



2010 Annual Conference Spokane, Washington

RESOLUTION #10 - 43

"BOARDING SCHOOL CLASS ACTION SUIT"

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, Executive Orders, 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 to promote the welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) are representatives of and advocates for national, regional, and specific tribal concerns; and

WHEREAS, ATNI is a regional organization comprised of American Indians/Alaska Natives and tribes 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 the ATNI; and

WHEREAS, the development of federal Indian law and policies have fluctuated over the past couple hundred years from extermination (genocide), termination (culture-cide), forced relocation, and other U.S. national policy goals that sought to completely annihilate the Native Americans or to force them to completely assimilate into the general American population and disappear as Indigenous peoples and tribal nations; and

WHEREAS, the United States actively implemented the policy of “Kill the Indian to Save the man” and sought to eliminate, amongst the children of the tribes, any traditional knowledge or Sacred Knowledge passed from one generation to the next that the Indian children would be able to resort to in identification with their tribal relatives and indigenous life-styles or tribal societies; and

WHEREAS, the Indian Boarding or Missionary Schools were used as government institutions to completely destroy the Indian Children’s capacity to identify with their indigenous tribal societies and traditional knowledge, and both psychological and physical methods were utilized to break down the psychological/psychiatric defenses of the Indian children (as students) and to install colonial paradigms into the children’s world views; and

WHEREAS, many Indian youth, boys and girls, from infancy to young adulthood, were subjected to severe physical punishment, which included not only psychological torture but physical/sexual rape and molestation, and for many said “students” this trauma was repeated over and over again, until there was a complete or partial dissociation with reality; and

WHEREAS, many Indian Children that were taken from their tribal homelands died while in the custody of the boarding/missionary schools; and

WHEREAS, many Native Students of the Boarding or Missionary Schools have become “trauma victims” that have suffered multiple traumatizations, with some suffering Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, as a direct consequence of their individual and collective experiences in said government authorized school institutions; and

WHEREAS, these “traumatized students” returned to the reservation-based tribal societies as “troubled adults” and introduced & practiced their mental health problems in the form of domestic violence, rape, and child sexual abuse, and have caused a societal-chain reaction of trans-generational abuse, familial & societal dysfunctionality and socio-pathology, as resultant of their indoctrination in the government schools and the traumas endured at that time; and

WHEREAS, modern tribal government and society has to bear the burden and costs of the damages done to the individual Indian students during their institutionalization within the boarding schools, in that the tribal governments must, for example, provide police protection to the persons and families and children abused by the traumatized individual, the tribe must provide court services, probation officers, case managers, and mental health counselors in pursuit of healing the “original traumatized student” or their victims on the reservation; and

WHEREAS, that the after-effects of this boarding school system has been extremely detrimental to the health and well-being of tribal society; and

WHEREAS, any and all lawsuits by the individual Indian students, for damages, should not proceed forward without consideration of the impacts and damages done to traditional tribal society and modern tribal governance, and that the specific intent and purpose of the

institutionalization of the “ Indian children” as boarding school residents was to completely destroy their capacity to identify with their tribal people, tribal society, tribal government, and traditional tribal knowledge, and that the federal government and Christian Churches had mutually-agreed goals to destroy tribal society completely, as a perceived threat to the American Dream and Christianity; and


WHEREAS, any and all attorneys, legal firms or organizations that work for or deal with or represent Indian Country, for the protection of tribal members rights or the rights of the tribe, should work cooperatively with the regional and national intertribal organizations to assure the tribal leadership is fully informed as to any intended or currently pending legal claims against the United States or the Christian Churches for damages caused by the Boarding School systems to past generations, current elder persons or tribal members, as a means to assure that impacts to tribal societies and governance shall be addressed as well; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that ATNI supports and calls for an intertribal class action lawsuit over the damages done to the tribal people and Indian tribes by the residential school systems, as addressed above; and

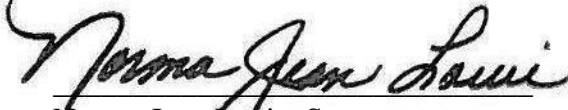
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ATNI is calling upon all intertribal organizations that represent and advocate for Indian Country to support a legal defense of the rights of tribal members and tribal society in their demands for restitution for damages done as a result of the purposeful and intentional physical, mental, and societal pains inflicted upon the Indian students while at the boarding/residential schools.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2010 Annual Conference of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, held at the Northern Quest Resort and Casino in Spokane, Washington, September 20-23, 2010 with a quorum present.



Brian Cladoosby, President



Norma Jean Louie, Secretary