



2013 Mid-Year Convention Airway Heights, Washington

RESOLUTION #13 – 33

"OPPOSE TRANSFER OR BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION"

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 federal government has a direct moral and legal responsibility – as yet unfilled – to each of the federally recognized American Indian tribes with which it signed treaties; and

WHEREAS, the federal trust responsibility to American Indian tribes establishes a political distinction; not a race-based distinction; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Interior, within which reside the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Indian Education, has the primary responsibility for the federal role in American Indian/Alaska Native education; and

WHEREAS, the responsibility for Indian programs has rested with the Department of Interior since its inception in 1849; and over the years, an understanding of the trust responsibility has become a function which Interior employees at all levels have developed some familiarity; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Education is one of the newest, smallest, and most often threatened federal departments; and

WHEREAS, through no fault of their own, Department of Education officials and staff at the policy and programmatic levels know little or nothing about American Indians/Alaska Natives, tribal sovereignty, or the federal trust responsibility; and

WHEREAS, the fundamental role of the federal trust responsibility and respect for tribal sovereignty in Indian Education requires that the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) remain within the U.S. Department of the Interior; and

WHEREAS, to move the BIE to the Department of Education would pose a great risk to the policy foundation developed by American Indians and Alaska Natives over many years; now

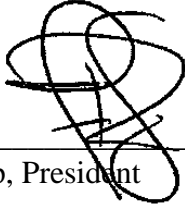
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI does hereby oppose any effort to transfer the BIE to the U.S. Department of Education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the ATNI realizes our Native students transfer among the varied schools – public schools, BIE funded schools, tribal schools, etc. – and it is vital that consistent communication, assessment and collaboration between the Department of Education and Interior occur regularly to support the educational outcomes of our children; and

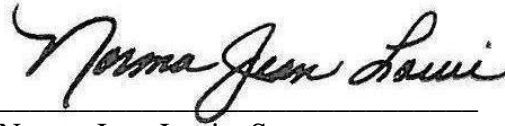
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the ATNI strongly urges the federal government to focus attention on the need to provide adequate resources necessary to ensure high quality tribal education at all levels, pre-Kindergarten to college.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2013 Mid-Year Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, held at Northern Quest Resort Casino, Airway Heights, Washington on May 13 – 16, 2013 with a quorum present.



Fawn Sharp, President



Norma Jean Louie, Secretary