



**ATNI Annual 2025 Convention
Suquamish, Washington**

RESOLUTION # 2025 – 39

**“SUPPORT FOR THE TRUTH AND HEALING ON INDIAN BOARDING
SCHOOLS LEGISLATION”**

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, schools for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian student hostages employed practices including assimilation, corporal punishments, and child labor, which were often carried out without law or policy; and

WHEREAS, Federal Indian Boarding School Policies were adopted by the United States Government to strip American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children of their Indigenous identities, beliefs, and languages and to assimilate them into non-Indian culture through federally funded, Christian denomination schools, which had the effect of cultural genocide; and

WHEREAS, Indian boarding schools were created through the Indian Civilization Fund Act of 1819, which established authority to administer the education, healthcare, and rations promised to Tribal Nations under treaty law, and President Grant's Peace Policy of 1868, which opened the Civilization Funds to be used by churches; and

WHEREAS, by 1926, nearly 83% of American Indian and Alaska Native school-age children were enrolled in Indian boarding schools in the United States; however, because many of the school records have been lost or destroyed, the full extent of the Federal Indian Boarding School Policies and their resulting harms has not been identified; and

WHEREAS, the Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) filed a Freedom of Information Act request to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 2016 asking how many Indian boarding schools the government funded, how many children attended, and how many went missing or died at the schools and the BIA responded that they could not answer because research would be needed; and

WHEREAS, the NABS has found 526 assimilative Indian boarding schools in the U.S. through independent research and has only been able to locate records from a small number of the 526 identified boarding schools; and

WHEREAS, the NABS filed a submission to the United Nations in 2019 about children who went missing at Indian boarding schools in the U.S. whose whereabouts remain unknown; to date, the U.S. has not responded to these allegations or provided answers to where those children are; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. has never acknowledged that its Indian boarding school laws and policies constituted acts of genocide according to the United Nations 1948 Geneva Convention; and

WHEREAS, the deliberate intention of U.S. federal government in enacting and executing its boarding school policies was the separation of Native American children from their families, cultures, and tribal communities through physical removal of their persons, cutting their hair, taking their clothing and issuing uniforms, forbidding them to speak their language or engage in any cultural practices, carrying out and/or allowing to be carried out severe and often corporal punishments constituting, in many cases, physical, emotional, and mental torture for non-compliance, and, in reported cases, involuntarily sterilizing some children, that, to this day, causes families to still mourn the loss of their children and lost future generations; and

WHEREAS, in partnership with ATNI and the NABS along with other coalition members, a multitude of organizations, Tribal Nations, descendants, and national leaders

including Indian boarding school survivors are in support of proposed legislation titled “Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act of 2025,” or other similar legislation; and

WHEREAS, the proposed legislation provides for an investigation about the loss of human life and the lasting consequences of residential Indian boarding schools, the primary goal of which will be to identify boarding school facilities and sites, the location of known and possible student burial sites located at or near school facilities, and the identities and tribal affiliations of students interred at such locations; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) does hereby support and urge Congress to pass the bipartisan “Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act of 2025” or similar legislation, which would provide for investigation of the Indian boarding school era; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ATNI supports the efforts of Tribal Nations, families, and organizations seeking information regarding Indian boarding schools and Federal Indian Boarding School Policies; and


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ATNI calls upon the United States Congress to conduct oversight hearings, including field hearings, as well as legislative hearings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ATNI calls upon the Federal government to comply with all requests and efforts to obtain information regarding Indian boarding schools and associated laws, policies, and actions by families, descendants, Tribal Nations, Alaska Native Villages, and Native Hawaiians, as well as Indigenous organizations and coalitions working on their behalf, and to cooperate with current initiatives through the Federal Freedom of Information Act, the United Nations Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances, and other applicable international mechanisms; 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 Annual Convention held at the Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort in Suquamish, Washington on October 12-16, 2025, with a quorum present.



Leonard Forsman, President



Norma Jean Louie, Secretary