



## **ATNI Midyear 2025 Convention Airway Heights, Washington**

### **RESOLUTION # 2025 – 27**

#### **“CENTERING TRIBAL VOICES IN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS) REORGANIZATION: A CALL FOR TIMELY AND MEANINGFUL CONSULTATION”**

#### **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 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 the representatives and advocates for national, regional, and specific tribal concerns; and

**WHEREAS**, the ATNI is a regional organization comprised of American Indians/Alaska Natives and Indian tribal governments 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**, the proposed reorganization of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and reductions in workforce could lead to significant changes to operational divisions across HHS, tribal funding, timely and responsive technical assistance, and availability

of tribal advisory committees and other opportunities to engage in effective policy development; and

**WHEREAS**, recent reductions of regional and Washington, D.C. based Administration for Children and Families (ACF) staff that advise ACF on tribal program and policy issues or lead tribal programs are raising concerns for tribes as these staff positions take years to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively work with tribes and carry out the federal trust responsibilities to tribal nations; and

**WHEREAS**, the closing of ACF regional offices around the country, including regions 1, 2, 5, 9, and 10, that serve 80% of tribes in the United States, has raised concern among tribal nations as these offices had daily interactions with tribes and provided assistance to ensure tribes could successfully apply for and operate ACF programs, locate training and technical assistance resources or provide the assistance themselves, and help tribal nations address issues in their relationships with state governments; and

**WHEREAS**, currently, hundreds of tribes are preparing their Child and Family Service Plans (Title IV-B of the Social Security Act) that are due this summer with no regional staff to provide technical assistance in the application process or answer questions about the integration of cultural services in their plans, all of which is necessary in order for tribes to receive federal funding under Title IV-B of the Social Security Act, an essential funding source for child welfare programs given its flexible structure and focus on prevention to keep families together; and

**WHEREAS**, these reorganization decisions are being made without tribal consultation, which can help the Administration understand where, within the federal government, essential services and funding are being provided to tribal nations and how to implement the Administration's policy priorities without affecting ongoing legal obligations to tribal nations; now

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that ATNI shares the vision for a healthy America and a more efficient Department of Health and Human Services, and expects the administration to consult with tribes regarding any reorganization or restructuring with respect to organizational efficiency take into consideration to ensure that tribal affairs staffing, funding, and programs can continue without delay or disruption; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI urges that the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) examine the impacts of staff reductions and immediately develop a plan to reinstate terminated tribal program staff in consultation with tribes; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of ATNI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

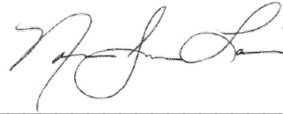
**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing Resolution was adopted at the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians 2025 Midyear Convention held at the Northern Quest Resort and Casino in Airway Heights Washington on May 11-15, 2025, with a quorum present.



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Leonard Forsman, President



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Norma Jean Louie, Secretary