

Government Administration and Elections Committee

HOUSE FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HR-8

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THAT ALL LAND IN CONNECTICUT WAS

Title: ONCE NATIVE AMERICAN TERRITORY.

Vote Date: 3/24/2023

Vote Action: House Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/10/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill is a Resolution Recognizing That All Land in Connecticut Was Once Native American Territory. While having no effect on any legal or administrative proceeding or procedure.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Aundré Bumgardner, Representative Forty First Assembly District, Connecticut

General Assembly: Representative Bumgardner strong supports HR-8 noting that "It is long overdue that in legislative sessions and public gatherings, that we collectively offer land acknowledgements of the ancestral territories of the Eastern Pequot, Mashantucket Pequot, Mohegan, Golden Hill Paugussett, and Schaghticoke Tribal Nations and other tribal nations indigenous to our state".

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Daniel Menihan, Jr. Tribal Councilor, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation: Mr. Menihan notes his support for the passage of HR-8, citing the history of his tribe's presence in what would later become the state of Connecticut. "Our historic Pequot Tribe has occupied southeastern Connecticut for more than 10,000 years. By the early 17th century, just prior to European contact, the Pequot Tribe had approximately 8,000 members and inhabited 250 square miles spread across 26 villages". Mr. Menihan then notes the attempted genocide of his tribe in the year 1637. He further states that he believes the power of land acknowledgements lie in their ability to raise awareness of their collective history. Mr. Menihan and the people of the Pequot Tribal nation conclude their testimony by stating "The

resolution before you today is a critical acknowledgment of the proud and complex history of our Native American ancestors who gave themselves to this land, and whose descendants live and thrive here today. We urge your adoption of the resolution".

Charlie Strickland, "Two Bears", Chairman and Justice of the Mohegan Tribes Council of Elders: Mr. Strickland begins his testimony by thanking members of the committee for addressing such an important issue to him. Mr. Strickland then goes into detail noting the history of his tribe and the presence they have had on the continent for nearly 10,000 years. He then details the history of his tribe in the late 18th and 19th century and notes the land that was taken from them. He notes that he shares these stories in recognition of the injustices faced by his tribe for decades. Mr. Strickland concludes his testimony by once more urging support for HR-8.

Jess Zaccagnino, and I am the policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT): Ms. Zaccagnino, and the ACLU-CT notes their support for HR-8, and state that "The ACLU-CT is committed to defending the rights of Native Americans to be free from discrimination and governmental abuse of power. Native Americans have suffered discrimination and injustice at the hands of the government since this country's founding, yet contemporary discussions of civil rights all too often overlook the rights of Native Americans". Ms. Zaccagnino states the discrimination and difficulties currently face by native American communities across the country and note how land acknowledgements are a tool to engage not erase the states history on this topic.

Nathan Frohling, Director of External Affairs, The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut: Mr. Frohling and the Nature Conservancy offer their support for HR-8 noting the peoples from the tribes of "Mohegan, Mashantucket Pequot, Eastern Pequot, Schaghticoke, Golden Hill Paugussett, Nipmuc, and Lenape". Mr. Frohling notes how these people have inhabited these lands for generations with wisdom and respect for nature and recognizing them would be a small gesture of appreciation.

The following individuals submitted Testimony in support of HR-8, they cited reasons similar to those stated in aforementioned testimony:

Timothy Gabriele
Jason Sewell

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Anonymous, Concerned Citizen: Anonymous concerned citizen opposes all bills

Reported by: Thomas Togneri

Date: 03-24-2023