



**ATNI Annual 2025 Convention
Suquamish, Washington**

RESOLUTION # 2025 – 40

**“CALL TO PROTECT THE NATIONAL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF
U.S. INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL SURVIVORS”**

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 promotion, protection and preservation of Tribal members' health, welfare and human rights is a priority for all Tribal Nations; and

WHEREAS, attempts to destroy Native American and Alaska Native cultures, religions, and languages through assimilationist practices and policies can be traced to the early 17th century and the founding charters of some of the oldest educational institutions in the United States; and

WHEREAS, as early as 1800, and until 1969, the Federal Government directly or indirectly supported approximately 526 Indian Boarding Schools across 38 States; and

WHEREAS, American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children were required by law to attend boarding schools with the intended purpose of stripping them of their languages, cultures, and Indigenous lifeways; and

WHEREAS, American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian peoples continue to experience intergenerational trauma and cultural and familial disruption from experiences rooted in Indian Boarding Schools Policies, which divided family structures, damaged cultures and individual identities, and inflicted chronic physical and psychological ramifications to our children, families, communities, and Nations; and

WHEREAS, efforts to preserve personal histories and support the healing journeys of Indian boarding school survivors remain an ongoing initiative in a cooperative agreement between the U.S. Department of the Interior and the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition in the first of its kind, National Oral History Collection of Indian Boarding School Survivors (Oral History Project), set to culminate in 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Oral History Project has interviewed over two hundred Indian boarding school survivors from twelve regions throughout Indian Country, worked with Tribal leadership, community helpers, and sustained culturally responsive gatherings to collect and preserve personal narratives, and contributed to the intergenerational healing of Tribal citizens and the Tribal Nations they belong to; and

WHEREAS, the Oral History Project is an important contribution as a vital, on-the-ground effort to support Indian Country in addressing the harms and ongoing intergenerational impacts of the Federal Indian Boarding School Policy era; and

WHEREAS, Indian boarding school survivors are the sons and daughters of sovereign Tribal Nations, who as elders—some as old as 96 years of age—have expressed their urgency and desire to contribute to the Oral History Project, stating that they do not know how much time they have left; and

WHEREAS, Tribal Nations remain eager continue the Oral History Project with funds previously appropriated by the United States Congress and dedicated to the initiative; and

WHEREAS, Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) strongly asserts that federal support for Tribal programs and initiatives, such as the Oral History Project, is not a DEI program, but a fundamental trust and treaty responsibility; and

WHEREAS, the National Endowment for the Humanities' cancellation of \$1.6 million in critical federal funding dedicated to Indian boarding school research, education, and preservation has provoked serious challenges and derailed Indigenous-led efforts to investigate, learn, and support healing in Tribal communities; and

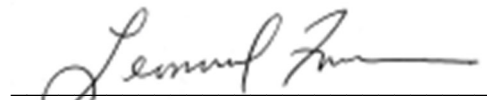
WHEREAS, ATNI strenuously urges the U.S. Department of the Interior to maintain the Oral History Project as a priority in its ongoing commitment to fulfill its trust obligation to Tribal Nations; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) calls on the U.S. Department of the Interior to permit the Oral History Project of U.S. Indian Boarding School Survivors as planned with the congressionally-appropriated funds already allocated, as a responsibility of the Federal Government to continue fulfilling its trust obligation to Tribal Nations; and

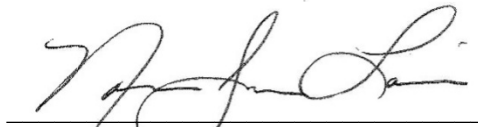
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this will be the policy of ATNI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolutions.

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