



Legislation Text

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CITY of ALBUQUERQUE
TWENTY FOURTH COUNCIL

COUNCIL BILL NO. R-21-205 ENACTMENT NO. _____

SPONSORED BY: Isaac Benton, Cynthia D. Borrego, Lan Sena, by request

RESOLUTION

Acknowledging And Recognizing The Albuquerque Indian School Cemetery At 4H Park As A Historical And Sacred Burial Site; Acknowledging The Historical And Ongoing Intergenerational Trauma Experienced By Native American Individuals, Families, And Tribal Nations As A Result Of Indian Boarding School Policies; And Committing To Work With Tribal Nations And Local Native Americans Toward Reconciliation And Healing. (Benton, Borrego, and Sena, by request)

ACKNOWLEDGING AND RECOGNIZING THE ALBUQUERQUE INDIAN SCHOOL CEMETERY AT 4H PARK AS A HISTORICAL AND SACRED BURIAL SITE; ACKNOWLEDGING THE HISTORICAL AND ONGOING INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA EXPERIENCED BY NATIVE AMERICAN INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND TRIBAL NATIONS AS A RESULT OF INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL POLICIES; AND COMMITTING TO WORK WITH TRIBAL NATIONS AND LOCAL NATIVE AMERICANS TOWARD RECONCILIATION AND HEALING.

WHEREAS, the City of Albuquerque is built upon the traditional homelands of the Tiwa peoples and recognizes that Tribal Nations have lived upon this land since time immemorial; and

WHEREAS, the City of Albuquerque values the contributions to our society accomplished through and by Native American thought, culture, and technology; and

WHEREAS, the United States government adopted the Indian Civilization Fund Act of 1819 to provide financial support for church run schools to “civilize” Native American children through education; and

WHEREAS, the United States government adopted the Indian Boarding School Policy of 1869

also known as “President Grant’s Peace Policy” in a deliberate attempt to eradicate Native American languages, beliefs, cultures, and identities and to assimilate them into White American culture through federally funded Christian-run schools, which had the effect of cultural genocide; and

WHEREAS, between 1869 - 1960’s the Indian Boarding School Policy authorized the forced removal of hundreds of thousands of Native American children from their families and communities and relocated them to one of 367 residential facilities across 30 states; and

WHEREAS, Article II(e) of the United Nations definition of genocide states “Forcible transferring children of the group to another group” with the intent to destroy, in whole, or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group is an act of genocide; and

WHEREAS, Native American children were required by law to attend boarding schools with the stated purpose of “Kill the Indian, Save the Man,” often through physical, sexual, psychological, and spiritual abuse; and

WHEREAS, many Native American children ran away and remained missing, or died of abuse, illness, or substandard healthcare provided by Indian Boarding schools; and

WHEREAS, by 1926, nearly 83 percent of Native American school-aged children were enrolled in Indian Boarding schools in the United States, but because nearly 62 percent of the school records have been lost or destroyed, the full extent of the Indian Boarding School Policy has not been identified; and

WHEREAS, the Albuquerque Indian School (AIS) was operated by the Presbyterian Church and by the United States government from the 1881 to 1981; and

WHEREAS, the Albuquerque Indian School received Native American children from surrounding Pueblos and Tribes from within and outside of New Mexico, including Native American children from Ute, Apache, Pima, and Navajo tribal nations; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of these harmful federal policies resulted in the isolation, separation, and death of Native American children who died while attending the Albuquerque Indian School and were buried in unmarked graves at the Albuquerque Indian School Cemetery, away from their families and community never to return home; and

WHEREAS, the City of Albuquerque received a request to acquire the site where the cemetery is located on June 20, 1972; and

WHEREAS, information regarding the number of individuals buried and their location at the Albuquerque Indian School cemetery at 4H Park is inconclusive and further research of the site is

required; and

WHEREAS, Albuquerque City Council Ordinance 2-6-6-1 established The Commission on American Indian & Alaska Native Affairs (CAIANA) as an advocate for Native American resident affairs and was amended in 2019 to have CAIANA serve as the forum for formalized government-to-government relations between the City of Albuquerque and its adjacent Tribal Nations; and

WHEREAS, the City, through its Office of Native American Affairs, has contacted the eight Pueblos and Tribes originally identified with this burial site to gather and provide information on this issue along, and is reaching out to the remaining affected Pueblos and Tribes within the State of New Mexico to engage in ongoing, meaningful tribal consultation; and

WHEREAS, the City convened a 4H Park Burial Site Stakeholders' Meeting on August 10, 2021 to provide a forum for community stakeholders with a connection to the site to provide recommendations for future actions by the City; and

WHEREAS, the CAIANA issued a formal memorandum to the Mayor's Office on September 20, 2021 entitled "Recommendations on Albuquerque Indian Boarding School Cemetery Site/4H Park" that provides information, discussions, and recommendations for short-term and long-term actions to address this specific issue and the legacy impacts of Indian boarding schools; and

WHEREAS, the City, through its Office of Native American Affairs, held a public event entitled "Albuquerque Indian School Cemetery Acknowledgement and Healing Reflection" on September 25, 2021 focused on the history of the site, acknowledging the historical and intergenerational trauma of Indian Boarding Schools, and recognizing the City's commitment to ongoing redress of the issue; and

WHEREAS, the City's Parks and Recreation Department has temporarily demarcated the assumed location of the cemetery at 4H Park, placed signage identifying the park as a sacred site to help educate the public about the site's significance to begin implementing recommendations from community stakeholders connected to the site; and

WHEREAS, the City of Albuquerque has a government-to-government working relationship with adjacent Pueblos and Tribes, and a responsibility to its Native American residents to make the AIS Cemetery Site a place to be treated with respect and reverence now and into the future.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE:

Section 1. Pledges to provide resources both financial and human, as feasible, to implement

short-term and long-term recommendations provided by the City's adjacent Pueblos and Tribes, CAIANA, and community stakeholders with connection to the site.

Section 2. Support the establishment of a working group to gather, analyze, and assess all historic and current information and documentation related to Albuquerque Indian School burials and cemetery sites. This working group should be Native-led and include historical and cultural experts.

Section 3. Support the development of and implementation of strategies to address issues, concerns, and health disparities Native residents of Albuquerque face due to the impacts of historical trauma and racism. These will include short and long-term goals in relation to education, economy, environment, health care, intergovernmental relations with Native Nations/Pueblos in the state, and the homeless population.

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