



**2026 Winter Convention
Portland, Oregon**

RESOLUTION # 2026 – 010

**“REDUCING INDIGENOUS RECIDIVISM IN THE STATE OF
WASHINGTON”**

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 historical, inter-generational trauma caused by the mass incarceration of and physical and sexual violence and emotional abuse against Indigenous youth, as well as the

separation and division of Indigenous families and communities and the destruction of Indigenous kinship systems, is felt deeply by Indigenous peoples today; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous children and juveniles were first mass incarcerated by the U.S. government in the 1800s and 1900s through Indian boarding schools, where they suffered physical and sexual violence and emotional abuse; and

WHEREAS, according to U.S. Census data from 2022, Indigenous people comprise only 1% of Washington's total population but represent 7% of the Washington state prison population, suggesting Indigenous people are incarcerated by the state at a rate seven times higher than would be expected for Indigenous people relative to the state's population; and

WHEREAS, the average sentence for Indigenous people sentenced at age 24 or younger—an age range when the human brain is not fully developed—is 17.68 years according to the Washington State Office of Public Defense; and

WHEREAS, according to the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC), Indigenous people are disproportionately suffering a recidivism rate of 33%; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous “Hoops” or “Circles” in DOC prisons are utilizing Indigenous religion and culture to receive education and teachings, achieve healing and rehabilitation, and seek forgiveness and redemption so our incarcerated Indigenous brothers and sisters can return to their families and reenter society without recidivating; and

WHEREAS, the Tribal Sons Hoop at the Washington Corrections Center in Shelton, Washington exemplifies the religious and cultural work being done by our incarcerated Indigenous brothers and sisters to reduce and prevent recidivism; and

WHEREAS, our Tribal nations desire to bring our incarcerated Indigenous brothers and sisters home healed and rehabilitated and to help reduce and prevent their recidivism, including through DOC religious, cultural, and educational programs and through societal re-entry opportunities such as education, employment, housing, and social services; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI brings attention to the disproportionate recidivism rate being suffered by Indigenous people in the state of Washington; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ATNI encourages our member Tribal nations that want to work with their communities, the DOC and its Indigenous Circles, Indigenous organizations, community partners, and other stakeholders to help reduce and prevent Indigenous recidivism, including through re-entry opportunities such as education, employment, housing, and social services; and


BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that ATNI honors and recognizes the honorable work of the Tribal Sons Hoop at the Washington Corrections Center to reduce and prevent recidivism.

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