

PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE

March 1, 2021

Steve Sigel, Executive Director
Garde Arts Center

Testimony Supporting SB 146

Dear Committee Members:

For three decades I have been privileged to be a neighbor of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe and the Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut in my capacity as Executive Director of the Garde Arts Center and as a neighbor and resident of New London.

I have witnessed many state investments in economic development in Southeastern Connecticut and throughout the State. We have all seen the largest of ventures fail to meet expectations, or simply choose to leave the State, sometimes just when tax benefits expire.

One thing can be said of our Tribes: they will never leave Connecticut for greener pastures. This has been their home before Connecticut existed, and will remain their home for countless generations.

The story of their survival against the brutality of forced colonization and the preservation of their rights by the Federal government obligates us to treasure them in our State and encourage and invest in their cultural legacy and prosperity.

That these suppressed peoples have persisted and grown over centuries to become an economic and cultural pillar of our State deserves our gratitude, protection and support. When we strengthen the Tribes we strengthen Connecticut, all the more so when we see the Mohegans and Mashantucket Pequots working together to protect the economy of the State we all call home.

There can be no better partners Connecticut can have in managing our evolving gaming industry, or our economic future. This bill provides us the opportunity to nurture that partnership.

Thank you for your support of this bill.