



For Immediate Release
February 26, 2014

Contact: Shayda Esfahani
P: 778.988.4460
E: shayda@learnaboutsam.org

Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest Indians (ATNI) Partners with SAM In Opposition to Marijuana Legalization in Oregon and Alaska

The Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians partners with Smart Approaches to Marijuana, opposing the legalization of marijuana and in favor of a public-health approach to marijuana policy.

FERNDALE, WA – The Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI), an organization comprised of American Indians/Alaska Natives and tribes in the states of Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Nevada, Northern California, and Alaska, announced today a partnership with Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM) along with an official resolution opposing the legalization of marijuana, specifically in Alaska and Oregon. The resolution calls for working with Smart Approaches to Marijuana to support “drug prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery efforts that focus on reducing marijuana use, especially among youth.”

“ATNI Member Tribes strive for drug free communities in order to provide safe and healthy environments for their tribal members including the most vulnerable, the children,” remarked Terri Parr W, Executive Director of ATNI. “In working toward this objective, they stand strongly in opposition to the legalization of drugs alongside their allies including SAM.”

SAM’s Director, Dr. Kevin Sabet, who spoke at the 2014 Winter Convention of the ATNI in Ferndale, WA last week, expressed great joy for the passing of this resolution, stating, “members of the Tribes of the United States are among the most vulnerable in our country and among the most targeted by the Big Tobacco and Liquor industries. Our partnership with the ATNI and their opposition to marijuana legalization will send a strong message to American society that Big Marijuana is not welcome in the Tribes.”

ATNI and SAM will be working together throughout the region to increase drug awareness and warn communities against drug legalization.

Simon Lee Sampson, of Yakama Nation and the Community Safety Network of Toppenish remarked, “We stand with SAM in support of their principles. We cannot deny that marijuana legalization will have a devastating impact on our communities – and we want none of it.”

###

About Project SAM

Project SAM is a nonpartisan alliance of lawmakers, scientists and other concerned citizens who want to move beyond simplistic discussions of "incarceration versus legalization" when discussing marijuana use, and instead focus on practical changes in marijuana policy that neither demonizes users nor legalizes the drug. SAM supports a treatment, health-first marijuana policy.

About the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians

In 1953 farsighted tribal leaders in the Northwest formed the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, and dedicated it to tribal sovereignty and self-determination. Today, ATNI is a nonprofit organization representing 57 Northwest tribal governments from Oregon, Idaho, Washington, southeast Alaska, Northern California and Western Montana. ATNI is an organization whose foundation is composed of the people it is meant to serve — the Indian peoples.