



2021 Annual Virtual Convention

RESOLUTION #2021 - 32

“IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION EXPANDING TRIBAL SELF-GOVERNANCE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES”

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, Federal trust and treaty obligations are the result of the millions of acres of land and extensive resources ceded to the United States—often times by force—in exchange for which it is legally and morally obligated to provide benefits and services in perpetuity, as well as uphold Tribal sovereignty, Self-Determination, and Self-Governance; and

WHEREAS, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA) authorizes Tribes and Tribal organizations to be funded by the Federal government to provide services that the Federal government would otherwise be obligated to provide due to the trust and treaty obligations of the United States; and

WHEREAS, other methods of Federal funding, such a grants, treat Tribes as not-for-profits instead of sovereign governments and create unnecessary barriers to services provided in fulfillment of perpetual trust and treaty obligations; and

WHEREAS, Self-Determination and Self-Governance under the ISDEAA have led to a significant improvement in the daily lives of American Indians and Alaska Natives because Tribes are more accountable and responsive to our people; and

WHEREAS, the success of the ISDEAA prompted Congress in 2000 to establish permanent Tribal Self-Governance in the Indian Health Service (IHS) in Title V of the ISDEAA; and

WHEREAS, Title V authorizes participating Tribes to redesign IHS programs, and redirect funds supporting those programs, in any manner that the Tribes determine is in the best interest of their communities, upholding Tribal sovereignty and Self-Determination, and better reflecting the diplomatic relationship between the U.S. and Tribes; and

WHEREAS, in Title VI of the ISDEAA, enacted in 2000, Congress envisioned expanding Self-Governance to include grant programs administered by other agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); and

WHEREAS, in 2003, HHS issued a study concluding such an expansion was feasible and identifying eleven HHS programs that could be integrated into Self-Governance; and

WHEREAS, in 2004, the Senate considered legislation to authorize a demonstration project implementing Title VI, but that legislation was not enacted; and

WHEREAS, many of the selected programs Tribes have been administering successfully for decades under individual grants. Tribes have built expertise in these programmatic areas and now is the time to provide the Self-Governance authority to uphold Tribal sovereignty and Self-Determination; and

WHEREAS, most recently with the highly successful rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine in Tribal communities, when Tribes are empowered to make their own decisions and operate their own programs, outcomes are better; and

WHEREAS, Self-Governance is the most successful Federal Indian policy in the history of Federal-Tribal relations; and

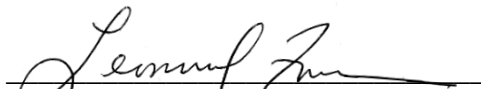
WHEREAS, expansion of Self-Governance within HHS is the next logical step to promote Tribal sovereignty and improve health care services, and has remained a top legislative priority of Tribes; and

WHEREAS, Tribes have drafted legislation, modeled on the 2004 Senate bill, that would establish a demonstration project expanding Self-Governance to specified programs administered by non-IHS agencies within HHS; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians support the introduction and enactment of legislation establishing a demonstration project to implement Title VI of the ISDEAA.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2021 Virtual Annual Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Portland, Oregon, on September 27 – 30, 2021, with a quorum present.


Leonard Forsman, President


Norma Jean Loue, Secretary