



2013 Mid-Year Convention Airway Heights, Washington

RESOLUTION OPPOSING EFFORTS BY THE STATES OF COLORADO AND MINNESOTA TO RENEGE ON THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TUITION WAIVERS FOR AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE STUDENTS ATTENDING FORT LEWIS COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA-MORRIS

PREAMBLE

We the members of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants rights secured under Indian Treaties, Executive Orders, and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and constitution of the United States and several states, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise to promote the welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) are representatives of and advocates for national, regional, and specific tribal concerns; and

WHEREAS, ATNI is a regional organization comprised of American Indians/Alaska Natives and tribes in the states of Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Nevada, Northern California, and Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the health, safety, welfare, education, economic and employment opportunity, and preservation of cultural and natural resources are primary goals and objectives of the ATNI; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has a direct moral and legal responsibility – as yet unfulfilled -- to the federally recognized Indian tribes with which it signed treaties in exchange for more than one billion acres of land and the resources contained therein;

WHEREAS, education is a high priority for the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians and our tribal members;

WHEREAS, ATNI member tribes have chartered the Northwest Indian College and Salish Kootenai College, which operates a total of 11 campuses in Washington and Montana State;

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments and the U.S. government have chartered 37 Tribal Colleges and Universities to ensure that high quality, culturally-based higher education is accessible to American Indian people who were largely excluded from state-supported higher education programs;

WHEREAS, these 37 Tribal Colleges and Universities operate more than 75 campuses in the 15 states within whose geographic boundaries the majority of American Indian reservations and federal Indian trust land lie;

WHEREAS, Tribal Colleges and Universities prepare and educate more than 88,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives in academic and community education programs, and these students represent more than 250 federally recognized Indian tribal nations, including the 10 largest federally recognized Indian tribes;

WHEREAS, Tribal Colleges and Universities fulfill a fundamental role in maintaining, preserving and revitalizing irreplaceable American Indian and Alaska Native languages and cultural traditions and strengthening Indigenous peoples worldwide;

WHEREAS, the federal government currently appropriates \$5,665 per full-time Indian student to the *tribally*-chartered colleges and universities that are funded under the Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Assistance Act, an Act established due to binding treaty obligations and the federal trust responsibility;

WHEREAS, a bill introduced in the 112th Congress called for the federal government to assume the responsibility for the cost of tuition for the non-state resident American Indians that choose to attend Fort Lewis College and University of Minnesota-Morris, which are \$16,072 and \$11,720, respectively;

WHEREAS, the states of Colorado and Minnesota, in accepting the transfer of land and facilities from the U.S. Government, readily agreed to provide free tuition for all Native students enrolled in their institutions in perpetuity;

WHEREAS, there has been no offer to return transferred land and facilities, but rather a proposal that the federal government assume the states’ obligations made in exchange for said land and facilities;

WHEREAS, the funding of the TCUs at the level authorized by Congress -- a primary responsibility of the federal government that has never been realized -- is less than half of the out of state tuition rate for Fort Lewis College;

WHEREAS, federal funds should be allocated to relieve *states* of a *state commitment* and legal responsibility to the federal government and American Indian people that was willingly assumed in exchange for land, resources, and facilities;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians opposes any effort to transfer to the federal government a state responsibility, willingly agreed to in exchange for land or facility, to provide for the cost of tuition waivers for American Indians and Alaska Natives, until all TCUs are and remain fully funded.

WHEREAS _____ (Name of Tribe) signed a binding treaty with the federal government that includes certain responsibilities, such as education;

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2013 Mid-Year Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, held at Northern Quest Resort Casino, Airway Heights, Washington on May 13 – 16, 2013 with a quorum present.

Fawn Sharp, President

Norma Jean Louie, Secretary