

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROCLAIMING	)	RESOLUTION NO. 23-5359
SUPPORT FOR CONGRESSIONAL	)	
LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH THE TRUTH	)	Introduced by Chief Operating Officer
AND HEALING COMMISSION ON INDIAN		Marissa Madrigal in concurrence with
BOARDING SCHOOL POLICIES ACT		Council President Lynn Peterson

WHEREAS, assimilation and “civilization” processes against Native Americans, such as the Indian Boarding School Policies, were adopted by the United States to strip American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children of their Indigenous identities, beliefs, and languages; to assimilate them into non-Native culture through federally funded and controlled Christian-run schools, which had the intent and, in many cases, the effect, of termination, with dire and intentional consequences on the cultures and languages of Indigenous Peoples; and

WHEREAS, as early as 1819 and until 1969, the United States federal government directly or indirectly supported approximately 521 Indian Boarding Schools across 38 states, often church-run, at which assimilation and “civilization” practices were inflicted on those children as part of the federal government’s goal of advancing eradication of Indigenous Peoples in the United States; and,

WHEREAS, the United States Indian Boarding School policy’s deliberate intent was to separate Native American children from their families, cultures, communities, and Tribal Nations through removal and reeducation; and,

WHEREAS, many tribal children were sent to boarding schools that served as a place to experiment on and abuse children medically, physically, psychologically, and sexually; and,

WHEREAS, the 2018 Broken Promises Report published by the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights reported that American Indian and Alaska Native Peoples continue to experience intergenerational trauma resulting from experiences in Indian boarding schools, which divided families, undermined cultural and societal structures, damaged Indigenous identities, and inflicted chronic psychological damage to American Indian and Alaska Native children and families; and,

WHEREAS, Congress introduced legislation titled the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act to establish the Truth and Healing Commission (Commission) on Indian Boarding School Policies in the United States, conduct a full inquiry into the assimilative policies of U.S. Indian boarding schools, and provide recommendations for justice and healing; and.

WHEREAS, the purposes of the Act are to establish a Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the United States to formally investigate and document, for the first time in history, the attempted termination of cultures and languages of Indigenous Peoples, assimilation practices, and human rights violations that occurred against American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians through Indian Boarding School Policies in furtherance of the motto to “kill the Indian in him and save the man”; and to formally investigate and document the impacts and ongoing effects of historical and intergenerational trauma in Native communities, including the effects of the attempted cultural and linguistic termination of American Indians,

Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, resulting from Indian Boarding School Policies, among other things; and,

WHEREAS, the Commission's main role is to develop recommendations on actions the federal government can take to adequately hold itself accountable for, and redress and heal, the historical and intergenerational trauma inflicted by the Indian Boarding School Policies and Practices; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council hereby supports congressional efforts to pass legislation approving the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act and bolstering initiatives, and subsequent recommendations, to hold the federal government accountable for, and redress and heal, the historical and intergenerational trauma inflicted by the Indian Boarding School Policies.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this sixteenth day of November 2023.



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Lynn Peterson, Council President

Approved as to Form:



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Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 23-5359, FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUPPORTING THE S.1723 TRUTH AND HEALING COMMISSION ON FEDERAL INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL POLICIES ACT IN THE U.S.

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Date: 11/2/23  
Department: GAPD  
Meeting Date: 11/16/23

Presenters: Katie McDonald, Tribal Liaison, and Andy Shaw, GAPD Director

Length: 25 minutes

Prepared by: Katie McDonald, Tribal Liaison, Betsy Emery, Tribal Affairs Advisor, and Ashley Schofield, Program Coordinator

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## ISSUE STATEMENT

Boarding schools for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians (Indian boarding schools) were established by the U.S. to strip American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children of their identities, beliefs, and languages, in order to assimilate them into non-Indian culture, through federally funded, denominational schools, which had the effect of cultural genocide. Indian boarding schools employed practices including assimilation, corporeal punishments, and child labor, which were often carried out without law, policy, or oversight.

The deliberate intention of Indian boarding schools was the separation of Native American children from their families, cultures, and Tribal communities through removal, cutting their hair, taking their clothing and issuing uniforms, forbidding them to speak their language or engage in any cultural practices, and carrying out severe and often corporeal punishments constituting, in many cases, physical, emotional, and mental torture for non-compliance. Children suffered sexual, cultural, and spiritual abuse and neglect and experienced treatment that in many cases constituted torture.

Many children never returned home. Recent research led by the U.S. Department of Interior and the National Native American Boarding School and Healing Coalition (NABS) have identified 523 Indian boarding schools that operated in the U.S. since 1801 –across 38 states including Oregon. Many of these boarding schools received federal support from 1819 to 1969. Ten of the recorded Indian boarding schools operated in Oregon, including the Forest Grove Indian Training School. This school was the nation's second federally funded, off-reservation Indian training school.

To date, there has never been a full accounting of the number of Native children forcibly institutionalized at Indian boarding schools, or were abused, died or went missing while attending boarding schools, or the long-term impacts and generational trauma of boarding schools on Native children and their families.

The Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act (Act), S.1723, would establish a federal commission (Commission) to conduct a full inquiry into the

assimilative policies of U.S. Indian boarding schools. The Commission would: document ongoing impacts from U.S. Indian boarding schools, examine the location of children, locate church and government records, hold culturally appropriate public hearings to collect testimony from survivors and descendants, gather institutional knowledge from subject matter experts, and share these findings publicly through a final report with a list of recommendations for justice and healing. In addition to the search for records, the Commission would bring together boarding school survivors with a broad cross-section of Tribal representatives and experts in education, health, and children and families to fully express and understand the impacts of the federal policy of Indian child removal.

Metro Council desires to establish meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships with Tribes with interests in the greater Portland metropolitan area through its Tribal Affairs program. In this work, Metro seeks to recognize tribal sovereignty, respect tribal rights and explore opportunities to incorporate tribal interests and priorities into Metro's work wherever practicable. The Tribal Affairs program cannot exist without a deep understanding of the historical and contemporary interests of Tribes and identifying how these interests can be advanced within Metro's work. It is critical that Metro dedicate staff time and resources to understand the historical and ongoing interests and priorities of Tribes with connections to the greater Portland area, including legacy connections that may be associated with Indian boarding schools that operated in the greater Portland area or state of Oregon more broadly.

Metro Council's adoption of Resolution No. 23-5359 expressing support for S.1723 will support efforts to establish a more comprehensive account of the historical and contemporary impacts of Indian boarding schools to Native children, their families and communities in the U.S. and in Oregon.

Through its allyship and support of S.1723, Metro Council is advocating for additional federal investigation, resources, collaboration and the future publication of information and recommendations that will help Metro advance opportunities for healing and transformation from the impacts of Indian boarding schools that intersect with Metro's work with interested Tribes.

## **ACTION REQUESTED**

Consideration and vote on Resolution No. 23-5359 expressing support for S.1723.

## **IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES**

Council adoption of Resolution No. 23-5359 will support multiple goals, principles and priorities identified in Metro's Tribal Affairs agenda. The efforts of a federal Truth and Healing Commission are anticipated to support and publish information that will directly inform Metro's forthcoming Historic and Cultural Resources Protection Program Office, which is currently being developed by Metro's Tribal Affairs, Parks and Nature and Capital Asset Management Division with interested Tribes. The Commission's investigation will

directly inform Metro's efforts to provide culturally specific and trauma informed programming to Indigenous communities and community members who may be navigating the legacy impacts of Indian Boarding Schools.

### **POLICY QUESTION(S)**

Would Council like staff to pursue additional efforts beyond Resolution No. 23-5359 via a regional letter of support for S.1723 to members of Oregon's congressional delegation?

### **POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER**

Council may also consider adding S.1723 as a legislative priority to the forthcoming Government Affairs and Policy Development federal affairs agenda.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends the Metro Council adopt Resolution No. 23-5359.

Note that this resolution accomplishes prior Metro Council direction from the September 28 Council meeting. We plan to come to you again after outreach to interested Tribes with a draft letter of support to share with local jurisdictional partners to consider signing on to before sending to the congressional delegation.

### **STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

- Council adoption of this resolution will further the goals identified in Metro's Tribal Affairs agenda including:
  - Building positive relationships with Tribes, Tribal staff and representatives to explore opportunities for partnership and collaboration to address tribal interests wherever practicable in Metro's work.
  - Improving Metro's work through incorporating tribal perspectives and expertise, Traditional Knowledge, Indigenous world views and aboriginal rights. Collaborate with Tribes to provide opportunities to increase the public's understanding of tribal interests, priorities, histories and connections in the greater Portland area, where appropriate.
- Council adoption of this resolution also aligns with the legislative principles outlined in Metro's Tribal Affairs agenda because this issue:
  - Has a nexus with Metro's current work;
  - Is a shared priority advanced by Tribes, tribal leadership and Indigenous legislators;
  - Promotes substantive inclusion of Tribes and Indigenous people in decision making;

- Acknowledges past and ongoing discrimination and/or oppression of Tribes and Indigenous communities and populations; and
- Works to dismantle ongoing systems of oppression and/or work to rectify past harms.
- Council adoption of this resolution will further Metro's commitments to the goals stated in the Strategic Plan to advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. It is anticipated the future Commission's efforts will produce and provide research and information that will support regional jurisdictions in advancing equity efforts, preserving sites of historical or ongoing cultural significance, and strengthening relationships with communities of color, in particular Indigenous communities and community members who have been impacted by the legacy of Federal Indian Boarding School policies.
- Known Opposition/Support/Community Feedback:
  - The Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, a tribally-established and led non-profit organization based in Oregon representing American Indians/Alaska Natives and over 50 member Tribes in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, northern California and Alaska support S.1723, as affirmed in Resolution #2023-43 at this year's ATNI Annual Convention held in Grand Mound, WA in September 2023. Additional ATNI resolutions including: #2023-44, #2022-33, #2022-01, #2017-24, #2013-32, and #2011-28, among others, express ATNI's support for and call on the U.S. federal government to acknowledge its role and responsibility for the historical and intergenerational traumas brought by the Boarding School policies and call for a beginning to the process of healing impacted people, families, communities, and Tribal Nations.
  - Other national organizations that have expressed their support for S.1723 include the National Congress of American Indians, the American Bar Association, the National Indian Health Board, and the Native Justice Coalition. Numerous other organizations and Tribes have endorsed the bill across the U.S.
- Anticipated Effects
  - Staff anticipate that adoption of this resolution will further Metro's relationship and partnership development efforts and goals with:
    - Tribes;
    - Tribal-serving organizations including the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition;
    - Urban Indigenous communities and community members;
    - Indigenous-identifying Metro staff; and

- Survivors and descendants of children and youth who attended Indian Boarding Schools or forcibly institutionalized in other associated facilities and institutions
- Staff anticipate that adoption of this resolution, Metro's forthcoming letter of support for S.1723 and the future work of the federal Commission will support future educational opportunities led by NABS and Tribes for Metro and other local government jurisdictions to learn about the Indian Boarding Schools and other associated facilities and institutions which impacted Indigenous Peoples and numerous Tribes in what is now known as present day Portland and the State of Oregon.
- Financial Implications
  - None.

## **BACKGROUND**

Council expressed their support for this type of legislation during the 2022 session by sending a letter of support for the prior versions of this federal legislation, S. 2907 and H.R. 5444, to members Oregon's congressional delegation.

During Metro's September 28, 2023 observance of the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools, Council requested the agency's Tribal Affairs program to bring forward a resolution of support for S.1723 for Council adoption and to draft an updated letter of support which could be signed by Metro Council and other interested local government jurisdiction partners across what is now known as greater Portland to be shared with the region's congressional delegation.

Today's staff presentation of Resolution No. 23-5359 accomplishes the first part of this Council direction. The Tribal Affairs program will continue to advance drafting of a letter of support to the congressional delegation for S.1723 to bring to Council at a future date after outreach and coordination with interested Tribes has occurred. Staff plan to share the letter of support with interested local jurisdiction partners after future additional Council action on the matter.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- Tribal Affairs Agenda
- ATNI Resolution #2023-43 Endorse S. 1723, A Federal Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act

## **METRO COUNCIL TRIBAL AFFAIRS AGENDA FY 2022 – 2023**

Draft current 09.16.2022

Metro Council desires to establish mutually beneficial relationships with interested Tribes to inform the agency's work across the region that is now known as the greater Portland metropolitan area. Creation of the Tribal Affairs program at Metro stemmed from increasing internal and external requests for tribal involvement in Metro's work and appreciation from Metro Council and leadership that Tribes should be engaged in Metro's work in recognition of tribal sovereignty.

Metro seeks to support tribal sovereignty through government-to-government coordination with Tribes, exploring opportunities to incorporate tribal interests and priorities into Metro's work and ensuring agency compliance with pertinent cultural, historic and natural resource protection laws.

Tribal relations is a new and unique body of work in addition to federal, state and local government affairs at Metro; it will take time to build relationships with interested Tribes as well as the internal staff capacity and knowledge to lead these efforts. Success will require coordinated external relationship building, focused policy development and sustained internal support across departments from the staff level to senior leadership all the way to the elected Metro Council.

Through government-to-government outreach and coordination, future policy development and training provided to staff, the Tribal Affairs program will distinguish government-to-government relations with Tribes from Metro's community engagement with urban Indigenous populations and communities in the greater Portland area.

Tribes may be engaged in many aspects of Metro's work. For example, Tribes can be engaged to identify priority focal species for Parks and Nature conservation and restoration efforts, to help develop a program check list to protect historic and cultural resources, or within a particular project to provide input on implementation actions to protect resources (e.g. where to place a hiking trail to avoid disturbance of a cultural resource, or introducing a traditional method for transplanting culturally important plant species).

Tribal Affairs cannot exist without a deep understanding of the historical and contemporary interests of Tribes and how these interests exist and can be advanced within non-tribal colonial government structures. It is critical that Metro dedicate staff time and resources to understand tribal sovereignty and the interests and priorities of Tribes with connections to the greater Portland area to inform this work. A brief overview is included at the end of this agenda. It is also critical that Metro develop productive and trustworthy relationships with the Tribes so that Metro can proactively ask what areas of Metro's work the Tribes would like to engage on.



## GOALS

Through its tribal relations work, Metro seeks to accomplish and realize the following goals:

- Respect tribal sovereignty through establishing relationships and engaging in government-to-government relations with Tribes.
- Build positive relationships with Tribes, Tribal staff and representatives to explore opportunities for partnership and collaboration to address tribal interests wherever practicable in Metro's work.
- Enhance opportunities for the pursuit of traditional lifeways of Tribes and Indigenous communities in the greater Portland area.
- Improve Metro's work through incorporating tribal perspectives and expertise, Traditional Knowledge, Indigenous world views and aboriginal rights. Collaborate with Tribes to provide opportunities to increase the public's understanding of tribal interests, priorities, histories and connections in the greater Portland area, where appropriate.

Relationships and partnerships with Tribes will support Metro's efforts to advance the region's six desired outcomes and other goals and priorities of the agency.

## METRO TRIBAL AFFAIRS PRINCIPLES

The Metro Tribal Affairs Principles are the key values that will guide Metro's relations, engagement, and informal consultation with Tribes. Metro Council affirms the following principles and recognizes their importance to facilitating successful tribal relations.

- **Support government-to-government relations** - Metro's relationships and engagement with Tribes will draw upon principles of diplomacy. A government-to-government relationship includes mutual recognition of the authority and position of the respective parties as governmental entities. Tribal governments will be engaged in a direct governmental manner which is distinct from community or public engagement approaches and engagement activities with urban Indigenous communities and populations.
- **Foster trust** - Trust is a fundamental element of establishing a good relationship. Honesty and integrity will be maintained by Metro at all times to foster a solid foundation of trust, common understanding and vision.
- **Engage in good faith** - Metro shall listen to and consider tribal comments carefully. Through engaging in good faith and with respect, solutions can be identified which embrace different cultures, values, interests and positions toward mutually beneficial ends. Metro will not engage Tribes on any predetermined outcomes or decisions and will strive to ensure each opportunity has the real potential to make a positive difference for all involved Tribes, Metro and the residents of our region.
- **Early planning** - Metro shall plan to engage and consult with Tribes as early as possible. Planning will include providing ample notice of meetings, multiple meeting opportunities and wherever possible, conducting meetings and engagement at both Metro and tribal locations.

- **Collaboration** - Valuable solutions arise through working together in generating, inventing, and innovating in the co-production of knowledge that will guide Metro's work. Collaboration engenders mutual understanding and respect.
- **Communication** – Continuous communication is critical. Meaningful dialogue is more than just a listening session; it is early, often and involves two-way dialogue and feedback. Metro will conduct its communication in a manner that is mindful of tribal preferences and will strive to provide full and candid project information at all times.
- **Building towards agreement and consensus** - Metro will strive to reach agreement amongst all parties. This includes ensuring all parties are heard and respected, all ideas, concerns and options are explored, best available input and information is utilized, and decisions are made in a transparent manner. Metro will create opportunities where the interests of Tribes and Metro can be shared, discussed and evaluated together, involving technical and policy leadership of all parties as appropriate.
- **Advance conservation and protection** - Metro supports efforts to protect, preserve and restore natural and cultural resources and First Foods which are integral to Tribes, tribal life-ways and historical and ongoing relationships to the landscape to create a better future in Oregon and globally.
- **Advance racial equity** - Metro envisions a region and state where a person's race, place of birth, ethnicity or zip code does not predict their future prospects and where all residents can enjoy economic opportunity and quality of life. Tribes, their communities and urban Indigenous communities and populations are included in Metro's racial equity work.
- **Advance regional coordination** - Many of our region's challenges are big and complex and require coordination between cities, counties and other local forms of government. Metro commits to exploring opportunities to support regional planning and coordination with the involvement of Tribes.
- **Commitment to Resources** – Metro will identify resources at its disposal to provide support to Tribes when limited resources may preclude or prevent their engagement with Metro. This includes providing technical assistance, accessibility assistance and other support services to ensure participation of Tribes and their representatives. When technical or subject matter expertise is provided, Metro will explore available options to provide compensation in recognition of the Tribes' time and efforts to inform Metro's work.
- **Do no harm** – Metro will use best efforts to ensure no harm comes to the Tribes through working with Metro. Exploitation of Tribes, their input, intellectual properties or Traditional Knowledge shall not occur. Metro commits itself to being a good partner who works collaboratively with all parties to productively build toward solutions and outcomes that do not erode trust or relationships.

## **PRIORITIES**

Fiscal year 2022-2023 priorities for Metro's Tribal Affairs are organized into four areas including operational activities, policy development, project support and legislative agenda. In this agenda, Metro Council is providing direction on near-term priorities and efforts that

will support the agency to build longer term capacity to support a broad portfolio of tribal coordination activities. Priorities listed below have been identified through support requests from Metro departments, projects with existing tribal relations or coordination activities and needs, and areas of Metro's work which may intersect with tribal interests. These priorities have also been informed by early relationship development efforts with Tribes and feedback and requests which have been provided to Metro. These priorities will be updated every two years and adaptively managed using a responsive approach which adjusts as relationships with Tribes develop and their input and priorities are shared with Metro.

### **OPERATIONAL:**

**Positive contact and relationship building efforts:** Metro engages and consults with Tribes through government-to-government relations which foster trust and aid in co-development of relationships, goals and objectives that can be formalized in intergovernmental agreements such as memorandums of understanding. Relationship development and coordination efforts will be supported at the Council-to-Council and staff-to-staff levels.

**Annual training calendar:** Develop an annual training calendar and curated learning opportunities for Metro Council, leadership and staff to advance their understanding of the tribal relations and priorities, regional history and context, federal and state Indian policy, and topical issues in Indian Country. Learning opportunities and trainings will be developed with input from Tribes and tribal organizations and equip Metro staff with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to support tribal coordination activities.

**Department-specific Tribal Affairs planning** - Support Metro departments in the preparation, planning and development of annual Programs of Work (POW) and strategies which describe how tribal coordination efforts and the Metro Council Tribal Affairs Principles will be integrated into department activities, projects and management strategies. Annual POW are necessary for and will support Council-to-Council and staff-to-staff tribal coordination meetings, identify Metro staff with tribal coordination responsibilities, and identify milestones and structural processes which can be measured to assess progress towards successful tribal relations and outcomes annually.

**Government Affairs Tribal Affairs strategy development** – The Government Affairs and Policy Development department shall develop and propose a five year strategic plan to advance a robust Tribal Affairs program which includes the necessary agency policies, standard staff practices and staff training to advance meaningful relationships with interested Tribes.

### **POLICY DEVELOPMENT:**

All of Metro's Tribal Affairs policy development efforts will be done in coordination with Tribes, tribal staff and their representatives. Near term policy development efforts will focus on the following matters:

- **Cultural Resources Protection Policy** - Support development of a Metro-wide Historic and Cultural Resources Protection Policy to ensure protection and preservation of resources in Metro projects and on Metro publicly-owned and operated properties and facilities in the greater Portland area.
- **Tribal Consultation Framework** - Support development of a Metro-wide Tribal consultation framework that provides guidance to Metro staff on how to initiate and lead informal consultation and engagement with Tribes in Metro's work. Where appropriate, this work should identify linkages and make recommendations for distinctions and necessary updates to the [Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity](#) and the [Public Engagement Guide](#).

### **PROJECT WORK:**

The Tribal Affairs program in GAPD will advise Metro departments and Council Office on relationship development including outreach and interactions with interested Tribes. The Tribal Affairs program is also responsible for responding to requests and inquiries from Tribes regarding engagement with Metro or Metro projects and programs. Advisory support will be provided to Metro projects and programs to help facilitate government-to-government consultation and engagement with interested Tribes. The Tribal Affairs program will prioritize supporting projects and programs that are a priority for Tribes and where there are clear opportunities to advance tribal interests and priorities in alignment with Metro's goals and values.

Metro will make best efforts to engage and consult with Tribes on projects of interest which may include Metro projects, actions, decisions or policy making which have the potential to affect tribal interests, the operation of tribal programs or services, include ground disturbing activities or are proximal to waterways or ESA listed species designated habitat.

Metro understands that tribal interests may include but are not limited to:

- Tribal Lands such as ceded lands or aboriginal homelands;
- Usual and accustomed areas or places;
- Tribal treaty rights such as the right to hunt or fish in usual and accustomed areas and or implied rights such as sufficient availability and health of critical habitat necessary to support productive fisheries for treaty-guaranteed fishing;
- Cultural resources, protection of ancestral remains, sacred sites or areas of cultural interest;
- First Foods;
- Access to areas of cultural or religious importance;
- Access to usual and accustomed areas or places;
- Ability to exercise traditional, cultural, religious or subsistence activities.

Metro departments are responsible for identifying projects, programs or actions within their purview which intersect with tribal interests and for providing necessary resources such as project management, staff and technical resources to support successful

government-to-government consultation and engagement. The Tribal Affairs program can assist departments in identifying projects which may intersect with tribal interests.

**LEGISLATIVE:**

The Tribal Affairs program will provide support to legislative staff to share and facilitate discussion of Metro's state and federal affairs agendas with interested Tribes.

Metro's legislative and tribal affairs staff will coordinate in order to propose potential priorities that intersect with tribal interests for Metro Council to discuss and possibly add to their agenda. Opportunities that will be explored by staff will include legislation which:

- Has a nexus with Metro's current work;
- Is a shared priority advanced by Tribes, tribal leadership and Indigenous legislators;
- Advances government-to-government relations and strengthen requirements for tribal consultation;
- Promotes substantive inclusion of Tribes and Indigenous people in decision making;
- Acknowledges past and ongoing discrimination and/or oppression of Tribes and Indigenous communities and populations;
- Works to dismantle ongoing system of oppression and/or work to rectify past harms.

Metro will not supplant any Tribe or tribal organization's efforts on legislative priorities and will strive to coordinate with legislative and policy representatives of Tribes, Tribal organizations and Indigenous legislators to determine if Metro's involvement on any legislative priorities is appropriate.

Metro will advance its legislative priorities through a variety of methods including signing onto letters, written and or oral testimony, and lobbying legislators. When advancing tribal affairs legislative priorities, Metro's role will be as an ally, striving to respect the requests of Tribes and tribal organizations on the appropriate method for Metro to express its support.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Tribes are independent sovereigns with inherent powers of self-government and relationships with the U.S. government that derive from treaties, federal law and executive orders. These Federal-Tribal relations are political and do not derive from race or ethnicity. The extent of a Tribe's reserved rights depends significantly on the language of its treaty, statute, or executive order and, potentially, judicial interpretation of meaning of any disputed language.

Treaties are listed among the elements that make up "the supreme law of the land" under Article VI of the U.S. Constitution. Local governments, under this "Supremacy Clause" of the U.S. Constitution, must respect rights created by or reserved in Indian treaties and cannot pass ordinances or laws that interfere with, or are contrary to, those rights.

Throughout the Pacific Northwest, Tribes ceded huge swaths of their aboriginal lands to the United States in exchange for peace, certainty about the terms of non-Indian settlement, and reservation of legal rights and interests in the Euro-American legal system. Some Treaties also included language about reserved rights to hunt, fish and gather, among many other activities.

The lands now known as the greater Portland metropolitan area are part of the aboriginal homelands, traditional use areas and trade networks of numerous Tribes. For millennia, Indian people resided throughout the Willamette Valley and along the Willamette and Columbia Rivers and their tributaries in traditional villages, permanent communities and seasonal encampments. The relationship of Tribes, their lands and interests extend from time immemorial to the present day and beyond. Each Tribe's interests are distinct. These interests may overlap and intersect with the static boundaries of Metro's service area and the urban growth boundary in various ways.



**2023 Annual Convention  
Grand Mound, Washington**

**RESOLUTION #2023 – 43**

**“ENDORSE S. 1723, A FEDERAL TRUTH AND HEALING COMMISSION  
ON INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL POLICIES ACT”**

**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 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 ATNI; and

**WHEREAS**, attempts to destroy Native American cultures, religions, and languages through assimilationist practices and policies can be traced to the early 17th century and the founding charters of some of the oldest educational institutions in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, as early as 1819, and until 1969, the Federal Government directly or indirectly supported approximately 521 Indian Boarding Schools across 38 States; and

**WHEREAS**, American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children, as young as 3 years old, were forcibly removed from their homes and sent to Indian Boarding Schools located throughout the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, Indian Boarding Schools used systematic, violent, and militarized identity-altering methods, such as physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect, to attempt to forcibly assimilate Native children and strip them of their languages, cultures, and social connections; and

**WHEREAS**, the violent methods referred to in subparagraph were carried out for the purpose of:

- Destroying the cultures, languages, and religions of Native peoples;
- Dispossessing Native peoples of their ancestral lands; and

**WHEREAS**, many of the children who were taken to Indian Boarding Schools did not survive, and of those who did survive, many never returned to their parents, extended families, or communities; and

**WHEREAS**, many of the children who were taken to Indian Boarding Schools and did not survive were interred in cemeteries and unmarked graves; and

**WHEREAS**, American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities continue to experience intergenerational trauma and cultural and familial disruption from experiences rooted in Indian Boarding Schools Policies, which divided family structures, damaged cultures and individual identities, and inflicted chronic physical and psychological ramifications on American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children, families, and communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the ethos and rationale for Indian Boarding Schools is infamously expressed in the following quote from the founder of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, Richard Henry Pratt: “Kill the Indian in him, and save the man”; and

**WHEREAS**, the children who perished at Indian Boarding Schools or in neighboring hospitals and other institutions were buried in on-campus and off-campus cemeteries and unmarked graves; and

**WHEREAS**, parents of children who were forcibly removed from or coerced into leaving their homes and placed in Indian Boarding Schools were prohibited from visiting or engaging in correspondence with their children; and

**WHEREAS**, parental resistance to compliance with the harsh, no-contact policy of Indian Boarding Schools resulted in parents being incarcerated or losing access to basic human rights, food rations, and clothing; now

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Federal Government has a responsibility to fully investigate its role in, and the lasting effects of, Indian Boarding School Policies; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, ATNI supports the endorsement of S.1723, a bill




to establish a Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the United States, including other necessary advisory committees and subcommittees:


- to formally investigate, document, and report on the histories of Indian Boarding Schools, Indian Boarding School Policies, and the systematic and long-term effects of those schools and policies on Native American peoples;
- to develop recommendations for Federal action based on the findings of the Commission; and
- to promote healing for survivors of Indian Boarding Schools, the descendants of those survivors, and the communities of those survivors; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that ATNI endorses the federal legislation S.1723, a bill to establish a Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2023 Annual Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Great Wolf Lodge, Grand Mound, Washington on September 18 - 21, 2023, with a quorum approving.

  
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Leonard Forsman, President

  
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Norma Jean Louie, Secretary