students, then let's do it. Let's

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1 stop talking about it. Let's start making an amends.
2 Let's start working towards it. Because I could sit
3 there, but I want action.

4 And so I'm teaching that on my level, but I'm
5 also teaching it when we have immersion students.
6 Because we have immersion students that come from all
7 over the world and they visit our area, and they're from
8 Washington, D.C., Chicago, and all these places. And my
9 job on the first day they get into Browning is to teach
10 them about historical trauma and what it's doing to our

11 students. So I teach them for two to three hours on why
12 and how they'll interact with my students, and how
13 that -- because I don't want them to come in with the
14 "Savior" mentality that they're going to save our people
15 in five days.

16 But I want them to understand. I don't want
17 them to think they're saving anybody, but I want them to
18 leave with understanding and education on why this
19 should be a broader topic taught in all schools about
20 Native Americans. Because it is -- and my kids are
21 starting to connect those dots and say, Why isn't this a
22 bigger issue? This is tied to -- historically to, we do
23 relate a lot to what happened, propaganda, how they used
24 propaganda in those boarding schools, just like Hitler
25 used propaganda against Jews. This is genocide. It's

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1 the direct killing of one race or ethnicity. Why isn't
2 this a bigger issue? And why isn't the government doing
3 bigger things to reconcile that? And why are we using
4 Canadian statistics and not U.S. statistics? Why don't
5 we know the numbers?

6 And so my students are connecting those dots,
7 and I'm, like, I'm right behind you. You're speaking to
8 the choir, kids. I'm behind you. I understand. But

9 until we start educating that and until we start pushing
10 that, we're going to get the same results.

11 And so I said, "So what can you do?" And so
12 every day they're like, well, I'm coming to school and
13 I'm getting educated on this. I'm going to go to school
14 and I'm going to do this.

15 But all I'm saying is, it is a big issue. It
16 is a very big issue, and my students are very well
17 versed in it at my little Catholic school. And the one
18 thing is I'm appreciative about where I work is they
19 give me the autonomy to teach the way I do teach, but
20 they also -- because if I was in Florida or Texas, I
21 would be fired for teaching the way I teach. But I'm
22 thankful.

23 And one story I wanted to share with you from
24 my grandmother's perspective, because I'm a third
25 generation, and they call the second generation the

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1 "Lost Children," which would be my mother. And growing
2 up she was very indifferent and cold because of the way
3 my grandmother raised her from coming out of boarding
4 school. And I always was so angry with my mother for
5 not being the mother I needed, for not being that loving
6 mother. But my grandmother was that mother to me. And

7 we had so many differences.

8 And it wasn't until I was about 38, and I
9 said, I need to grant my mother some grace, because I
10 don't know what she went through. Because my mother was
11 very, like, everything had to be clean. We always had
12 to be put together. We always had to look presentable.
13 And just like my -- I didn't learn the language because
14 my grandmother said her grandkids were going to speak
15 perfect English. And she said, "They're never going to
16 get beat the way my family was beat."

17 And she went to St. Labre Indian school, and
18 she told me one story. She only shared one story. She
19 said she would share the one story. And her and my aunt
20 went to St. Labre Indian school, and they actually ran
21 away. My aunt, when she was in her younger years, got
22 kicked in the head by a horse, and so she had seizures.
23 And so when they were at the Indian school there she
24 actually -- they took all her medicine away from her and
25 everything, so they start beating my aunt because she

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1 was having seizures. And they said that it was because
2 she was filled with demons. And it was because she was
3 epileptic, and they took her medicine away. And that
4 was one story that my grandma shared from there.

5 But there was also the Holy Family Mission
6 that Mr. Weatherwax talked about, and that she was
7 there, too, in her younger years. And she told me, she
8 said, "You could hear -- you could hear the cries from
9 the infirmary," she said, "but one time I was delegated
10 the job to go down there and help," she said. "But one
11 night," she said, "there was a little girl down there
12 who was infested with lice, and they treated it with
13 kerosene and gas." She said, "But when they were
14 treating it, her skin was starting -- in the back of her
15 head, was starting to become infected from them putting
16 those compresses of kerosene on the back of her head."
17 She said she would cry, that little girl would cry, and
18 she was getting infected and they wouldn't do anything,
19 she said, and a couple days later she died from them
20 putting those kerosene compacts on her head.

21 She never did share anything about getting
22 beat or sexual abuse, because that was -- that's still a
23 taboo issue, and my grandma would always say, "You don't
24 share those things." And I never asked, out of respect,
25 and I didn't want her to relive things that she couldn't

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1 deal with. So I never said anything.

2 And even when all those payments were coming

3 out, she still would not say anything. But I know that
4 it hurt her because I would hear her cry. And I would
5 hear her hurt. And sometimes I would hear conversations
6 with her and my older aunts, her siblings, and she would
7 talk about it.

8 But the trauma that she even went through, she
9 had about eleven brothers and sisters, and they all died
10 horrific deaths at the hands of drugs and alcohol -- or
11 mostly alcohol at the time. But just having to grow up
12 in that. And even myself, having the ACE score of an
13 eight and having to operate with those high levels of
14 trauma, I see, even every day in Browning, where we need
15 adequate healthcare. We need adequate mental health.
16 We need adequate -- not just alcohol, because we have an
17 alcohol treatment center. But we don't have a drug
18 center. Not -- and especially when our own IHS is
19 prescribing some of those pills that got our people
20 addicted, they have an obligation to make that right.

21 So I just want action.

22 And I told my students I will do my best to
23 speak on behalf of us, but I want you guys also to write
24 letters, and they've had these letters written forever.
25 But I will send those in an e-mail, and there's like 10

1 or 20 of them. But that's all I have to say.

2 [APPLAUSE]

3 MR. GARRIOTT: Thank you.

4 DR. PEASE: Good afternoon. My name is
5 Janine Pease, (Native Language), One Who Loves to Pray.
6 (Native Language.) I'm a Crow Indian woman from the
7 Crow Reservation.

8 I've spent my professional career in higher
9 education, especially with the Tribal Colleges, and I'm
10 an adjunct professor with Little Big Horn College
11 presently.

12 Today, I am presenting as the chairman of the
13 St. Labre boarding school's investigation commission,
14 and I would like to tell you about our investigation
15 commission. I'm joined here today by several members of
16 that commission: Dr. Richard Littlebear, former
17 president of Chief Dull Knife College; and Ada -- I
18 mean, I'm sorry, Anda Pretty on Top, who is a member of
19 the board at St. Labre, been a career and lifetime
20 educator.

21 In December 2022, the St. Labre Board of
22 Education established and chartered the investigation
23 commission to look into two specific areas: the
24 incidence of student death in the three boarding schools
25 at St. Labre has, that is, St. Charles in Pryor;

1 St. Xavier in St. Xavier, Montana, on the Crow. Both
2 St. Charles and St. Xavier on the Crow Reservation. And
3 St. Labre on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. So to
4 look into the deaths of any children who were enrolled
5 in those boarding schools, as well as to identify
6 undocumented graves.

7 In order to carry out those purposes, our
8 commission has determined to do two things. The first
9 is to do an extensive archival study to understand from
10 the records of those schools the enrollment of the
11 Indian children, the incidence of illness and death, and
12 to understand the entire enrollment that had occurred
13 since 1887. That's a long time. Now, St. Labre was
14 established in 1887 and is still a boarding school.
15 St. Xavier and St. Charles were established also in that
16 similar time but have not been a boarding school all
17 through the years up to the present.

18 So our approach was to retain a historic
19 research firm to go to the archives of all of the Orders
20 that have served in the Catholic schools, those three
21 schools.

22 It turns out that we find that all the Orders
23 have taken the records to their headquarters or to the

24 places where they have repositories for those records.
25 So we retained a research firm to go to those archives.

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1 We're expecting to see the daily diary of the
2 schools for all of those years to understand who-all was
3 enrolled at the schools, when they became enrolled, when
4 they left the enrollment. We want to see what occurred
5 in the schools, and so that has been quite a task.

6 We have been granted, as a part of our
7 charter, resources to support that research, and they're
8 at disparate locations all over the Midwest, in the
9 Midwest and the West.

10 We're also interested in the Agency agents'
11 Journal of Education, the records that the BIA agent
12 maintained on the Catholic schools. All three of these
13 schools received federal funds for the operation of
14 schools, as you're well aware. And so from 1887 through
15 the early 19 -- or 20th Century, federal funds supported
16 this work.

17 A second area of our interest is to go to the
18 communities to visit with Tribal members who have
19 memories, accounts, and stories that they themselves
20 have to bring to bear on the two areas, the two
21 purposes. And we have held listening sessions, three

22 hours in length, in twelve sessions on the
23 reservation -- in the reservation towns. We've held
24 them in our churches, our schools, in our elder centers
25 at Shoulder Blade center in Lama Deer, and Awe

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1 Kualawaache nursing home, Crow Agency, as well as the
2 Boys & Girls Club in Lama Deer, and at Little Big Horn
3 College in Crow Agency.

4 We have had many people come to share their
5 stories, to bring the oral histories from their parents
6 and their grandparents to us. These are very brilliant
7 and very personal stories, and we're very -- we wish to
8 honor and respect what they have had to share with us in
9 these twelve sessions. We've just completed the twelfth
10 one in October. We started them in June. And so we
11 went over those months. And we had -- in some places we
12 had very low attendance, but as our sessions picked up
13 what you might call momentum, more people joined us to
14 share their stories.

15 We're expecting for all of these areas of
16 research, as well as the transcriptions of our oral
17 histories, to come together in a report that we expect
18 to present to the board of education -- the St. Labre
19 Board of Education, this spring. And so we will expect

20 to be able to share that with the Board of Education.

21 It is time for our communities to understand
22 what exactly did happen in our schools. And those of us
23 who have agreed to be on the investigation commission
24 have stepped up to take that responsibility, to come to
25 know and to help our people deal with that era of our

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1 education.

2 Thank you very much for coming to Montana and
3 thank you for listening to my presentation.

4 MR. GARRIOTT: Thank you.

5 [APPLAUSE]

6 MS. SINGER: Yá'át'ééh. Hello. My name is
7 Meg Singer. I'm from the Navajo Nation by way of
8 Salt Lake City, Utah. I've lived here in Montana for a
9 very long time, working with a lot of people in this
10 room. I went to graduate school here. And I'm grateful
11 for this opportunity.

12 I just wanted to share the stories -- about
13 our surrounding boarding schools -- within my family.
14 My father is a boarding school survivor, coming out of
15 Tuba City, Arizona, on the Navajo Nation. And also my
16 grandmother, who is a survivor from the Sherman Indian
17 Institute in California. They are both still living.

18 When I was growing up, I heard about boarding
19 schools, as one does as a Native person, and I would ask
20 my dad, "You know, Dad, when you went to boarding
21 school, did they cut your hair?"

22 "Well, no, because my hair was already short."
23 It was the '50s. I mean, he wanted the ducktail and
24 everything.

25 So, okay. It wasn't shortened. All right.

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1 "Well, Dad, when you were there, did you get in trouble
2 for speaking your language?"

3 "Well, no, I already knew English. I grew up
4 in the Grand Canyon. All of the white people came
5 speaking English and I picked it up, so we were good."

6 "Ah. So your boarding school experience was
7 different than what I've heard."

8 And that was basically the extent of which he
9 shared things. I would -- we would hear funny stories.
10 He called it "federal prison." He, you know, was
11 saying, yes, I have been to prison. And the
12 neighborhood would be like (gasps). "Yes, but it was --
13 it's called 'boarding school, actually. And I went when
14 I was six years old. So who do you know that was in
15 prison at six? Ha ha ha ha ha ha."

16 And then we would talk about things about when
17 he was a -- in there, and they would line up and they
18 had to be in the line to get from dorm to dorm, to
19 building to building, or else they would get in trouble.
20 And his idea was to tell these two boys that really
21 wanted to run home how to escape the boarding school.
22 And he said, "You know what's interesting? When we line
23 up, they're not looking at us. They only do this. So
24 at that moment, what you do is go around the building,
25 hide there, and then run out this way. And it's just

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1 straight home." He knew exactly where these kids needed
2 to run. And they did. And it was after chow. And
3 these kids ran and they ran home. And they got picked
4 up. And they were, like, cowboyed out, like with a
5 rope. And they were brought back, just tied up, covered
6 in mud because they had fell into the ravine, where it
7 was all muddy. And they were trying to get home, and
8 they got in trouble.

9 And my dad was like, "Man, I was so lucky they
10 didn't tell the dorm mother that it was my idea. Ha ha
11 ha ha ha."

12 And then I grew up. And I saw my dad and how
13 he was treated at work for being Native. And I saw the

14 struggle that he had, how he couldn't connect with us as
15 his children. I saw him be rude to my grandma. I
16 thought we were Navajo. I thought we were supposed to
17 respect our elders. Like, why are you being such an
18 A-hole, Dad, to, like, your own family?

19 And then I grew up. And my cousins who were
20 my siblings got trauma after trauma after trauma.
21 Choice after choice after choice taken away. And to the
22 point where I'm the last one of my generation, of my
23 cousins, and I'm 37 years old.

24 My dad, in 2008, turned to me, because I took
25 him to church, and I was like, Oi, Oi, Oi. You know,

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1 Jesus. Woo. He turns to me and goes, "Megan, I think
2 I'm depressed."

3 And something just popped in my mind. I'm
4 like, "Ya think? Yeah, you are depressed. Why? What's
5 going on?"

6 We started getting him into therapy, and he
7 went from therapist to therapist. He was not
8 comfortable around men. He was not comfortable around
9 certain people. He was really only comfortable around
10 white women. White women had no idea what boarding
11 schools were. So as he is trying to get health and

12 access to mental health services, he's becoming the
13 educator, because these Americans didn't know what the
14 American government did. So talk about that being
15 really hard. And then things started coming out more.
16 It was at nighttime, listening to the kids cry. It was
17 in the morning time, watching the kids get beat because
18 they wet the bed. It was getting the dorm mother
19 exposing herself to them. It was my aunt begging to go
20 to boarding school so that she wasn't getting molested
21 at home.

22 So there's all of these things that came out.
23 And for me, it was just, like, this is why we had the
24 life that we had. This is why you have been treated so
25 badly as a Native man. This is why I'm struggling with

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1 a lot of things. This is why the -- you know, the
2 government doesn't care about us Tribes and us Tribal
3 people, and et cetera, et cetera. And this is where it
4 was, and this is why I don't know my language. But I
5 think the biggest thing of learning this experience and
6 having my dad as a survivor is I survived my dad. And
7 I'm really lucky that he was able to repress and repress
8 and repress and nothing came out. He wasn't an
9 alcoholic. He didn't do drugs. He just was so

10 detached. He was not here. And so there are some times
11 when you can see him and you literally have to just,
12 like, trauma. Dad, come back. Come back to us. We're
13 here right now. We're safe. Come back. Be with us
14 right here. Feel it. We love you.

15 And I think the biggest thing for him is that
16 he just wasn't the parent that he wanted to be or that
17 he could be.

18 And so growing up now, you know, I was the
19 first in my generation, first woman to not go to
20 coll- -- not go to boarding school, and the first woman
21 in my family to go to college. Because, I mean, the
22 trauma that I didn't have to have. The trauma that my
23 cousins had that I didn't have, because my dad was able
24 to cope with his trauma from boarding school more.

25 So I've worked here in Montana for a long

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1 time. I went to school here. I've helped the Fort Peck
2 Tribe bring a resolution to get the OCR to talk about
3 the state of public education in Montana.

4 When I was working here and I was teaching
5 here, I would turn across where the student center was.
6 There was this tipi there. Remember that? That tipi
7 was artwork. It was supposed to be there as a

8 placeholder that the school would build a center because
9 of the history of boarding schools.

10 This MSU wanted the students to come to
11 college here at this school, a home away from home, with
12 full knowledge that the history of the boarding schools
13 is that when we sent our kids off to school, they didn't
14 come back, and then that was happening here. The
15 students weren't graduating. They weren't completing.
16 They were having breakdowns. They didn't have
17 resources. So that center was a home away from home.
18 Ten years go by, another ten years go by. There's no
19 money. And I'm like teaching the kids in Montana. I'm
20 like, over here, this is another promise that hasn't
21 been done.

22 So we were able to work with Mary Jane
23 McGarity, if anyone knows her here. We went from person
24 to person asking for grants to build that building, that
25 student center, so that that history of boarding school

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1 wouldn't happen anymore. That's our home. That's our
2 space. That's where all the community can go now to
3 that. And I'm grateful that I was able to be a part of
4 that.

5 But these are the things that we are doing

6 now, the state of education. We always have to keep
7 moving forward with that history of boarding schools
8 behind us. A lot of it hasn't changed, and that's where
9 we need to work together as Tribes, states, you know,
10 federal, all of our governance and our governance
11 systems, our sweat, our religions, our wars. I don't
12 know. Everybody. We have to get together on this.

13 So I just wanted to share my thoughts. I'm so
14 proud of this share. My dad and my grandmother being
15 here. And just thank you, everybody, for today. Thank
16 you.

17 [APPLAUSE]

18 MR. GARRIOTT: Thank you so much.

19 MS. SMALL: (Native Language.) My Cheyenne is
20 broken. I speak good English sometimes, but my Cheyenne
21 is broken. So Dr. Laverne, Uncle, my apologies. You
22 can correct me later. But I try. And I have resolved
23 not to lose my language any further.

24 My American name is Marsha Small. I'm a
25 graduate student, doctoral student here at Montana State

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1 University. I have been working in Indian boarding
2 school cemeteries since 2013. I do geophysical surveys.
3 I do ground-penetrating radar, along with anamometry, to

4 locate the stolen and kidnapped children, our relatives.

5 As I have worked through this, I've come to
6 these conclusions. One is: This does not need to be a
7 Band-Aid, that we can strive to help each other. We
8 need to put the lateral pressure on our communities.

9 The reason I say this is because I have put out the word
10 that I'm available to do surveys in these cemeteries. I
11 have only been contacted by Janine, Dr. Pease,
12 Janine Pease of the Blackfeet of the Piikáni, and the
13 Sonishskotsik [phonetic] outside of North Dakota.

14 People know I'm doing this. I am one of the
15 few, if not the only one in the United States, that's
16 been doing ground-penetrating radar in Indian boarding
17 school cemeteries. So that's one thing.

18 The other thing is that I understand the
19 trauma. I feel everybody's pain here. When somebody
20 says, Oh, I have not -- I don't have that in my family,
21 I find that denial. Because almost, if not all, people
22 here are a recipient or descendant of the Indian
23 boarding school system. We hold that trauma clear and
24 dear. We hold it in our hearts and our soul. How to
25 eradicate that, I'm not quite sure. But I know that I'm

1 looking forward to horizon healing.

2 My grandfather went to Genoa. My
3 great-grandfather. My uncle went to Genoa. My aunt
4 went to Genoa. My people are pretty well emerged from
5 the Indian boarding school systems. That's the reason
6 why my Cheyenne is broken. But I'm trying to bring that
7 back. The story from the Indian agent in our
8 communities -- because that's what the government did;
9 they made our people the policemen. So when I was being
10 bad, we were being bad at Grandma's up on Kirby Creek,
11 she'd be trying to hush us down, keep us down, be quiet.
12 And we'd just be just, you know, children. But she
13 would always scare us with Must-Stop [phonetic].
14 Must-Stop is going to come get you. Must-Stop for us
15 was the Indian agent. He was coming to get us. He
16 might take us to the boarding school. That was our
17 monster. That was the monster in our community. So I
18 grew up thinking that way, and it always held it in my
19 soul. My fear is not of the monsters of the world; they
20 were my relatives.

21 So I just thank you, Department of Interior.
22 I know that we have a long ways to go, and so I won't
23 take up any more time. But I'd like to thank each and
24 every one of you here. Go into your communities. I beg
25 you to go into your cemeteries, take one name, decide to

1 research on them. Where you will hit a barrier is the
2 Freedom of Information Act. You'll hit the Privacy Act.
3 Because what the state prevails [verbatim] is you have
4 to be 73 years old before you can garner the data out of
5 these systems. They will not let you have any other
6 data except your direct descendants. And they won't let
7 you have your own data until you're 73 years old. But
8 look for ways around it. I haven't found any yet, but
9 that's my goal.

10 Thank you so much, everybody. (Native
11 Language.)

12 [APPLAUSE]

13 MR. LITTLEBEAR: My name is Richard Littlebear
14 and I'm Northern Cheyenne. I'm a -- also a member of
15 the St. Labre commission. And Janine has pretty well
16 explained the purposes of that commission, so I will
17 marginally go into it. Because I went to the Tongue
18 River boarding school in Busby, Montana, from first --
19 from the -- actually, we were called beginners, because
20 we all talked our language. And we were put into
21 those -- into that school, which I thought we were
22 unique, in the elite group. Here we were, we were in
23 that group because we did not speak English. It took
24 one year for English to get into our vocabulary, and we

25 were put into kindergarten and then all the way up.

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1 Most of us did not speak sophisticated English. We were
2 able to communicate. And I think that one of the
3 reasons why we were able to communicate is that at home
4 there was a lot of Cheyenne still going on. And there
5 was no censorship. Nobody stopped us from talking. It
6 was encouraged. But we get to school, and it's the
7 other way around. And I think that has led to a lot of
8 trauma. When you're deprived of your own way of
9 communication, you're bound to have a lot of problems.

10 I really enjoy speaking my language. I really
11 enjoy -- I've learned how to read and write Cheyenne.
12 And that's one of my efforts, to keep it going. It's --
13 I thought, well, I know I'm fluent in Cheyenne. I can
14 speak. I can transfer those skills right over into
15 writing. It isn't that easy. I'm still learning, and I
16 started the process about 1990. And I'm a fluent
17 speaker. So there's that.

18 The point I'm trying to make is there's a heck
19 of a lot of work that goes into saving our languages.
20 And then we have all the other problems of -- the
21 problem of the DNA; the trauma that we have from -- that
22 is embedded in our DNA because it has gone on for so

23 long and has been so systematized.

24 And then, lately, I learned that -- I was
25 always kind of suspicious of that -- that theory.

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1 Lately, I learned that there's another area of study
2 called epigenetics, which starts with you when you're a
3 young kid. If you start experiencing trauma,
4 trauma-inducing experiences -- violence at home, sexual
5 abuse, so forth -- those things stick with you. They
6 come back. They come back in dreams or they come back
7 in actual violent action. So those things have to be
8 taken care of. And I think they're being neglected.

9 There's -- there should be -- even in alcohol
10 treatment centers, drug treatment centers, there should
11 be a provision in there where people are exposed to some
12 Native American language. Because I know all of us
13 don't speak that -- don't speak Crow, don't speak
14 Cheyenne. But let's at least experience one language so
15 that we can have a different viewpoint. For me, that
16 would be a two-fold thing. It would help save the
17 person learning that language, acquiring that language,
18 and it would perpetuate the language itself. Because
19 the language is very central.

20 To show you how dire that situation is for our

21 languages, back in 19 -- or 2015, we had 566 fluent
22 speakers on our reservation out of a population of
23 12,000. That's less than 1 percent. Just recently, we
24 did another survey and we only have 277 speakers of
25 Cheyenne. Speakers who are as fluent as I am. There

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1 are some who are relatively fluent, but it's going to
2 take a lot of work to bring this language back, which
3 was once -- back in the 1970s and '80s, it once
4 permeated the whole reservation. And it was always part
5 of every ceremony, and it still is today to an extent
6 that we can now do that.

7 I know I'm talking about something quite out
8 of the area of this commission that I'm part of, but
9 that is opening a lot of other areas of concern. For
10 me, for -- personally, I have some land on the
11 reservation. Through the leasing process that we have,
12 we leased it to one person, and that was about 15 years
13 ago. I went to look for -- look at how that lease was
14 working. Even though I get the magnificent sum of six
15 hun- -- \$6.59 out of that lease. Now, that's probably
16 as much as it takes to produce that check. And, yet,
17 that lease had been given over to another person without
18 my knowledge, without the other people's knowledge of --

19 who have some ownership of that same piece -- as those
20 same pieces of land. Why did that happen? How come
21 didn't they -- people didn't notify me? And then I went
22 over and said, How can I found out -- find out about
23 this? What are the consequences of me trying to find
24 out about it?

25 Well, you have to do this. You have to do

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1 this. You have to go to -- you have to go to the land
2 audit. All of these little things. I can't do that. I
3 didn't put myself in this situation.

4 So I think something like that has to be
5 looked at. Has to be -- the leasing process has to be
6 more systematized so that there's more accountability
7 for it, so that at least we get -- I don't know how many
8 acres I actually have because some of that has been
9 parceled out to other members of my family. But it
10 seems to me that I should be given more than \$6.59 out
11 of what I'm getting. I'm not money hungry. I'm not
12 anything like that. But I think it shows a lack of
13 accountability that whoever is the land person who --
14 whatever department that is, should be looking into.
15 Because if it happens on my small reservation, it must
16 be happening in other places. That's just a personal

17 gripe.

18 I'm glad I have you as a captive audience
19 right now.

20 [LAUGHTER]

21 MR. LITTLEBEAR: But that's been bugging me
22 ever since I -- I signed the lease in good faith. Yet I
23 don't think I'm being treated that way. So you'll be
24 hearing from me later on. Not in a bad way or anything
25 like that, but maybe some kind of redress to get some

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1 satisfaction out of me. I'm not the only one talking
2 about it. It's my other relatives who are doing that.
3 They look to me because they think I'm knowledgeable
4 just because I'm educated.

5 So there are so many things I don't know, but
6 I do know how to get at them. And that's one of the
7 reasons why, hard to get at them, is to get up here and
8 talk to you, the Honorable Deb Haaland.

9 And by the way, I really appreciate your
10 coming to listen to us. That is something that is
11 really needed. And I hope there is something that comes
12 out of this. Appreciate your attention (Native
13 Language).

14 [APPLAUSE]

15 MR. GARRIOTT: Thank you.

16 DR. PLENTY SWEET GRASS-SHE KILLS: (Native
17 Language.) Good afternoon. I'm Dr. Ruth Plenty Sweet
18 Grass-She Kills. I'm an enrolled Tribal citizen of the
19 Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara Nation. I'm also descended
20 from the Fort Peck Sioux and Assiniboine. I'm the first
21 generation in my family to not be in boarding school,
22 and I'm also the first generation -- or first person in
23 my family to hold a Ph.D.

24 I work for my Tribal college as the Food
25 Sovereignty director. And part of what I think is

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1 important in the work that I do -- I'm grateful to have
2 Marsha as one of my friends and colleagues, who is
3 acknowledging our relatives who haven't come home to us.
4 And the work that I do that is similar, in remediating
5 our seeds. And the Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara people are
6 agricultural and have grown corn, beans, squash,
7 sunflowers, watermelon, you know, for -- it became a
8 trade center because of our great produce. But because
9 of the loss of our language and because of taking our
10 children from our homes, and because of the removal of
11 our seeds to institutions and agencies, a lot of that
12 knowledge tied to the songs, tied to how to grow our

13 foods has been missing for generations.

14 And so just without -- I wanted to try to
15 acknowledge my own family's losses because of boarding
16 schools, but I didn't want to cry, so I thought just
17 acknowledging the loss of the knowledge and how that has
18 impacted our communities.

19 When I returned home after finishing my Ph.D.,
20 our life expectancy for women was in their 50s and for
21 men was in their 40s, and that was pre-COVID. And so we
22 definitely have health disparities that I believe are
23 part of that as the trauma. Part of that is, of course,
24 drugs and alcohol. And then, of course, part of that is
25 related to our diet and the loss of our connections to

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1 our traditional foods.

2 So I want to -- I should have started by
3 excusing myself before speaking before my elders, but
4 we'll just acknowledge thank you for being here and
5 allowing me this time to share briefly. Thank you.

6 [APPLAUSE]

7 MR. GARRIOTT: Thank you.

8 MS. PRETTY ON TOP: Good afternoon. My name
9 is Anda Pretty on Top. I'm a Crow Tribe, and I live in
10 Lodge Grass, Montana. And I'm also on the board of

11 directors for St. Labre for Labre homes, and also on the
12 commission. I was appointed with Dr. Pease and
13 Dr. Littlebear.

14 Our task, this is a huge task -- and so we're
15 doing the best we can -- of looking at all the obstacles
16 that are in front of us. And as Janine has stated very
17 well, what we are doing, the intent and purpose of our
18 commission, is to investigate. And it is sometimes
19 hard. But we have a researcher that's doing a
20 tremendous job. And the listening sessions were very
21 good, but it was minimal. People showed up -- not a lot
22 of people came, but we heard their stories. And also
23 we're still continuing this investigation.

24 And the boarding school era, my grandmother,
25 my parents were products of boarding schools. And my

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1 husband is too. And as I was talking to my husband,
2 because of his background, he had no parenting skills at
3 home. And he stated that the boarding school had
4 structure, and he learned that; and the academics was
5 very primary, elementary level in high school. He did
6 not like that, because he finished his work and helped
7 all of his Crow friends. But he said -- he stated that
8 boarding school is not for everyone. It's mostly for

9 people -- the kids that do not have parents. And this
10 is what I wanted to share today. Thank you.

11 [APPLAUSE]

12 MS. BECK: (Native Language.)

13 Hi, my name's Iko'tsimiskimaki Beck. I go by
14 Ekoo. I am Blackfeet and Red River Métis. I'm enrolled
15 in Little Shell Tribe of Montana. I am the daughter of
16 David Beck and Rosalyn LaPier. On my paternal side, I'm
17 white.

18 On my maternal side, my grandparents are
19 Angeline Wall and Bill LaPier. Angeline Wall attended
20 Ursuline in St. Ignatius, Montana. She's still alive
21 today. She just turned 83 in October, and if she had
22 been able to travel she would be here. And I hope
23 someday that she does decide to share her story in this
24 kind of a way, like so many brave people here have
25 today.

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1 My great-grandmother and my great-grandfather,
2 her parents -- Annie Mad Plume Wall and Francis Wall,
3 also known as Iyekema [phonetic] -- both attended Holy
4 Family Mission boarding school on the Blackfeet
5 Reservation, which was open for 50 years, until 1940.
6 And when I was growing up, I grew up with my

7 great-grandmother still being here. She was with us
8 until I was 13. And every year at Memorial Day we spent
9 our day at -- well, we went from grave to grave, of
10 course, and decorated them and cleaned them. But we
11 spent our day at Holy Family Mission, and we spent our
12 day hearing stories. And so I spent a lot of my
13 childhood thinking about these stories that I heard and
14 trying to understand their experiences.

15 My grand -- my great-grandmother looked back
16 on her time very fondly. But at the same time she told
17 us stories of children dying of lye poisoning because
18 lye can poison you. You can die from it. So there are
19 multiple cases in which lye has killed children. So she
20 would say, you know, "It was my childhood. I loved it,
21 and then I watched my classmate die of poisoning."

22 And my great-grandfather, the stories about
23 him were always -- he went there when he was twelve, and
24 he only spoke Blackfeet. And so his experiences were
25 always being punished. And the thing that bothered him

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1 the most out of the different kind of -- there are many
2 different punishments, but was that he had to go and
3 walk around a tree and beg God for forgiveness for
4 speaking his language. And they made him do that

5 constantly, to go beg for forgiveness for speaking his
6 language. And so that greatly impacted my family, and
7 it greatly impacted the way that they raised their
8 children, the way that their children raised their
9 children.

10 And so I just wanted to share a couple of
11 those things because, to my knowledge, no one who
12 attended Holy Family Mission lives anymore today. There
13 are oral histories, of course. When I was twelve I took
14 a cassette player and recorded my great-grandmother's
15 experiences that she wanted to share. And there are
16 actually a lot of people have written dissertations who
17 are Blackfeet, and they have some of those stories
18 included in those unpublished dissertations. So that's
19 another place where those oral histories can be found.

20 But Holy Family Mission had a really profound
21 impact on my community, and so I just wanted to share
22 those couple of tidbit.

23 Thank you so much. And thank you for coming
24 to Montana.

25 [APPLAUSE]

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1 MR. WERK: Thank you. I'm sorry. I won't be
2 able to stand and get through this. But I had a -- I

3 left in -- I had to come back. I thank my (Native
4 Language) for speaking earlier and sharing their story.

5 My name is Toby Werk, and I come from Fort
6 Belknap. And on Fort Belknap, there was St. Paul's
7 Mission. And I have a few bullet points here that I
8 wrote down some notes that I wanted to share because
9 there was a -- Donovan spoke a little bit earlier,
10 Donovan Archambault's our councilman. But he didn't
11 speak about St. Paul's, and he talked about his own
12 experience being in Pierre. And St. Paul's Mission, I
13 mean, you're -- where we are on Fort Belknap, I mean,
14 you're out in the middle of nowhere. And if you don't
15 think you are, you could see it from there. So I feel
16 like our story isn't always out there.

17 You know, a few of our -- my bullet points
18 that I started with was with my parents, my
19 grandparents. I myself, when I went to St. Paul's, it
20 wasn't a boarding school, but it was still ran by the
21 Jesuits and the Dominican Sisters and everything. And
22 you hear all of these terrible stories that happened to
23 people. You know, I mean, even in this day or in my
24 generation, for doing something wrong, you were beaten.
25 You know, whether you caught it with a ruler, you know,

1 got your hair pulled or, you know, got a good smack
2 alongside the head, those were normal things that we
3 learned there at school.

4 My grandparents, when my mom and her family
5 were taken there, the only time that they got to see
6 them, for my parents to go and see my aunts, my uncles
7 or whatever, was on Sunday. If they went to church,
8 they got to see them. My grandfather would not let my
9 aunts and uncles speak their language because he was
10 beaten for speaking his language. He cut their hair
11 short. We always -- you know, we'd all go around with
12 white sidewalls so that the nuns couldn't pull our hair.
13 And you know, he was taken from his home. He was born
14 right up the road here, between White Sulfur Springs and
15 Belt, in a tipi. And when they rounded him up, they
16 took him to St. Paul's. He never got to go to school,
17 he said. He never learned so much as they talk about,
18 oh, you're going to school. No. He was labor. He had
19 to take care of the garden. He had to take care of the
20 sheep. He had to take care of the milk cows. All of
21 those things so that the younger kids would have, you
22 know, maybe hopefully have something to eat.

23 You know, we talk about how my grandmother,
24 how they met, that's how she met him. Because when she
25 was little -- she was born in the Bear Paw Mountains by

1 Chinook, south of Chinook, in Cleveland. And when they
2 cut the reservation down and rounded them up, she got
3 sent to Fort Yates in North Dakota, and then from Fort
4 Yates she got sent to Oklahoma. You know, they were --
5 and it wasn't -- you know, they loaded them up on the
6 train, like cattle. And when it was her time, or we
7 talk about how she got older, she was able to move home,
8 and she got sent to the St. Paul's Mission and met my
9 grandfather there.

10 But they talked about how they met, that my
11 grandpa would catch mice and rats, and all the girls and
12 all the other boys or the boys when it was their turn to
13 cut wood, they would steal the chips that chipped off,
14 and hide them in their pocket so that they could cook
15 those. And my grandpa talked about when that's all they
16 ever ate was oatmeal in the morning and mutton in the
17 afternoon. Because at one time, St. Paul's Mission was
18 the largest sheep ranch in the country. They ran over
19 15,000 sheep at St. Paul's Mission. They never got to
20 eat -- they got to eat mutton when something died, you
21 know.

22 And I know the gentleman sitting next to you
23 talked about, you know, wanting to know about burials or

24 burial sites. My grandpa said when somebody would die
25 out there on the sheep ranch, they'd just bury them.

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1 Unmarked graves of young men that, you know, either died
2 of an accident or were killed, or something. And then
3 when the mission came through, we had sand rocks where
4 our people were buried. And when they wanted to make a
5 hay field, they just went and they gathered up all of
6 these -- the people out of these graves, not all of
7 them, but majority of them, and moved them to where the
8 St. Paul cemetery is now. But they took them from our
9 burial sites, from the sand stones in the side hill and
10 stuff there where they were buried.

11 There's -- I mean, there's just all of
12 these -- everybody has these horrific, scary stories and
13 everything, but I couldn't just leave without not
14 sharing that, you know.

15 And today, we have a beautiful, beautiful
16 school sitting there, empty, on reservation land. We
17 asked for it back because they broke their promise, the
18 diocese, the church, that they would have this school
19 for our people. And it's sitting there all boarded up
20 now. It's been closed for four years, a
21 multimillion-dollar building there that we can't even

22 have a week there. They won't open it for anything for
23 us. We have an old rec center that was built in the
24 1890's that, if we want to have something there now, we
25 got to pay the diocese of Chinook \$350 to use it.

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1 So I ask you, how do you help us? How do you
2 help us get that school back? Or not back?

3 There's a story, the bishop came when this
4 last school burnt, I think in '06 or '12 -- I can't
5 remember my dates -- but before that, it burnt three
6 times.

7 In Eagle Chalice [phonetic] two boys were
8 taken from him, and he said, no, it's wintertime.
9 Because they kept running away and going back to him.
10 And the last time they ran away and there was a storm,
11 and they died.

12 And they come to his house, the brothers and
13 Indian police, to his little cabin, and went searching
14 and everything. He said, Oh, I know your boys are here,
15 because they ran away.

16 He said, No, they're not. He said, I told you
17 to leave them because winter was coming. And you took
18 them. So where are my children? Two days later, they
19 found them froze to death. And he told them that your

20 school will burn four times before it comes back to us,
21 to our people. And it burnt four times. '06 or '9 was
22 the last time that it burnt.

23 And now it sits dormant. And St. Labre and
24 the Diocese of Great Falls say that they own that. But
25 that land was given to them to have a school, as long as

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1 it was open, from Running Fisher [phonetic], and that
2 promise has been broken.

3 I had two sisters that went out and got
4 educated, became teachers, taught there, but they were
5 never treated the same. They never had retirement.
6 They never had health insurance. But the other -- the
7 nonmember, nonenrolled teachers did. You know. So like
8 all of these injustices, it's like we could just keep
9 going and going and naming them and naming them.

10 But for me, for our little community, I ask
11 you for your help for us to get that building. Because
12 our community spoke up and want it, and we want to have
13 our own immersion school there. Because we have a
14 little immersion school that's run out of a trailer
15 house right now. But we're still teaching our own kids
16 our own ways, our own culture, our own language.

17 So thank you.

18 MR. GARRIOTT: Thank you.

19 [APPLAUSE]

20 MR. GARRIOTT: Over here, was there someone
21 else?

22 MS. LUCERO: Good afternoon. My name's
23 Kristina Lucero. I'm an enrolled member of the
24 Tseycum Band over in the Saanich Peninsula over in
25 Canada. I realize this is federal, and not including

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1 Canada, but I think it's relevant.

2 My grandma actually went to Kuper Island
3 boarding school, and I remember growing up thinking,
4 when she was telling these stories, is this real? I
5 remember thinking, you know, how could you do something
6 like this to children? She would talk about how the
7 priests would, you know, do really terrible things to
8 them, and then the nuns would cover those up by burning
9 babies. So when you're talking about gravesites, I'm
10 not sure exactly if you guys have been able to look into
11 other ways that people had been disposed of, but they
12 were really horrific stories.

13 My background is in the criminal legal system.
14 I have been an attorney since 2009. And up until a few
15 months ago I worked as -- I was a parole board member

16 for the State of Montana. And as a parole board member,
17 I asked a lot of the same questions about accountability
18 to our people who are serving our incarcerated
19 populations, and the answer was always the same: It's
20 up to the individual to be culturally competent and/or
21 trauma-informed. Conditioning funding to federal, state
22 and municipal dollars on cultural competency, and not
23 just training, but actually getting them informed I
24 think would be really helpful. Because our Indigenous
25 people are disproportionately represented in our prison

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1 system. So when we're talking about accountability and
2 we're talking about holding people to their words and
3 making sure that they're doing the things that they're
4 supposed to be doing when they're serving our
5 populations, when you put that in the context of what
6 this is all about, like boarding schools and people who
7 have suffered those epigenetics, the effects go on,
8 lasting effects. I think it's really important to get
9 all of the people who work in federal, state and
10 municipal agencies to be culturally informed.

11 Just last week I visited with a Tribal leader
12 that said that his -- one of his Tribal members had
13 informed him that one of the incarcerated people in the

14 women's prison couldn't speak her language. And when I
15 asked the Native American liaison if he had spoken to
16 the warden about that, she informed him that he had
17 either heard that wrong or typed the question wrong.

18 So again, the accountability for these state
19 actors is not there.

20 I would like to just point out that the
21 current population of the women's prison is 42 percent
22 Native American. So in terms of, like I said earlier
23 about accountability, holding people -- the federal
24 government accountable to their actions I think would go
25 a long way. And I think to do that it seems like

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1 funding is always the way to get people to pay
2 attention.

3 That's all I have to say.

4 [APPLAUSE]

5 MR. GARRIOTT: We'll hear from one last
6 person. We have time for one more. One last one. Here
7 on the side, the woman in black. And then after that,
8 then we'll hear from Secretary Haaland, and then we'll
9 also have a closing song from the Bobcat group.

10 MS. RAINBOW FEATHER WOMAN: (Native Language.)

11 How is everybody this afternoon?

12 My name is Rainbow Feather Woman. I come from
13 Rocky Boy, Montana, Chippewa Cree Tribe.

14 I appreciate you and your team to come to our
15 state. I just wanted to say that you saved the best for
16 last.

17 [LAUGHTER]

18 MS. RAINBOW FEATHER WOMAN: But listening to
19 everybody's stories, it's a tough, really, really tough
20 subject. But I also love your title as the Journey
21 [sic] to Healing. I honestly think that our language is
22 going to help heal all of this historical trauma that we
23 all endure. Whether we were part of it or not, I think
24 this particular historical trauma from boarding schools,
25 the findings and everything that it all entails, even

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1 human trafficking, sex trafficking, MMIW, MMIP, that
2 all -- it all connects, unfortunately. Those are really
3 sad, tough subjects. But we all unfortunately are part
4 of that. But I honestly think that language is healing.

5 And we do have a program back on our
6 reservation of (Native Language) Chippewa Cree language
7 revitalization program. We did one cohort so far; it
8 was a 14-month program where we spoke nothing but the
9 Cree language, 8:00 to 4:30, and by the end of those 14

10 months, those eight individuals were able to speak our
11 language. In fact, it saved a couple of our -- of those
12 trainees, their lives. They were turning to drugs and
13 alcohol, selling drugs, going off, you know, just taking
14 that ugly road. And then this came up. And to this
15 day, that lady, she's -- one of the ladies that was a
16 trainee, she's a grandmother. She's speaking the Cree
17 language to this baby, who we're hoping and praying will
18 be a first-language speaker. We haven't had a
19 first-language speaker in about 50 years on our rez.

20 We're the only Cree Tribe in the
21 United States, because every province -- I think almost
22 every province in Canada has Cree Tribes. And then
23 we're the furthest Ojibwe or Chippewa Tribe west in the
24 United States.

25 But we did have a state of emergency on our --

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1 for our languages and our Tribe. But I just want to,
2 you know, state that, that there is hope and there is
3 healing. And like I said, I love your -- the title, you
4 know, Madam Secretary, that you and your team have here.
5 And I think there's lot of hope, and I'm looking forward
6 to that. And I want to be supportive however I can. I
7 sit on our Tribal Council back at Rocky Boy. I'm in my

8 senior years. So I feel like I have, you know, a little
9 bit of experience to share and push forward -- help push
10 forward.

11 Since everyone was sharing some stories, my
12 great-grandpa on my mom's side, you know, he was taken
13 to -- I'm not sure if it was the school that this
14 gentleman was talking about over in Fort Belknap area,
15 when he was about eight, ten years old, I guess. Him
16 and his cousin were taken from their -- from our --
17 their home in Rocky Boy over to this next reservation.
18 Well, they didn't like -- you know, it was -- they were
19 being treated mean, so they took off. They knew the
20 train was close by. They knew they had relatives in
21 Browning, Blackfeet country. So they took off on this
22 train, no jackets, middle of winter. And they were able
23 to get to that train. And they knew where to get off
24 where Browning was, and they went, stayed at their
25 relatives. They found their relatives there, and they

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1 stayed there until they were 17 and 18 years old. And
2 they made their way back to Rocky Boy and, you know,
3 their parents were like, Hey, what are you doing? You
4 know, and they told them what happened. All those years
5 they thought they were just at that school. And so like

6 me, my daughter, we wouldn't be here if my grandpa
7 didn't take off from that school and survive, you know.
8 And there's so many stories. And I even
9 presented on -- I'm by no means an expert on any of
10 this, but I know what I've learned, what I've heard from
11 others, my own family members, my daughter's family up
12 in Canada. I've learned their stories, heard their
13 stories, and I have been asked to speak at different
14 areas to like an all-white crowd. It's happened about
15 three, four times now. And a lot of them, they don't
16 realize this current and past history that we carry on
17 our shoulders and in our hearts, and -- but I know
18 there's hope. And you have all of our support from our
19 Tribes, Madam Secretary. Thank you. (Native Language.)

20 [APPLAUSE]

21 MR. GARRIOTT: Thank you. Thank you so much.

22 We're going to conclude. Before that, Madam
23 Secretary will say some closing remarks. And before
24 that, I just wanted to just thank everyone for their
25 participation, for their courage today in sharing the

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1 stories and addressing some of these very tough issues.
2 And of course, thank you to our staff, our mic runners
3 and everybody.

4 Madam Secretary.

5 SECRETARY HAALAND: Thank you, Wizi. And
6 thank you all again so much. For those of you who
7 stayed the entire time, we appreciate it. And
8 everything that all of you said, it resonates with me.
9 I can identify with everything that you said in one way
10 or another and certainly through the travails that we've
11 had on this Road to Healing. This is the last stop. I
12 have been to Alaska, we went to Michigan, California,
13 Arizona.

14 We've heard a lot of stories. A lot of them
15 are the same. The idea and the really strong move to
16 ensure that our languages are preserved is something
17 that every Tribe that I've spoken to shares. So I
18 appreciate all of that, everything all of you are doing
19 to preserve those languages.

20 I don't speak my language. I introduced
21 myself in Kerasan when I first started because that's
22 what I know. But my mother endured boarding school.
23 She went to boarding school because her parents sent her
24 there. She didn't have to go. But nonetheless, even in
25 the public schools in her era, they were beating kids

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1 with the rubber hose for speaking their languages. And

2 she went to school in Arizona.

3 My grandmother was taken -- both my
4 grandparents, my grandmother, my maternal grandmother
5 and my grandfather from Laguna and Jemez Pueblos,
6 respectively, were taken on the train and sent to
7 Santa Fe. My grandmother, when she spoke to me about
8 it, said that the priests came to the village and
9 gathered up all the children and put them on the train.
10 And even though, you know, now, if you got -- hopped in
11 your car and left Isleta village, it would take you, I
12 don't know, an hour and a half, maybe, an hour and
13 three-quarters to get to Santa Fe. But back then, my
14 grandfather -- my great-grandfather only had a horse and
15 a wagon, and so it took him three days to go visit my
16 grandmother, and he was only able to see her twice in
17 the five years that she was gone.

18 You know, we hear stories about children
19 returning to their homes after boarding school and no
20 one's there. Their families are gone. I'm lucky. I'm
21 very fortunate that when my grandmother returned to her
22 home, her mother was there waiting for her. And my
23 grandmother was able to resume her life as a Pueblo girl
24 and grow to be a Pueblo woman, herding sheep for her dad
25 and helping to cook, you know, preserve the food that

1 they grew, and participate in all of her ceremonies.
2 And having the opportunity to speak with her about what
3 our ceremonies were like before, you know, people kind
4 of moved into the modern world, was really wonderful to
5 hear.

6 So our work goes on to make sure that our
7 children have what they need to carry on our customs and
8 traditions. And just know that we at the Department of
9 the Interior are working very hard to make sure that we
10 can provide funding and tools and all of these things to
11 help with all of the work that needs to be done. I am
12 proud of the work that we've done. We have worked hard
13 to make sure that we -- that Tribes are -- have a say,
14 have a seat at the table. We have post-stewardship
15 agreements with a lot of our public lands. We want to
16 make sure that Tribes can participate in how we are
17 stewarding our public lands. It's one of the -- you
18 know, to conserve and manage our public lands is part of
19 our mission at the department.

20 And so I just feel like it is a new era for
21 Indian country. And there are so many dedicated career
22 staff at the department who go to work every single day
23 thinking about all of you and wanting to make sure that
24 they do the best job possible so that all of you can

25 thrive.

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1 So I thank you all again. I thank all of my
2 staff. They're all sitting over there. Really have
3 poured their heart and souls into the boarding school
4 initiative. And so I just want to thank all of them
5 publicly, because I know where their hearts are as well.
6 So thank you all again for being here.

7 [APPLAUSE]

8 (Drumming.)

9 MR. GARRIOTT: Thank you, Secretary.

10 So we're going to close everything out in a
11 good way. Our university Tribal group is going to sing,
12 and we'll be done for the day. And again, thank you,
13 everybody.

14 MEMBER OF THE BOBCAT SINGERS: [Away from
15 microphone] Honor Song for everybody who came. And I
16 know you have probably been standing a lot today.
17 Appreciate it. We're the Bobcat Singers, a
18 conglomeration of Native students and faculty, friends,
19 relatives, and working together here with this
20 particular group for about a year now and come a long
21 way in the knowledge that goes in preparing a drum [away
22 from microphone]. While we're still learning, we're

23 grateful to our leaders (Native Language) to represent
24 themselves and the Indian people.

25 So thank you guys for coming and showing the

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1 respect. With that, we'll be singing an Honor Song for
2 our relatives.

3 (Closing ceremony.)

4 (Whereupon, the proceeding

5 concluded at 3:08 p.m.)

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1 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

2 STATE OF MONTANA)
) ss.
3 COUNTY OF GALLATIN)

4 I, Emily K. Niles, Registered Merit Reporter,
5 do hereby certify:

6 That I reported in shorthand (Stenotype) the
7 proceedings had in the above-entitled matter at the
8 place and date indicated.

9 That I thereafter transcribed my said
10 shorthand notes into typewriting, and that the
11 typewritten transcript is a complete, true and accurate
12 transcription of my said shorthand notes to the best of
13 my ability.

14 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand in my
15 office in the County of Gallatin, State of Montana, this
16 17th day of November, 2023.

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EMILY K. NILES, RMR, CRR

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