



United States  
Conference of  
Catholic Bishops

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20017

March 16, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sharice Davids  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Cole and Ms. Davids:

As chairmen of several U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) committees, we write in support of the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act (H.R. 7325). We urge the House to advance this important legislation.

In July 2024, our predecessors [wrote to Congress](#) stating “unequivocally that the tragic history of the boarding school period should be brought to light in order to pave the way for healing of impacted Indigenous communities” and that “[w]e are committed to concrete actions to restore trust and cultivate healing and the reconciliation that the Church desires.”

In that letter, two points were raised for consideration regarding the structure of the previous version of the legislation. We appreciate your efforts to incorporate that feedback, which we believe will facilitate efforts to bring the truth forward and contribute to healing and reconciliation.

In particular, the exclusion of a broad subpoena power will invite greater cooperative, transparent participation across government, secular, and religious institutions to properly begin and carry forward the process of truth, healing, and justice. The addition of three seats to the Federal and Religious Truth and Healing Advisory Committee, designated for representatives of religious communities that have historic ties to this era, invites those communities to enter formally into this dialogue as established stakeholders invested in the commission’s outcome. This direct participation from the Catholic Church and other faith traditions will also help to better facilitate requests for records. True healing and reconciliation are only possible through the involvement of all relevant parties.

The forced removal of children from their tribal lands and communities as part of federal boarding school policies was a moral failure that disregarded the unique culture and dignity of Indigenous peoples. Accounts from this era illustrate lasting trauma among those who were involuntarily brought to these schools. The pain from the Native American boarding school era continues to echo today. As stated in the USCCB’s Pastoral Framework, [Keeping Christ’s Sacred Promise: A pastoral Framework for Indigenous Ministry](#), “The Church recognizes that it has played a part in traumas experienced by Native children.”

As Pope Francis stated clearly in 2022, “Without real indignation, without historical memory and without a commitment to learning from past mistakes, problems remain unresolved and



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keep coming back.” If enacted, we believe H.R. 7325 would help to build up that historical memory essential to learning and healing.

As we continue to encourage greater access to and understanding of this painful history, the Catholic Church in the United States remains committed to transparency, to listening, and to humility. We remain dedicated to working with Native communities, government actors, and other religious traditions in efforts to bring about authentic healing and reconciliation. As one means of promoting this, we urge the House to favorably advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Shelton J. Fabre  
Archbishop of Louisville  
Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice  
and Human Development

Most Reverend John T. Folda  
Bishop of Fargo  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Native  
American Affairs

Most Reverend Robert J. Brennan  
Bishop of Brooklyn  
Chairman, Committee on Cultural  
Diversity in the Church

Most Rev. Barry C. Knestout  
Bishop of Richmond  
Chairman, Committee on the Protection of  
Children and Young People

CC: The Honorable Tim Walberg  
Chairman, House Committee on Education and Workforce  
The Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott  
Ranking Member, House Committee on Education and Workforce  
The Honorable Bruce Westerman  
Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources  
The Honorable Jared Huffman  
Ranking Member, House Committee on Natural Resources