



**2026 Winter Convention
Portland, Oregon**

RESOLUTION # 2026 – 004

**“CALLING ON CONGRESS TO PASS THE “HASKELL INDIAN
NATIONS UNIVERSITY IMPROVEMENT ACT,” AND TO ENSURE
HASKELL’S AUTONOMY, FINANCIAL STABILITY, AND CAPACITY
TO PROVIDE A CULTURALLY GROUNDED, HIGH-QUALITY
EDUCATION FOR NATIVE STUDENTS”**

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, ATNI recognizes that education is the cornerstone for cultural preservation, self-determination, and the well-being of Tribal youth; and

WHEREAS, Haskell Indian Nations University (Haskell) was founded in 1884 by the U.S. Army and has evolved from an industrial training school to a fully accredited university that provides tuition-free higher education to Native students from over 140 Tribal Nations; and

WHEREAS, Haskell maintains significant historical and cultural importance as a four-year postsecondary institution governed by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) as it serves an entirely Native American student population, while preserving and advancing Tribal heritage and equipping Native students with the skills needed to serve their communities; and

WHEREAS, Haskell serves as a key institution for educational advancement, leadership, and economic development within Indian Country, supporting approximately 800 students annually, and offering degrees that reflect and honor Tribal cultures and histories; and

WHEREAS, Haskell has faced decades of mismanagement, infrastructure neglect, and operational challenges under the BIE, leading to congressional inquiries and calls for systemic reform; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. federal government has a long-standing Trust and Treaty responsibility to support the education and welfare of Tribal Nations and their citizens that ensures access to high-quality, culturally relevant education; and

WHEREAS, the “Haskell Indian Nations University Improvement Act” (“Act”) seeks to federally charter Haskell as an independent institution governed by a Board of Trustees nominated by Tribal representatives, and thereby transferring its governance from the BIE while ensuring continued federal support; and

WHEREAS, the Act authorizes annual appropriations of \$21 million (with provisions for necessary increases), establishes a Program Enhancement Trust Fund with a \$5 million capital contribution, and creates a separate Capital Improvement Trust Fund to support construction, renovation, and infrastructure development; and

WHEREAS, the Act aligns with the broader goals of Tribal self-determination by empowering Tribal representatives to have a direct role in the governance and success of Haskell Indian Nations University; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI expresses its stout support for the “Haskell Indian Nations University Improvement Act” and urges Congress to pass this legislation to ensure the continued success and growth of Haskell Indian Nations University; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ATNI calls upon Congress to fully fund Haskell Indian Nations University as part of its Trust and Treaty responsibilities to Tribal Nations,

recognizing that investing in Haskell is an investment in the future of Native communities and leadership; and

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

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing Resolution was adopted at the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians 2026 Winter Convention held at the Hilton Portland Downtown in Portland, Oregon, on February 1-5, 2026, with a quorum present.



Leonard Forsman, President



Norma Jean Louie, Secretary