

**Second Regular Session  
Seventy-fourth General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO**

**PREAMENDED**

*This Unofficial Version Includes Committee  
Amendments Not Yet Adopted on Second Reading*

LLS NO. 24-1154.02 Jessica Herrera x4218

**HOUSE BILL 24-1444**

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**HOUSE SPONSORSHIP**

**McLachlan and Herod,**

**SENATE SPONSORSHIP**

**Bridges and Simpson,**

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**House Committees**

Education  
Appropriations

**Senate Committees**

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

101      **CONCERNING THE RECREATION OF THE FEDERAL INDIAN BOARDING**  
102              **SCHOOL RESEARCH PROGRAM, AND, IN CONNECTION**  
103              **THEREWITH, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.**

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**Bill Summary**

*(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)*

In 2022, the general assembly enacted House Bill 22-1327, which created the federal Indian boarding school research program (program) in the state historical society, commonly known as history Colorado. House Bill 22-1327 required the program to conduct research regarding the physical abuse and deaths that occurred at federal Indian boarding

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.  
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.*

schools in Colorado and required history Colorado, in consultation with the Colorado commission of Indian affairs, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe to develop recommendations to better understand the abuse that occurred and to support healing in tribal communities. Pursuant to the provisions of House Bill 22-1327, the program was repealed on December 31, 2023.

The bill recreates and reenacts the program and appropriates \$1 million from the general fund divided in equal annual payments for fiscal years 2024-25, 2025-26, and 2026-27 to implement the recommendations developed. The recommendations include:

- The continuation of the program until December 31, 2027;
- Authority for history Colorado, in partnership with the Colorado commission of Indian affairs, to conduct ongoing research and tribal consultations with different tribes and engage in listening sessions with American Indian and Alaska native communities on the history and impact of federal Indian boarding schools in Colorado;
- The collection of oral histories of survivors that highlight indigenous narratives;
- Quarterly updates from history Colorado to the Colorado commission of Indian affairs;
- Developing further recommendations to the general assembly to address the impact of federal, state, and local schooling systems on native communities;
- Developing further recommendations to the Colorado department of education and Colorado department of higher education to support education for native communities;
- Developing further recommendations to the Colorado department of human services and other state agencies on how to address the health, mental health, economic, and other impacts of the boarding school system; and
- Funding for 2 term-limited FTE to support the recommendations.

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1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly  
3 finds and declares that:

4 (a) Beginning with the federal "Indian Civilization Act" enacted  
5 in 1819, the United States enacted laws and implemented policies

1 establishing and supporting federal Indian boarding schools across the  
2 nation. The purpose of federal Indian boarding schools was to culturally  
3 assimilate American Indian children by forcibly relocating them from  
4 their families and communities to distant residential facilities to suppress  
5 the children's identities, language, and beliefs. For over one hundred fifty  
6 years, hundreds of thousands of American Indian children were taken  
7 from their communities. Over three hundred fifty federal Indian boarding  
8 schools existed in the United States. By 1926, nearly eighty-three percent  
9 of all American Indian children of school age were in boarding schools.

10 (b) The impact of the boarding schools on American Indian  
11 families has been immeasurable. Families lost their traditional language,  
12 parenting authority, and the ability to pass on American Indian culture  
13 and traditions. The trauma from Indian boarding schools crosses  
14 generational boundaries and the boarding school policy resulted in  
15 long-standing intergenerational trauma, cycles of violence and abuse,  
16 disappearance of American Indian people, premature deaths, mental  
17 health disorders, and substance abuse in American Indian communities.

18 (c) In Colorado, there were at least seven federal Indian boarding  
19 schools, including: the Teller Indian school in Grand Junction, the  
20 Southern Ute boarding school in Ignacio, a boarding school in Towaoc  
21 operated by the federal bureau of Indian affairs, and the original Fort  
22 Lewis Indian school in Hesperus, Colorado;

23 (d) In order to heal from the generational trauma, we must  
24 confront the past and shed light on the hidden cruelty;

25 (e) It is the intent of the general assembly to build on the first  
26 report of the "Federal Indian Boarding Schools in Colorado: 1880-1990",  
27 completed by History Colorado;

1 (f) There are still outstanding archival and physical research  
2 questions to be answered about boarding schools in Colorado;

3 (g) Tribal representations noted that the work must include the  
4 voices of American Indian peoples who are impacted, which will be  
5 served by the oral history work; and

6 (h) The tribal consultations during the fiscal year 2023 were  
7 focused on research updates, and there should be additional tribal  
8 consultations with thirty-three tribal nations and listening sessions with  
9 American Indian and Alaska Native communities in urban communities  
10 to address and plan for a number of key topics including care and  
11 memorialization at sites, support for impacted communities, and  
12 education for impacted communities and Colorado in general.

13 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **recreate and**  
14 **reenact, with amendments,** 24-80-216 as follows:

15 **24-80-216. Indian boarding school research program -**  
16 **recommendations - definitions - repeal.** (1) As used in this section,  
17 unless the context otherwise requires:

18 (a) "AMERICAN INDIAN" MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL HAVING  
19 DESCENDED FROM PEOPLE WHO WERE LIVING IN NORTH AMERICA PRIOR TO  
20 THE TIME THAT PEOPLE FROM EUROPE BEGAN SETTLING IN NORTH  
21 AMERICA.

22 (b) "COMMISSION" MEANS THE COLORADO COMMISSION OF INDIAN  
23 AFFAIRS ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-44-102.

24 (c) "AMERICAN INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL" MEANS A BOARDING  
25 SCHOOL OPERATED AT ANY TIME IN COLORADO FOR AMERICAN INDIANS  
26 THAT WAS AUTHORIZED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, THE STATE,  
27 RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS, OR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS THAT WERE NOT

1 LOCATED ON AN INDIAN RESERVATION.

2 (d) "HISTORICALLY IMPACTED AMERICAN INDIANS" MEANS  
3 AMERICAN INDIANS, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE ATTENDED OR  
4 ARE DESCENDED FROM PERSONS WHO HAVE ATTENDED INDIAN BOARDING  
5 SCHOOLS.

6 (e) "PROGRAM" MEANS THE INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL  
7 RESEARCH PROGRAM ESTABLISHED IN SUBSECTION (2)(a) OF THIS SECTION.

8 (f) "SOCIETY" MEANS THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

9 (g) "STEERING COMMITTEE" MEANS THE AMERICAN INDIAN  
10 STEERING COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED IN SUBSECTION (5)(a) OF THIS  
11 SECTION.

12 (2) (a) THERE IS ESTABLISHED IN THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
13 THE INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL RESEARCH PROGRAM TO RESEARCH AND  
14 DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS WITH TRIBAL CONSULTATION AND  
15 LISTENING SESSIONS WITH AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE  
16 COMMUNITIES TO PROMOTE COLORADANS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE  
17 PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE AND DEATHS THAT OCCURRED AT AND  
18 IN RELATION TO INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS IN COLORADO, INCLUDING  
19 THE VICTIMIZATION OF AND INTERGENERATIONAL IMPACTS ON FAMILIES  
20 OF THE YOUTH FORCED TO ATTEND THE BOARDING SCHOOLS. THESE  
21 RECOMMENDATIONS MUST BE SHARED WITH THE COMMISSION AND THE  
22 STEERING COMMITTEE BEFORE THE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE SHARED  
23 PUBLICLY.

24 (b) THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, THROUGH THE PROGRAM,  
25 SHALL CONDUCT ONGOING RESEARCH TO DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS TO  
26 THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, THE COLORADO

1 DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO  
2 ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL SCHOOLING  
3 SYSTEMS ON AMERICAN INDIAN COMMUNITIES AND IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
4 THE COMMISSION AND THE STEERING COMMITTEE. IN DEVELOPING THE  
5 RECOMMENDATIONS, THE SOCIETY MUST:

6 (I) FORMALLY CONSULT WITH FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED INDIAN  
7 TRIBES;

8 (II) CONDUCT RESEARCH RELATED TO OBJECTS, ARTIFACTS, AND  
9 REAL OR PERSONAL PROPERTY. IF THE SOCIETY CONDUCTS A  
10 COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF RESEARCH THAT FOCUSES ON OBJECTS,  
11 ARTIFACTS, OR REAL OR PERSONAL PROPERTY THAT IS IN THE POSSESSION  
12 OR CONTROL OF PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS, PRIVATE ENTITIES, OR  
13 NON-FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ENTITIES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES, THE  
14 SOCIETY MAY ENTER INTO A CONTRACT OR AGREEMENT TO ACQUIRE,  
15 HOLD, CURATE, OR MAINTAIN THOSE OBJECTS, ARTIFACTS, OR REAL OR  
16 PERSONAL PROPERTY UNTIL THE OBJECTS, ARTIFACTS, OR REAL OR  
17 PERSONAL PROPERTY CAN BE PROPERLY REPATRIATED OR RETURNED,  
18 CONSISTENT WITH APPLICABLE FEDERAL LAW AND REGULATIONS AND  
19 SUBJECT TO THE CONDITION THAT NO FEDERAL FUNDS MAY BE USED TO  
20 PURCHASE THOSE OBJECTS, ARTIFACTS, OR REAL OR PERSONAL PROPERTY.

21 (III) ENGAGE IN LISTENING SESSIONS WITH AMERICAN INDIAN  
22 COMMUNITIES ON THE HISTORY AND IMPACT OF INDIAN BOARDING  
23 SCHOOLS IN COLORADO. THE LISTENING SESSIONS MAY INCLUDE VISITS TO  
24 BOARDING SCHOOL SITES INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO GRAND  
25 JUNCTION INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL, FORT LEWIS INDIAN BOARDING  
26 SCHOOL, SOUTHERN UTE BOARDING SCHOOL, NAVAJO DAY SCHOOL,  
27 ALLENDAY SCHOOL, TOWAOC DAY SCHOOL, GOOD SHEPHERD INDUSTRIAL

1 SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, STATE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL FOR BOYS, IGNACIO  
2 SCHOOL, THE COLORADO SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND, AND HOLY  
3 CROSS ABBEY.

4 (IV) COLLECT CONFIDENTIAL ORAL HISTORIES FROM SURVIVORS  
5 THAT HIGHLIGHT HISTORICALLY IMPACTED AMERICAN INDIAN  
6 NARRATIVES. THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS MUST INCLUDE HISTORIES  
7 FROM THE SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE, THE UTE MOUNTAIN UTE TRIBE,  
8 AND OTHER HISTORICALLY IMPACTED AMERICAN INDIANS AND TRIBAL  
9 NATIONS THAT MAY HAVE HAD STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED COLORADO  
10 INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS. ADDITIONAL CONFIDENTIAL ORAL HISTORY  
11 PROJECTS WITH OTHER AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE  
12 COMMUNITIES MUST BE CONDUCTED. "CONFIDENTIAL", FOR PURPOSES OF  
13 THIS SUBSECTION (2)(b)(III), MEANS THAT ANY IDENTIFYING QUALITIES OF  
14 AN INDIVIDUAL WILL NOT BE MADE PUBLIC.

15 (c) THE SOCIETY MUST PROVIDE PUBLIC-FACING, JOINT QUARTERLY  
16 UPDATES TO THE COMMISSION AND STEERING COMMITTEE ON THE  
17 REQUIREMENTS OF SUBSECTION (2)(b) OF THIS SECTION. THE SOCIETY  
18 SHALL PROVIDE PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS, DEVELOPED WITH  
19 TRIBAL CONSULTATION AND LISTENING SESSIONS WITH HISTORICALLY  
20 IMPACTED AMERICAN INDIANS, TO THE COMMISSION NO LATER THAN  
21 NOVEMBER 8, 2025, AND SHALL PROVIDE FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS BY  
22 MAY 10, 2027.

23 (3) THE SOCIETY, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE STEERING  
24 COMMITTEE, COMMISSION, TRIBAL NATIONS, AND HISTORICALLY IMPACTED  
25 AMERICAN INDIANS, MUST PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROVIDING  
26 THE BEST CARE AND MEMORIALIZATION AT ALL AMERICAN INDIAN  
27 BOARDING SCHOOL SITES IN COLORADO, INCLUDING HESPERUS AND

1 GRAND JUNCTION AND ANY CEMETERY IN OLD FORT IN COLLABORATION  
2 WITH FORT LEWIS COLLEGE AND THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN  
3 SERVICES THROUGH TRIBAL CONSULTATIONS. THE COLORADO  
4 DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES MUST COMPLETE TRIBAL  
5 CONSULTATIONS BEFORE THE TRANSFER OR SALE OF LAND MANAGED BY  
6 THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES AT THE GRAND  
7 JUNCTION REGIONAL CENTER. THE SOCIETY MUST FOLLOW ALL  
8 REQUIREMENTS OF THE "NATIVE AMERICAN GRAVE PROTECTION AND  
9 REPATRIATION ACT", 25 U.S.C. SEC. 3001 ET SEQ.

10 (4) (a) A THIRD-PARTY ENTITY, WHICH MAY BE AN ENTITY OUTSIDE  
11 OF COLORADO, THAT ENTERS INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE COMMISSION  
12 OR SOCIETY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH PURSUANT TO SUBSECTIONS (2) AND  
13 (3) OF THIS SECTION MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

14 (I) DEMONSTRATE EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH HISTORICALLY  
15 IMPACTED AMERICAN INDIANS;

16 (II) DEMONSTRATE EXPERIENCE OF TRAUMA-INFORMED  
17 APPROACHES; AND

18 (III) INDICATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF TRAUMA AND HOW IT  
19 PASSES THROUGH GENERATIONS.

20 (b) WHEN THE SOCIETY OR COMMISSION IS CONSIDERING  
21 CONTRACTING WITH A THIRD-PARTY ENTITY, THE SOCIETY OR COMMISSION  
22 MUST GIVE PREFERENCE TO A THIRD-PARTY ENTITY THAT CONSISTS OF  
23 INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE OF AMERICAN INDIAN DESCENT OR ARE  
24 HISTORICALLY IMPACTED AMERICAN INDIANS.

25 (5) (a) THERE IS ESTABLISHED AN AMERICAN INDIAN STEERING  
26 COMMITTEE IN THE SOCIETY. THE STEERING COMMITTEE'S PURPOSE IS TO  
27 IDENTIFY AND ADVISE THE SOCIETY ON AREAS OF CONCERN REGARDING



1 INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS AND ISSUES RELATING TO ORGANIZING OR  
2 CONDUCTING SEARCH EFFORTS RELATED TO GRAVES AT SCHOOL SITES,  
3 DEVELOPMENT OF SUPPORT GROUPS, OR OTHER SUPPORTIVE EFFORTS  
4 RELATED TO INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS. THE STEERING COMMITTEE  
5 SHALL MEET AT LEAST ONCE PER QUARTER IN STATE FISCAL YEAR 2024-25,  
6 AND BIANNUALLY THEREAFTER, AT DATES AND TIMES REQUESTED BY THE  
7 COMMISSION. THE STEERING COMMITTEE MAY MEET ELECTRONICALLY.

8 (b) THE STEERING COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING  
9 MEMBERS, WHO MUST BE APPOINTED BY THE SOCIETY WITH INCLUSIVE  
10 REPRESENTATION FROM ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE LED BY AND SERVE  
11 AMERICAN INDIAN COMMUNITIES IN COLORADO:

12 (I) AN INDIVIDUAL WHO REPRESENTS THE UTE MOUNTAIN UTE  
13 TRIBE AND WHO IS CONFIRMED BY THE UTE MOUNTAIN UTE TRIBAL  
14 COUNCIL;

15 (II) AN INDIVIDUAL WHO REPRESENTS THE SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN  
16 TRIBE AND WHO IS CONFIRMED BY THE SOUTHERN UTE TRIBAL COUNCIL;

17 (III) TWO INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE CITIZENS OF OTHER TRIBAL  
18 NATIONS IDENTIFIED AS HAVING MEMBERS ENROLLED AT ANY TIME IN AN  
19 INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL IN COLORADO;

20 (IV) THREE SURVIVORS OF INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS IN  
21 COLORADO;

22 (V) THREE DESCENDANTS OF COLORADO INDIAN BOARDING  
23 SCHOOL SURVIVORS;

24 (VI) ONE AMERICAN INDIAN IN THE CULTURAL RESOURCE  
25 MANAGEMENT PROFESSION;

26 (VII) ONE TRAUMA-INFORMED MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL;

27 (VIII) ONE AMERICAN INDIAN EMPLOYEE OF THE SOCIETY;

1 (IX) ONE INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS EXPERTISE IN RESEARCHING THE  
2 HISTORY AND IMPACT OF INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS; AND

3 (X) ONE TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER FROM ANY OF  
4 THE IDENTIFIED TRIBAL NATIONS THAT HAD STUDENTS ATTEND A  
5 BOARDING SCHOOL IN COLORADO.

6 (c) THE SOCIETY SHALL APPOINT MEMBERS OF THE STEERING  
7 COMMITTEE AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS  
8 SECTION, BUT NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 1, 2024.

9 (d) THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS SERVE WITHOUT  
10 COMPENSATION AND WITHOUT REIMBURSEMENT FOR ANY EXPENSES  
11 INCURRED RELATED TO SERVING ON THE COMMITTEE.

12 (6) FOR STATE FISCAL YEAR 2024-25, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
13 SHALL APPROPRIATE THREE HUNDRED THIRTY-THREE THOUSAND THREE  
14 HUNDRED THIRTY-FOUR DOLLARS, AND FOR EACH OF STATE FISCAL YEARS  
15 2025-26 AND 2026-27, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHALL APPROPRIATE  
16 THREE HUNDRED THIRTY-THREE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED  
17 THIRTY-THREE DOLLARS FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO THE STATE  
18 HISTORICAL SOCIETY, ESTABLISHED IN SECTION 24-80-201, TO FUND TWO  
19 TERM-LIMITED, FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES WITH AMERICAN INDIAN HIRING  
20 PREFERENCE AND TO IMPLEMENT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION.  
21 ANY MONEY APPROPRIATED PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION (4) THAT IS  
22 NOT EXPENDED OR ENCUMBERED AT THE END OF THE STATE FISCAL YEAR  
23 FOR WHICH IT WAS APPROPRIATED REMAINS AVAILABLE FOR EXPENDITURE  
24 IN SUBSEQUENT FISCAL YEARS WITHOUT FURTHER APPROPRIATION.

25 (7) THIS SECTION IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 31, 2027.

26 **SECTION 3. Appropriation.** For the 2024-25 state fiscal year,  
27 \$333,333 is appropriated to the department of higher education for use by

1 history Colorado. This appropriation is from the general fund and is based  
2 on an assumption that history Colorado will require an additional 2.0  
3 FTE. To implement this act, history Colorado may use this appropriation  
4 for native American boarding school research program. Any money  
5 appropriated in this section not expended prior to July 1, 2025, is further  
6 appropriated to History Colorado for the 2025-26 state fiscal year for the  
7 same purpose.

8           **SECTION 4. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act  
9 takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the  
10 ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly; except  
11 that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V  
12 of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this  
13 act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take  
14 effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in  
15 November 2024 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the  
16 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.