



2014 Annual Convention Mission, Oregon

RESOLUTION #14 -43

**“TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF A TRIBAL/FEDERAL TASK FORCE TO STUDY
THE FUNDING CONSTRAINTS OF THE BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION AND
FORMULATE NEXT STEPS”**

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 Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) directly oversees a total of 183 elementary, secondary, residential and peripheral dormitories across 23 states that serve roughly 41,000 Indian students living on or near reservations; and

WHEREAS, under the BIE system, an additional 126 schools are tribally-controlled under Public Law 93-638 Indian Self Determination contracts or contracts under the Tribally Controlled Grant Schools Act (Public Law 100-297); and

WHEREAS, BIE's mission is to provide Indian students quality educational opportunities starting in early childhood in accordance with a tribe's need for cultural and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, the high school graduation rate for BIE students in 2011 was 61 percent, placing BIE in the bottom half among graduation rates for Indian students attending public schools in states where BIE schools are located; and

WHEREAS, BIE schools are primarily funded through the Department of the Interior, however, it also receives annual formula grants from the Department of Education, similar to public schools; and

WHEREAS, the structure of funding and administrative bureaucracy for the BIE is causing significant challenges for the BIE and Indian schools to improve student academic performance; and

WHEREAS, while the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), which oversees funding for the BIE, has undertaken another realignment of its administrative functions, it is unclear to what extent, if at all, the changes will result in improved services for BIE and its schools; and

WHEREAS, the BIA implemented its most recent realignment without seeking input from a broad range of education and BIE stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, the BIA failed to develop a strategic plan with specific goals and measures for itself or BIE or strategies to achieve goals; and

WHEREAS, the BIA has not updated its workforce plan or assessed Indian Affairs' realignment and its impact on BIE to ensure the agency has the right staff in place with the appropriate skills to effectively meet the needs of BIE schools and their ability to serve Native students; and

WHEREAS, the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report to Congress in September 2013 highlighting issues reducing the effectiveness of the BIE and proposed possible methods to increase effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, the GAO stated in that same report that it intends to issue a second report that will compare funding and expenditures for BIE schools to those of nearby public schools; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI does hereby call for the establishment of a Tribal/Federal Task Force (Task Force) comprised of tribal leaders and federal agency representatives to study the funding constraints BIE schools face as well as investigate

appropriate measures to be taken in order to address such concerns culminated into a final report; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ATNI supports that this Task Force be comprised of representation from the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the National Indian Education Association (NIEA), the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), the Tribal Education Departments National Assembly (TEDNA), the BIA, and the Department of Education (ED) to complete the study and provide recommendations for next steps to be taken and potential solutions, such as the impacts of shifting funding streams from the BIA to the BIE so that administrative functions and funding allocations are held strictly within the BIE; and

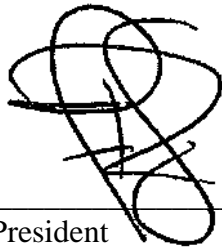
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any potential solutions considered, such as the one aforementioned, must take into account all benefits and consequences arising from each; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ATNI does hereby request that the findings from the Task Force report be disseminated to tribes and their education agencies, the Secretaries of the Interior and Education, the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education, and Congress; and

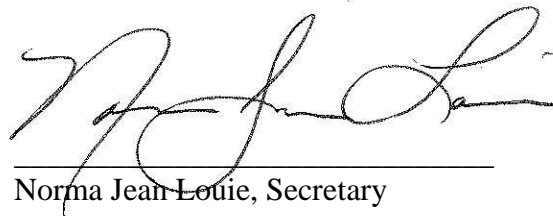
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of ATNI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2014 Annual Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, held at the Wildhorse Resort and Casino, Mission, Oregon on September 22 – 25, 2014, with a quorum present.



Fawn Sharp, President



Norma Jean Louie, Secretary