



**Testimony for Public Hearing
RE: Proposed H.B. No.5054
An Act Establishing Native American Month
Government Administration and Elections Committee
February 20, 2013**

**Prepared by:
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Vice Chairwoman for the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation**

Chairman Musto, Representative Jutila, members of the Committee and Representative Hewett,

Kuweeqáhsun: Good morning, my name is Fatima Dames. I am the Vice Chairwoman for the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation. Thank you for the opportunity to be present here today to testify in support of Proposed H.B. No. 5054: **An Act Establishing Native American Month**. If enacted, this proposed legislation will establish the month of November as Native American Month.

The intent of this proposed legislation is to recognize the heritage, culture and the contributions that Native Americans have made to our society. This categorized acknowledgement would be an honor for the many historical and present day tribal communities. As you know, the heritage and cultural traditions of Native Americans are diverse and filled with oral and written stories about every aspect of our way of life. There is much wisdom and opportunity available to us when we explore the cultural traditions that have been contributed to our society by Native Americans. For example, did you know that the name of our great State of Connecticut derives from the Algonquian language? The Algonquian meaning for Connecticut, is "long river." This is just one example of the collective contributions made by the tribes of Connecticut.

H.B. No. 5054 would provide all Native Americans with the opportunity to share their influences and gifts to society from first contact to today. Can you imagine the sense of pride and fulfillment that many Native children and families would experience as the citizens of Connecticut initiate a month long journey to explore and celebrate the rich heritage and diverse cultures of indigenous people from all over the world?

In closing, and on behalf of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, we thank you for the opportunity to express our unwavering support for the intent of H.B. No. 5054 which will recognize the heritage, culture and contributions of Native Americans throughout the month of November. We urge you to not only support but to pass H.B. No. 5054 to continue Connecticut's tradition of being a leader in creating legislation that builds on what we as Native Americans proudly say is truly a melting pot of cultures.