

A Resolution in Support of the Establishment of a National Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding Schools

WHEREAS, Congress has introduced legislation (S. 2907, H.R. 5444) to establish a National Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policy in the United States (known as the “Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act”); and

WHEREAS, at least fifteen of these identified Boarding Schools (Chehalis Boarding and Day School – Oakville, Colville Mission School – Kettle Falls, Cushman Indian School – Tacoma, Fort Simcoe Indian Boarding School – White Swan, Fort Spokane Boarding School – Davenport, Neah Bay Boarding and Day School – Neah Bay, Puyallup Indian School – Squaxin Island, Quinault Boarding and Day School – Taholah, S’Kokomish Boarding and Day School – Olympia, St. George Indian Residential School – Federal Way, St. Joseph’s Boarding School – Federal Way, St. Mary’s (now Paschal-Sherman Indian School,) Tonasket Boarding School – Tonasket, Tulalip Indian Industrial School – Tulalip Bay, and Tulalip Mission School – Priest’s Point) operated within our state, having a deep intergenerational impact on the very students, and tribal communities we still serve; and

WHEREAS, in order to begin the healing process to address the harms suffered and endured as a result of these boarding school policies; a comprehensive study is needed of the history of these policies, such study should include a complete documentation of every student and the events that took place at each of these schools; gathering of testimony from those that suffered abuse, neglect or other trauma, and recommendations to Congress based on the information gathered from individual victims, communities and experts concerning the nature of the harms and potential paradigms of healing and reconciliation; and

WHEREAS, the Commission’s main role is to develop recommendations on actions the federal government can take to adequately hold itself accountable for, and redress and heal, the historical and intergenerational trauma inflicted by the Indian Boarding School Policies and Practices; and

WHEREAS, both of the Senators from our state (Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell) and five of our Representatives (Susan DelBene WA-1, Rick Larsen WA-2, Pramila Jayapal WA-7, Adam Smith WA-9, and Marilyn Strickland WA-10) in Congress have already signed on as co-sponsors of this legislation.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, that we, the State Board of the Directors, on behalf of the members of the Washington Education Association, hereby support Congressional efforts to pass legislation approving the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies and Practices Act and bolstering initiatives, and subsequent recommendations, to hold the federal government accountable for, and redress and heal, the historical and intergenerational trauma inflicted by these Indian Boarding School Policies and Practices.