



## **2023 Annual Convention**

### **RESOLUTION #2023 – 51**

#### **“RESTORING HOPE FOR OUR INCARCERATED RELATIVES”**

### **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 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 ATNI; and

**WHEREAS**, Indigenous children and juveniles were first incarcerated by the U.S. government through Indian boarding schools starting in the 1800s, and the historical, inter-generational trauma caused by that incarceration and the separation and division of families and communities is felt deeply by Northwest Indigenous peoples today; and

**WHEREAS**, as much as 41% of the Indigenous persons incarcerated by the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC) suffer overly long sentences because of sentencing enhancements resulting from mistakes they made while they were juveniles; and

**WHEREAS**, the human brain does not fully develop until age 25, and due to mental health afflictions associated with historical, inter-generational Indigenous trauma, such in utero trauma and fetal alcohol syndrome, many Indigenous juveniles are especially unable to fully decipher the consequences of incorrect choices; and

**WHEREAS**, Indigenous juvenile are three times more likely than Caucasian juveniles to be referred into the state criminal system rather than to be deferred away from that system; and

**WHEREAS**, since 1997, based on incorrect choices that incarcerated Indigenous persons made while under age 18, the state has assigned “juvenile points” to lengthen their state prison sentences; and

**WHEREAS**, Indigenous people are the most disproportionately impacted by prior juvenile adjudications in the state, with as many as 422 Indigenous persons serving overly long sentences in the DOC as a result of being assigned “juvenile points” by the state; and

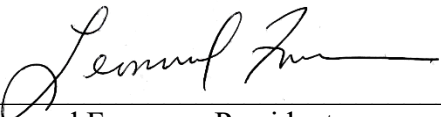
**WHEREAS**, overly long state prison sentences resulting from incorrect choices made by Indigenous persons when they were juveniles, diminish their hope for forgiveness, redemption, rehabilitation, return to their families, and reentry into their communities; and

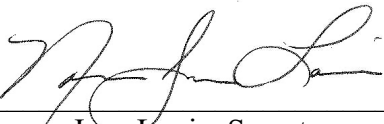
**WHEREAS**, with the support of eight Washington tribal governments and Indigenous organizations, the Washington State Legislature passed HB 1324 this year to end the practice of assigning “juvenile points” to lengthen state prison sentences, but it did not do so retroactively; now

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that ATNI calls upon the Washington State Legislature, with the support of the Governor and Attorney General, to pass legislation in 2024 to retroactively end the practice of assigning “juvenile points” to lengthen state prison sentences.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2023 Annual Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Great Wolf Lodge, Grand Mound, Washington, on September 18-21, 2023, with a quorum approving.

  
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Leonard Forsman, President

  
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Norma Jean Louie, Secretary