



Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate

LAKE TRAVERSE RESERVATION
P.O. Box 509
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Agency Village, South Dakota 57262
Phone: (605) 698-3911

March 24, 2021

The Honorable John Thune
U.S. Senator - South Dakota
511 Senate Dirksen Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven
U.S. Senator - North Dakota
338 Senate Russell Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Rounds
U.S. Senator - South Dakota
502 Senate Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin Cramer
U.S. Senator - North Dakota
400 Senate Russell Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Please Support the Remove the Stain Act

Dear Senators Thune, Hoeven, Rounds and Cramer:

On behalf of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, I write to request that you support the enactment of the Remove the Stain Act.

Senator Merkley and Senator Warren are preparing to re-introduce the Remove the Stain Act to withdraw the Medals of Honor that were awarded to the Seventh Cavalry for their participation in the Wounded Knee Massacre.

Chief Spotted Elk or Big Foot, Mnicoujou Lakota, was known for his diplomatic skills, and Chief Red Cloud had invited him down to Pine Ridge to help diffuse tension between our Oglala Lakota brethren and the United States. On their way to Pine Ridge, the reformed 7th Cavalry stopped Big Foot and the Mnicoujou Lakota at Wounded Knee, and directed them to camp overnight there. Col. Forsythe and his men encircled them with his troops and howitzers. Chief Big Foot objected and told the Colonel that he and his people would prefer to travel on to Pine Ridge but Forsythe refused despite the winter weather.

On December 29, 1890, after a bitterly cold night on the prairie, the 7th Cavalry lined the Lakota men and large boys in front of their guns and disarmed them. When one Lakota man, who was deaf, did not immediately surrender his rifle the Cavalry troops struggled with him and the gun went off, firing into the air. The 7th Cavalry murderously opened fire and massacred women, children, babies, old men and the men and large boys who were lined up in front of the guns.

Marcella LeBeau, 101, our Lakota elder who served as a nurse in World War II believes that there is a pervasive sadness among our Lakota relatives, who lost their family members, because the Wounded Knee massacre has never been properly addressed.

The Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate strongly supports the enactment of the Remove the Stain Act. As our Senators, we call upon you to co-sponsor the Remove the Stain Act, and take the necessary step to remove the medals given to the 7th Cavalry in the wake of this terrible massacre.

Thank you for understanding this terrible tragedy among our Lakota—Nakota—Dakota People. Please support this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Delbert S. Hopkins, Jr.", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chairman Delbert S. Hopkins, Jr.

Cc: Senator Merkley
Senator Warren

