



**2019 Winter Convention  
Portland, Oregon**

**RESOLUTION #19 – 04**

**“SUPPORT FOR THE NATIVE AMERICAN SPIRITUALITY AND RE-ENTRY  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN ITS ENDEAVORS TO WORK WITH NATIVE AMERICAN  
ADULTS IN CUSTODY IN OREGON”**

**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**, Indigenous people account for a disproportionate number of Adults in Custody, Department of Justice research data shows Native Americans are incarcerated at a rate of 38% higher than the national average and 70% of youth taken into federal custody are Native American; and

**WHEREAS**, racial identity specific to population data of Indigenous people incarcerated within the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC) appear to be dramatically undercounted; as the state of Oregon Native American population is approximately 1.8%, ODOC Native American population is listed at 2.7%, Native American Religious Service Volunteers believe the numbers to be at least 4% to 5% of the total prison population; and

**WHEREAS**, Indigenous people face challenges that other adults in custody do not, due to cultural isolation, high disparity numbers and, loss of self (identity); and

**WHEREAS**, the Indigenous population continues to experience oppression and discrimination within the dominant society and, oppression is also reflected within the Oregon Native prison population; and

**WHEREAS**, Religious, spiritual and cultural needs are poorly understood, and many times dismissed as unnecessary, within institutional settings; and

**WHEREAS**, the Native American Spirituality and Reentry Advisory Committee (NASRAC) was formed in September 2018 to provide formal and informal oversight and assistance in supporting authentic Indigenous teachings, spirituality and reentry behind the Iron Doors of Oregon state prisons and jails; and

**WHEREAS**, the NASRAC is made up of Indigenous people who have experience volunteering their time and sharing knowledge within a correctional facility, have been formally incarcerated, and/or formally represent one of the 9 federally recognized Oregon Tribes; and

**WHEREAS**, the NASRAC and ATNI agree that tribal governments should support the work being done by faithful volunteers providing services within Oregon prisons, through a Government-to-Government relationship specific to addressing Policies, Administrative Rule, accountability for lost or damaged religious service items, lack of communication, barriers to volunteering, and access to programming; and

**WHEREAS**, there are prisons within the ODOC with large numbers of tribal members who have limited, or have lost, programming due to a lack of Native American Religious Service volunteers being available to help facilitate programs; and

**WHEREAS**, active Native American Religious Services volunteers for Oregon prisons presently number 24 and, NASRAC and ATNI recognize there is great need to support these volunteers and programs, regardless of their tribal affiliation; and volunteers frequently travel long distances (most without financial compensation), and state they continue to deal with chronic unresolved issues specific to their programs; and

**WHEREAS**, NASRAC reports that the ODOC response to limited and/or lost programming, ultimately falls upon the shoulders of poverty stricken Native communities and tribes to provide each institution with volunteers and necessary resources; and

**WHEREAS**, Religious Freedom and the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), balance the right to exercise religion against the government's interests in security, safety, health and cost controls; and

**WHEREAS**, Washington state has been successful in providing consistent Native American Religious and Reentry services to their state prison facilities for many years, by contracting with a Native American led, independent non-profit known as Native American and Reentry Services; and

**WHEREAS**, critical decision making and alterations to current programming involving Native American Religious Services, should always be made in collaboration with Native American Religious Services providers and appointed tribal representatives. Access to Religious Services should not be restricted based on Incentive Level, or an administrative need whose intent is to homogenize all religious services programs; now

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that ATNI does hereby call upon the Oregon Department of Corrections to comply with the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), and take whatever actions are necessary to ensure that the religious, spiritual and cultural needs of all Native persons in the State's custody are met; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI does hereby acknowledge and recognize the Native American Spirituality and Reentry Advisory Committee (NASRAC) as a Native organization that was created to provide formal and informal oversight and assistance in supporting authentic Indigenous teachings, spirituality and reentry behind the Iron Doors of Oregon state prisons and jails; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI calls upon tribal and state governments to support the work being done by faithful volunteers providing services within Oregon prisons, through a Government to Government relationship specific to addressing Policies, Administrative Rule, accountability for lost or damaged religious service items, lack of communication, barriers to volunteering, and access to programming; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI does hereby call upon the ODOC and the Tribes of Oregon State to work collaboratively to identify an independent organization to be employed by ODOC to develop, implement and staff a minimum standard of programming for each institution, specific to serving Adults in Custody who self identify as Native American, First Nations or Indigenous People; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that ATNI does hereby support an independent demographic survey to be designed and implemented within all ODOC facilities with tribal input and tribal representation as the purpose of an independent study is to identify the number of

tribes represented, as well as to identify the spiritual, cultural and reentry needs of the Indigenous population presently incarcerated.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2019 Winter Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, held at the DoubleTree by Hilton – Portland, Oregon, on January 28-31, 2019, with a Quorum present.

  
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Leonard Forsman, President

  
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Norma Jean Louie, Secretary