

Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs  
 05/03/2022 02:00 PM  
 HB22-1327 Native American Boarding Schools  
 Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Jill Oberer For Self	<p>It is imperative that HB22-1327 (Native American Boarding Schools) pass the legislature and be signed into law.</p> <p>First and foremost the families impacted and traumatized by the forced removal of their children, to be placed in Native American Boarding Schools, against their will and without their permission, must be fully understood and formally recognized.</p> <p>The trauma to the children forcibly removed from their homes must be researched, and documented. Without full understanding, formal recognition, expression of remorse, and acceptance of responsibility for harm done, no one can heal or move forward. Not the children who suffered, their families, or the larger community.</p> <p>It is essential that this bill is passed. It is essential that the full extent of the physical and emotional abuse, of the trauma which occurred at these schools, including the death of innocent children be fully researched, documented, publicly acknowledged, and rectified to the best of our ability. These families must be recognized and honored if they are ever to know peace, if any of us are to truly know peace and be able to move forward in unity.</p> <p>Jill Oberer                      968 17 ¼ Road                      Fruita, Colorado 81521</p>
Remmington Kohpay For Self	<p>First, I would like to thank Senator Coleman and the other members of the committee for your time today in review of this bill. My name is Remmington Kohpay and I am from Grand Junction, Colorado.</p> <p>I am testifying today in support of House Bill 22-1327 and the proposed action to establish the Native American boarding school research program through History Colorado. I would also like to support the request from the Department of Human Services that the Teller project is included in this bill.</p> <p>The passing of this bill is critical for the Colorado Ute Tribes and History Colorado to investigate and identify the twenty one unmarked graves located on the grounds of what was once the Teller Indian School, later known as the Teller Institute. This location at 2800 Riverside Parkway in Grand Junction and the grounds associated with it have had a long-standing history as a place where people go to be forgotten. As a member of this community I want to let it be known how vital it is to address this issue.</p>

	<p>At least a dozen tribal nations from Colorado’s surrounding states have ties to this former boarding school. As a Native American and citizen of this state, I feel that it is critical for the murky history of the Teller Institute to be brought forth so that we may begin to heal as a people. Every day I work with chronically unsheltered people and can see firsthand what can happen when a community is left voiceless and erased. The pain from the lack of closure left by the loss of these 21 children will not go away until they can be properly laid to rest according to their tribes’ customs. This, however, is unlikely to be done without the actions that the passing of this bill will allow.</p> <p>At this time I would also emphasize that tribal outreach is crucial to this project. The execution of Section 3 of this bill pertaining to the Teller facility should be done in consultation with the sovereign nations before the transfer of the land is completed.</p> <p>I appreciate your time today on behalf of such an important bill and strongly encourage a vote of support for HB22-1327.</p> <p>Thank you</p>
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