

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 2026-4706, by Representatives Lekanoff, Stearns, Taylor, Hall, Santos, Cortes, Burnett, Thai, Duerr, Timmons, Parshley, Ryu, Fosse, Thomas, Zahn, Simmons, Nance, and Gregerson

1 WHEREAS, Beginning with the Indian Civilization Act of 1819,
2 hundreds of thousands of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native
3 Hawaiian children were removed from their families, tribes,
4 communities, and villages and placed in more than 526 Indian boarding
5 schools across the United States until the 1960s; and

6 WHEREAS, Between 1850 and 1930, at least twenty-eight Indian
7 boarding schools, operated by the federal government or religious
8 missions, existed within the boundaries of Washington state,
9 including in Bellingham, Clallam, Port Gamble, Davenport, Federal
10 Way, Kettle Falls, Mora, Neah Bay, Oakville, Olympia, Omak, Priest
11 Point, Squaxin Island, Swinomish, Tacoma, Taholah, Tonasket, Tulalip
12 Bay, Ward, White Swan, and Yakima; and

13 WHEREAS, Indigenous children from Washington state were also sent
14 to asylums, orphanages, and other facilities far from their homes,
15 including to Idaho, Montana, and Oregon; and

16 WHEREAS, Indian boarding schools aimed to culturally assimilate
17 Indigenous children through practices that caused systemic
18 destruction of Indigenous identities, traditions, ceremonies,
19 spirituality, and language; and

20 WHEREAS, Countless American Indian and Alaska Native children
21 died at these Indian boarding schools and were unceremoniously
22 interred, without traditional burials, in unmarked graves and
23 cemeteries at these schools, faraway from their ancestral lands; and

1 WHEREAS, The memory of this brutal history continues to haunt
2 Indigenous communities through intergenerational trauma, compounded
3 by systemic oppression and racism, and spiritual, cultural, and
4 familial disruption; and

5 WHEREAS, September 30th is recognized in both the United States
6 and Canada as "Every Child Matters Day," a national day of
7 remembrance for United States Indian boarding schools to honor the
8 victims and survivors of the Indian boarding schools and to
9 acknowledge their ongoing suffering; and

10 WHEREAS, Across Indian country, this day is also known as "Orange
11 Shirt Day" to remember the story of six-year old Phyllis Jack
12 Webstad, whose brand-new orange shirt, chosen by her grandmother to
13 represent her loss of freedom and individuality, was immediately
14 confiscated on her first day at a residential mission school, an
15 action that has come to symbolize how the Indian boarding schools
16 stripped Indigenous students of their identities; and

17 WHEREAS, Indigenous communities recognize orange as the color of
18 strength and power, truth telling, health, and regeneration, inviting
19 victims and survivors of Indian boarding schools and governments to
20 shine the light of truth on this long-hidden and shameful historical
21 public policy, to engage in reconciliation through learning how this
22 policy harmed American Indian and Alaska Native children, and to
23 begin to heal;

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State House
25 of Representatives commend the importance of working to identify and
26 preserve primary resources that document the existence of Washington
27 state Indian boarding schools and the experiences of the children who
28 resided in them; and

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Washington State House of
30 Representatives recognize September 30, 2026, as Every Child Matters
31 Day, as established by Phyllis Jack Webstad and the Orange Shirt
32 Society, in recognition of the importance of learning about the
33 history of the United States federal Indian boarding schools.

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35 I hereby certify this to be a true and correct copy of
36 Resolution 4706 adopted by the House of Representatives

37 March 2, 2026
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Bernard Dean, Chief Clerk