

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6034

Chapter 245, Laws of 2026

69th Legislature
2026 Regular Session

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 11, 2026

Passed by the Senate March 10, 2026
Yeas 49 Nays 0

DENNY HECK

President of the Senate

Passed by the House March 4, 2026
Yeas 95 Nays 0

LAURIE JINKINS

**Speaker of the House of
Representatives**

Approved March 30, 2026 2:44 PM

BOB FERGUSON

Governor of the State of Washington

CERTIFICATE

I, Sarah Bannister, Secretary of the Senate of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6034** as passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives on the dates hereon set forth.

SARAH BANNISTER

Secretary

FILED

March 31, 2026

**Secretary of State
State of Washington**

SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6034

AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

Passed Legislature - 2026 Regular Session

State of Washington 69th Legislature 2026 Regular Session

By Senate State Government, Tribal Affairs & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Kauffman, Conway, Hasegawa, Liias, Nobles, Riccelli, Stanford, Trudeau, and Valdez)

READ FIRST TIME 01/26/26.

1 AN ACT Relating to the statutory establishment of the governor's
2 office of Indian affairs; and adding new sections to chapter 43.376
3 RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) There is hereby created as a cabinet
6 agency of the governor, the office of Indian affairs.

7 (2) The office of Indian affairs shall have the following
8 responsibilities:

9 (a) Assist the governor in the development and review of
10 effective policies and legislation to support the state of Washington
11 in fostering strong and meaningful relationships with federally
12 recognized Indian tribes, whose traditional lands and territories
13 included parts of Washington as described in RCW 43.376.010, tribal
14 organizations, and urban Indian organizations;

15 (b) In accordance with RCW 43.376.020, provide a training focused
16 on fostering effective communication and collaboration between the
17 state and federally recognized Indian tribes, whose traditional lands
18 and territories included parts of Washington as described in RCW
19 43.376.010, which the heads of each executive and small cabinet
20 agency, and each of the governor's policy advisors and executive
21 leadership team members, shall attend;

1 (c)(i) In partnership with relevant agencies including the
2 department of enterprise services, the office of financial management
3 state human resources, and agency tribal liaisons, expand upon RCW
4 43.376.020 to produce additional training for state employees.

5 (ii) The office of Indian affairs shall consult with tribal
6 nations in the development of the training.

7 (iii) The training shall be made available to state employees in
8 an accessible manner, including but not limited to an electronic,
9 digital format to facilitate access for state employees.

10 (iv) Cabinet agencies shall work with the office of Indian
11 affairs to determine appropriate staff and timing to receive the
12 training;

13 (d) Advise state agencies and departments concerning issues
14 relative to federally recognized Indian tribes, whose traditional
15 lands and territories included parts of Washington as described in
16 RCW 43.376.010, and Indian organizations of Washington state;

17 (e) Be the governor's liaison between the state of Washington,
18 Indian tribal governments, and Indian organizations;

19 (f) Be liaison and advisor to the governor and state agencies on
20 federal and state legislation and policies in Indian affairs;

21 (g) In collaboration with state agency tribal liaisons, provide
22 assistance and advice to state agencies, departments, boards, and
23 commissions concerning tribal relationships and issues impacting
24 tribal rights, communities, lands, and interests, and other American
25 Indian or Alaskan Native residents and communities of Washington
26 state;

27 (h) Regularly convene meetings with tribal nations and relevant
28 state parties to discuss issues of mutual interest in a timely
29 manner; and

30 (i) Facilitate and convene meetings with tribal leaders annually
31 to implement the Centennial Accords, including the development of the
32 agenda, identifying joint strategies, and achieving specific goals.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The executive head of the office of
34 Indian affairs shall be the executive director, who shall be
35 appointed by the governor, with the consent of the senate, and serve
36 at the pleasure of the governor as part of the governor's executive
37 cabinet. He or she shall be paid a salary to be fixed by the governor
38 in accordance with the provisions of RCW 43.03.040.

1 (2) The executive director shall employ a staff, who shall be
2 state employees pursuant to Title 41 RCW. The executive director
3 shall prescribe the duties of the staff as may be necessary to
4 implement the purposes of this chapter and may delegate such of his
5 or her powers, duties, and functions to other officers and employees
6 of the office as he or she may deem necessary to the fulfillment of
7 the purposes of this chapter.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The legislature hereby finds and
9 declares that nothing in this chapter, including, without limitation,
10 the creation of the office of Indian affairs, is intended to infringe
11 upon the sovereignty of Indian tribes who are federally recognized by
12 the United States as possessing powers of self-government and whose
13 traditional lands and territories included parts of Washington as
14 described in RCW 43.376.010.

15 (2) Indians subject to the jurisdiction of the state of
16 Washington pursuant to the provisions of Title 9A RCW and chapter
17 37.12 RCW are entitled to all services of the state of Washington
18 including, without limitation, correctional legal aid, public
19 defender, probational and psychiatric services afforded to any other
20 persons who are defendants in criminal actions or parties to civil
21 actions in the courts of this state.

22 (3) The provisions of Title 9A RCW and chapter 37.12 RCW do not
23 preclude Indian tribes, who are federally recognized by the United
24 States as possessing powers of self-government and whose traditional
25 lands and territories included parts of Washington as described in
26 RCW 43.376.010, from enacting their own laws, regulations, and
27 ordinances, and enforcing them by their own tribal courts in
28 accordance with their rules of procedure.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The office of Indian affairs may establish
30 procedures and requirements for operations and expenditures to
31 support and enhance state government partnership and relationships
32 with tribal nations. Such operations and expenditures are intended to
33 strengthen state-tribal relations and provide resources for
34 government-to-government engagement. The office of Indian affairs may
35 accept or request grants or gifts from citizens and other private
36 sources to be used to defray the costs of appropriate hosting of
37 state-tribal relations gatherings, including appropriate gift giving
38 and reciprocal gift receiving, or other activities of the office. The

1 office shall open and maintain a bank account into which it shall
2 deposit all money received under this section. Such money and the
3 interest accruing thereon shall not constitute public funds, shall be
4 kept segregated and apart from funds of the state, and shall not be
5 subject to appropriation or allotment by the state or subject to
6 chapter 43.88 RCW.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) On or before November 1st of each
8 year, the office of Indian affairs shall prepare and submit to the
9 governor and the legislature an annual written report of the
10 operations, activities, programs, and services of the office for the
11 preceding fiscal year.

12 (2) For each operation, activity, program, or service provided by
13 the office of Indian affairs, the annual report shall include:

14 (a) A description of the operation, activity, program, or
15 service;

16 (b) Budget data, including the amount and source of funding,
17 expenses, and allocation of full-time employees for the operation,
18 activity, program, or service;

19 (c) Goals, challenges, and achievements related to the operation,
20 activity, program, or service;

21 (d) Relevant federal and state statutory references and
22 requirements; and

23 (e) Other information determined by the office of Indian affairs
24 that:

25 (i) May be needed, useful, or of historical significance; or

26 (ii) Promotes accountability and transparency for each operation,
27 activity, program, or service with the public and elected officials.

28 (3) The annual report shall be designed to provide clear,
29 accurate, and accessible information to the public, the governor, and
30 the legislature.

31 (4) The office of Indian affairs shall:

32 (a) Submit the annual report in accordance with RCW 43.01.036;
33 and

34 (b) Make the annual report, and previous annual reports,
35 accessible to the public by placing a link to the reports on the
36 office's website.

37 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** Sections 1 through 5 of this act are each
38 added to chapter 43.376 RCW.

Passed by the Senate March 10, 2026.
Passed by the House March 4, 2026.
Approved by the Governor March 30, 2026.
Filed in Office of Secretary of State March 31, 2026.

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