



2016 Annual Convention Tulalip, Washington

RESOLUTION #16 - 51

“STOPPING INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT NON-COMPLIANCE AND SUPPORTING TRIBAL ADVOCACY TO ADDRESS NON-COMPLIANCE”

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 Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) was enacted in 1978 to stop the flow of Indian children being removed from their families and communities and placed in non-Indian foster care and adoptive homes; and

WHEREAS, the consequences of these abusive practices by private and public agencies and state courts led to generations of Indian children losing contact with their families, siblings, communities, and culture, and untold trauma to the tribal families and children affected; and

WHEREAS, today we still see Indian children removed and placed into state foster care at rates 2-12 times more than their white counterparts (*Summers, A. (2015). Technical assistance bulletin: Disproportionality rates for children of color in foster care. National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges: Reno, NV.*) and increasing examples of deliberate non-compliance with ICWA, especially among private adoption interests; and

WHEREAS, tribes play a critical role in educating public and private agencies and state courts on proper implementation of ICWA and assisting birth parents and children's attorneys to ensure their client's rights are protected; and

WHEREAS, a 2005 General Accountability Office study of ICWA implementation revealed how dependent states are upon tribes to assist them in implementing ICWA properly despite tribes being severely underfunded in this area; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI does hereby state their strong opposition to the illegal taking of Indian children and placement in foster care or adoptive homes in violation of ICWA and the aggressive attempts to abolish some or all of the law through frivolous litigation by private adoption and anti-sovereignty groups; and

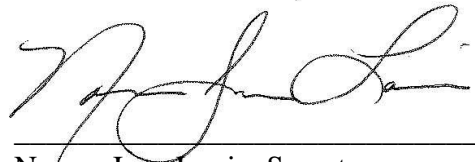
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ATNI requests the Administration to increase their FY 2018 budget request for the ICWA, Title II Tribal Grant Program at least two-fold over FY 2016 enacted levels (\$15.6 million) to ensure that every tribe will have the capacity to support ICWA compliance by public and private agencies and state courts.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2016 Annual Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, held at Tulalip Resort Casino, Tulalip, Washington on September 26-29, with a quorum present.



Fawn Sharp, President



Norma Jean Louie, Secretary