



2020 Virtual Annual Convention

RESOLUTION #2020 – 42

“CALLING UPON THE NEXT U.S. PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS TO MAKE PERMANENT THE WHITE HOUSE COUNCIL ON AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE AFFAIRS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF SENIOR LEVEL EXECUTIVE BRANCH OFFICIALS”

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, when European nations landed on American shores, Indigenous Native nations and European nations exchanged mutual recognitions of sovereignty by treaty-making; and upon the formation of the United States of America in 1776, the U.S. “continued to make treaties and to deal with Indian tribes on a government-to-government basis” (citing President Ronald W. Reagan, Statement on American Indian Policy (1983)); and

WHEREAS, in the Treaty, Supremacy, Commerce Clauses of the U.S. Constitution, Federal statutes and Executive Orders, acknowledges Indian nations and tribes as prior sovereigns with a government-to-government relationship with the United States; and in the Apportionment Clause and the 14th Amendment, the Constitution acknowledges tribal citizens as “Indians not taxed,” subject to the primary jurisdiction of Indian nations and tribes; and

WHEREAS, the United States has entered into more than 375 treaties and enacted and executed hundreds of Intergovernmental Agreements, Statutes, and Executive Orders with Indian nations and tribes to preserve and recognize our original inherent rights to sovereignty and self-government within our homelands and waters; and

WHEREAS, the President and the Secretary of the Interior have important Federal trust, treaty, statutory and legal responsibilities to Indian nations and tribes, including the protection of Indian lands, waters, and natural resources; and

WHEREAS, in a speech to NCAI in January 1964, President Lyndon Johnson “recognized that, “Both in terms of statistics and in terms of human welfare, it is a fact that America’s first citizens, our Indian people, suffer more from poverty than any other group in America—It is a shameful fact;” and in March 1968, President Johnson in a Special Address to Congress, titled “the Forgotten American,” declared that “a new goal that ... stresses self-determination, a goal that erases old attitudes of paternalism and promotes partnership;” and directed agencies to include an Indian component into Federal programs; and

WHEREAS, President Johnson pledged to put American Indians at the forefront of the War on Poverty through a whole government approach and established the National Council on Indian Opportunity to work with Indian nations on a government-to-government basis to promote participation in Federal programs and services; and

WHEREAS, the National Council was chaired by the Vice President with the Secretary of the Interior, USDA, Commerce, Labor, HEW, HUD, and Office of Economic Opportunity and seven elected tribal leaders, Executive Order No. 11399; and

WHEREAS, President Richard M. Nixon declared the Indian Self-Determination Policy in his Special Message to Congress in 1970 and expanded the National Council on Indian Opportunity, including congressional legislation to staff and fund the National Council, Executive Order No. 11551, 11688, 25 U.S.C. sec. 1 note, Public Law No. 91-125 (1969); and

WHEREAS, President Reagan issued his American Indian Policy Statement on January 24, 1983, reaffirming the Indian Self-Determination Policy and declaring that it was important to Indian Self-Determination for Indian nations and tribes to develop tribal sources of revenue;

WHEREAS, President William J. Clinton issued Executive Order 13175 on November 6, 2000, declaring that all Federal Agencies should respect Indian nations rights to sovereignty, treaty rights, self-determination and self-government; and

WHEREAS, President Barack H. Obama issued Executive Order 13647 establishing the White House Council on Native American Affairs with its purpose: “To honor treaties and recognize tribes’ inherent sovereignty and right to self-government under U.S. law, it is the policy of the United States to promote the development of prosperous and resilient tribal communities” (“White House Council”); and

WHEREAS, President Donald J. Trump re-instituted the White House Council on April 28, 2020, after a three-year hiatus, and on the 50th Anniversary of President Nixon’s Special Message to Congress, announced his support for the Indian Self-Determination Policy, and lauded his Administration’s efforts in “developing and implementing an aggressive, government-wide strategy, working with Tribal leaders” to address Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and declared that “we commit ourselves anew to ensuring the sovereignty, strength, and health of Indian Tribes and Tribal citizens;” and

WHEREAS, to ensure the continuity of the United States’ historical nation-to-nation relationship with Indian nations, there is a need to codify by law the White House in the Executive Office of the President to provide due respect to the Indigenous peoples of the United States and to honor the original status of Native nations under the Constitution of the United States on a standing basis; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI calls upon the President and Congress to (i) codify and make permanent the White House Council on American Indian and Alaska Native Relations, (ii) ensure participation on the White House Council by the Vice President (as chairperson) and comprised of all Cabinet Secretaries, (iii) meet quarterly, (iv) ensure that the President meets with the Council at least annually; and (v) ensure that the Council invites representatives of Federally-recognized Tribes to participate in dialogue with Council members to promote the government-to-government relationship; and

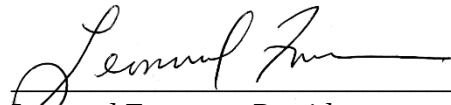
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ATNI calls upon the President and Congress to elevate and establish new Executive branch positions to promote nation-to-nation relations with American Indian nations and Alaska Natives, including:

- Appointing an Under Secretary for Indian Affairs at the Department of the Interior as authorized by the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act, Pub. L. 114-178 (Jun. 22, 2016);
- Appointing a new Deputy Secretary for American Indian and Alaska Native Health at the Department of Health and Human Services;
- Appointing a new Associate Deputy Attorney General for Indian Country Law Enforcement in the Deputy Attorney General’s Office at the Department of Justice;
- Appointing a new Assistant Secretary for Indian Country and Alaska Native Development at the Department of Treasury; and

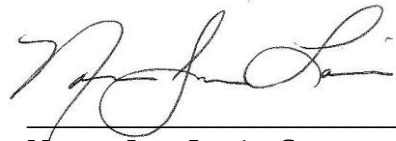
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution be forwarded to regional and national forums, not limited to the National Congress of American Indians, United South & Eastern Tribes, California Association of Tribal Governments, Native American Finance Officers Association, the Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association, and the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2020 Virtual Annual Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Portland, Oregon, on October 5 – 8, 2020, with a quorum present.



Leonard Forsman, President



Norma Jean Louie, Secretary