



TESTIMONY OF CHIEF MANY HEARTS, LYNN MALERBA, THE MOHEGAN TRIBE
BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Senator Musto, Representative Jutila, esteemed members of the Committee and Representative Hewett.

Aqai Mohisinak. Wisawôk Sôqsqa Mutáwi Mutáhash. Greetings from Mohegan. My name is Lynn Malerba Chief Many Hearts of the Mohegan Tribe. Joining me today is Vice Chairman of the Tribal Council, James Gessner. I wish to thank you for your invitation to testify and offer our strong support for H.B. 5054, AN ACT ESTABLISHING NATIVE AMERICAN MONTH.

The first nations of what is now known as the United States have contributed greatly to the development of our nation by welcoming people to our native lands and sharing our beautiful natural resources. Our Mohegan nation is a sovereign, federally-recognized Indian nation with our own traditional and constitutional form of government.

Like all the citizens of the State of Connecticut we share a love for this State which carries the name of Quinnetuket or Long Tidal River. Indeed throughout Connecticut there are towns named after tribes and tribal people such as our town Uncasville, Foxon, Moosup, Quinnebaug Valley, Hammonasset, Quinnipiac, Niantic to name a few.

From the moment our Great Chief Uncas told Governor Winthrop in 1638 "My heart is not mine ... it is yours" our histories were forever linked. It is clear that his philosophy of collaboration with our new neighbors would be the path to our survival. 375 years later, this philosophy has continued. The government to government relationship that exists between the Mohegan Tribe and our State Leaders is one of tradition and honor.

As early as the Revolutionary War, we have worked together side by side to protect our lands with 42 Mohegan men serving alongside the colonial forces. In the 1830's State of Connecticut Senators and Representatives valiantly opposed Indian Removal by speaking against President Jackson's policy of Indian removal and relocation; a tangible demonstration of our strong committed relationship to one another. More recently, the State of Connecticut worked with Mohegan to ensure the return of our ancient burial grounds in Norwich and in Uncasville.

Our governments jointly further the goals of our state by contributing to all the local communities through governmental, charitable and educational programs. The Mohegan people are proud to share our history and educate about the first people of Connecticut. As Gladys Tantaquidgeon, our famous Medicine Woman said, "You can't hate someone you know a lot about." Native American month will further the education of all citizens in our rich cultural heritage to ensure that it endures.

HB 5054 which establishes November as Native American Month recognizes the unique legacy and cultural contributions of the first peoples of Connecticut. This bill memorializes our long, shared history of respectful cooperation. This bill honors our country's past, present and future indigenous people while we underscore the richness and depth of the American experience.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of our Mohegan people and wish you all the best as you work on behalf of all citizens of the State of Connecticut. Taput Ni (Thank you).

THE MOHEGAN TRIBE