



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

RESOLUTION # 2025 – 33

**“CALLING UPON THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS TO HONOR THE
SOVEREIGNTY AND SELF-DETERMINATION OF NATIVE
SOVEREIGN NATIONS”**

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, Indian Tribes are sovereigns that pre-date the United States, with prior and treaty protected rights to self-government and to our Indian lands, and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the United States, through the Treaty, Commerce, and Apportionment Clauses and the 14th Amendment, recognizes the sovereign status of Indian Tribes as Native nations established prior to the United States; and

WHEREAS, Native Americans are Children of the Creator, who blessed us with life, freedom and a sacred duty to Mother Earth; thousands of years ago, Native Peoples established our Native Nations vested with sovereignty; AND

WHEREAS, the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (the “IGRA”) acknowledged and confirmed the inherent sovereign powers of Tribal Governments; and

WHEREAS, federally recognized Indian tribes are authorized by tribal and federal law to govern tribal nations and operate programs, services and activities for the benefit of the tribes and their members; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution recognizes the sovereign status of Indian nations and tribes in the Treaty, Commerce and Supremacy Clauses and in Article I, Section 2, Clause 3 acknowledges “Indians not taxed” as Native citizens under tribal self-governance; and

WHEREAS, from its first days, the United States of America entered treaties with our Nations to establish American lands, recognizing Native Nation sovereignty, pledging peace, friendship, and commerce, America made 375 Indian nation treaties, and “from the first treaty entered into with an Indian Nation, the treaty with the Delaware Indians of September 17, 1778, the Congress has assumed a trust responsibility and obligation to Indian tribes and their members;” H.R. Con. Resolution 331 (1988) (“Iroquois Confederacy and Indian Nations—Contributions to the United States”); and

WHEREAS, for 250 years, Congress has enacted laws to implement treaties, including support for Indian agriculture, education, health care, economic development, lands, waters, roads and community infrastructure as essential aspects of America’s nation-to-nation and government-to-government relations with Native Nations; and

WHEREAS, upon the 200th Anniversary of the Constitution, Congress reaffirmed “the trust responsibility and obligation of the United States Government to Indian tribes, including Alaska Natives, for their preservation, protection, and enhancement, including the provision of health, education, social, and economic assistance programs as necessary, and including the duty to assist tribes in their performance of governmental responsibility to provide for the social and economic well-being of their members and to preserve tribal cultural identity and heritage;” H.R. Con. Resolution 331; and

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Indian Affairs is an essential agency for nation-to-nation and government-to-government relations between the United States of America and Indian nations and tribes, supporting Indian education, public safety, economic development, natural resource, land and water management, among other things; and

WHEREAS, the Indian Health Service provides Indian health care pursuant to the Federal treaty and trust responsibilities, with its essential mission to provide health care to American Indians and Alaska Natives to improve health and life expectancy, and

WHEREAS, Congress has provided for Indian tribes to assume Federal responsibilities in Indian country through Indian Self-Determination Contracts and Self-Governance Compacts; and

WHEREAS, American Indians and Alaska Natives continue to suffer the highest rates of poverty and unemployment, low educational attainment and graduation rates, the worst violent crime and highest rates of fatal fentanyl and opioid drug overdoses, the lowest health status and shortest life expectancy in America, and in these circumstances, cuts in government programs, service and assistance are serious matters of life and death; and

WHEREAS, in addition to treaties, America established many Indian reservations and Indian lands through Federal agreements, statutes, and executive orders, and our Native homelands are all protected by the Constitution's and laws of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, arbitrary actions proposing random cuts on programs and services with elimination of government functions, offices of facilities, and termination of essential Federal employees and reductions in force that impede government functions and threaten unreasonable and unnecessary hardships on Indian nations and Indian children, elders, families, communities are contrary to law; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI calls upon the President and Congress to honor the sovereignty and self-determination of Indian nations and tribes, respect the Constitution's Indian Affairs framework, and uphold America's treaty and trust responsibility, including the obligations of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Education, Bureau of Trust Funds Administration, and the Indian Health Service as required by treaty and statute; and based on our nation-to-nation relations and government-to-government consultation orders, ATNI calls upon the Administration and Congress to consult with Indian nations and tribes prior to implementing changes to the law that impact Indian treaty and trust responsibilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Education, Bureau of Trust Funds Administration, and the Indian Health Service, charged with carrying out America's treaty and trust responsibilities, must be preserved from unreasonable, unjustified threats to personnel and interruptions in government services, and empowered to carry out America's treaty and trust obligations to Indian nations and tribes to ensure that Indian lands serve as "livable" permanent homes, including:

- education, including early childhood, K-12, and tribal college,
- health care, including emergency care, health clinics, treatment centers, and hospitals,
- child and elder care,
- economic development,
- agriculture and nutrition,
- public safety,

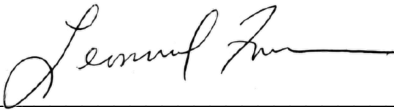
- land, natural resource, and water development,
- infrastructure, electricity and energy, and
- transportation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress must carry out its legislative and oversight functions and reassert control of the appropriations and budget processes and act through due process of law as required by the 5th and 14th Amendments to ensure the Federal Government acts in accordance with the Constitution, treaties and laws of the United States of America; and

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

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.



Leonard Forsman, President



Norma Jean Louie, Secretary