



**MEDIA CONTACTS**

## Indigenous Children and Survivors of Boarding Schools honored by the Navajo Nation Council

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**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — Yesterday, during a National Day of Remembrance, the 24th Navajo Nation Council offered their condolences to the families and communities impacted by the legacy of Indian boarding schools and honored the memory of the Indigenous children who never returned home.

Additionally, Canada declared a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to acknowledge the devastating legacy of the Indian residential school system and the lasting impact it had on the people of the First Nations.

“The traumatic experiences of our Navajo students have come to light detailing a more gruesome and disturbing legacy of these boarding schools. Our children were often subjected to sexual, physical, spiritual, and mental abuse,” said Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Cove, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Red Valley, Tsé’á’náoozt’í’i, Sheepsprings, Beclabito, Gad’ii’áhí/Tó Ko’í). “This has resulted in many lives lost because of this violence. We have to confront this traumatic history and begin to heal as a people.”

Across the United States and Canada, Indigenous communities gathered to speak out on the atrocities that occurred within these government-sanctioned schools and the generational impact they had on the loss of Native languages and culture.

Secretary Debra Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) announced it would begin Tribal consultations as the next step of the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative. In June, this initiative directed the Interior Department to prepare a report detailing available historical records on the impact of the federal boarding school program upon Indigenous children. The final submission of a written report on the investigation is due by April 2022.



PHOTO: Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty at the Navajo Nation Council Chambers during the Sexual Assault Prevention Walk.

“I launched the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative to begin the long healing process that our country must address to build a future we can all be proud to embrace. As we move forward, working with Tribal Nations is critical to addressing this legacy with transparency and accountability,” said Secretary Debra Haaland. “Tribal consultations are at the core of this long and painful process to address the intergenerational trauma of Indian boarding schools and to shed light on the truth in a way that honors those we have lost and those that continue to suffer trauma.”

As the history of Indian boarding schools comes to the forefront nationally, survivors are able to tell their stories and unveil the brutality they experienced.

“These schools caused so much sorrow for our people and it breaks my heart knowing our children never returned home to their families. There has to be accountability and a formal apology from the United States and the entities that supported the federal boarding school program,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh). “We thank Secretary Debra Haaland for her leadership as we ensure this never happens again. The Navajo people look forward to working with the Interior Department to complete this historic report. Every survivor is resilient. Every child matters across Indian Country.”

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