

Government Administration and Elections Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6040

AN ACT REQUIRING THE STATE COMMISSION ON CAPITOL PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION TO DEVELOP A PROCESS FOR ADDING STATUES TO THE STATE CAPITOL AND ESTABLISHING THE

Title: STATE HISTORICAL COMMISSION.

Vote Date: 2/14/2025

Vote Action: Vote to Draft

PH Date: 3/14/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Rep. Jason Rojas, 9th Dist.

Rep. Geraldo Reyes, 75th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

There has been a growing sentiment in the state that the public spaces of Connecticut's Capitol are underutilized as a resource to educate the state on its history. The last statue added to the state capitol was in 1987 and this legislation is seen by some as an opportunity to use the public space to teach individuals about the state and its history. This bill would seek to establish a process of adding statues to the capitol building and creating a state historical commission.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE: The substitute language added the State Historian as an ex officio member to the State Historical Commission. This was added at the request of the State Historian as it was thought that they could advise about statues. The language also added a designee of the Chief Court Administrator as a member of the commission at the behest of the Judicial Branch. This was added for the potential impact this legislation could have on judicial branch facilities.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

State of Connecticut Judicial Branch:

"We would respectfully request that a designee of the Chief Court Administrator be included as a member of the Commission because of the potential impact recommendations of the Commission would have on Judicial Branch facilities."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Latoya Cluff, Vice Chairwoman, Mashantucket Pequot Tribe:

For centuries public spaces in Connecticut have failed to represent the complete narrative of Connecticut's past. This bill commemorates symbols that reflect an inclusive and balanced history. We advocate for the relocation of the statue of John Mason because of his actions against the Pequot men, women, and children in 1637. We would like it to be part of an educational exhibit that tells the full story of his role in Connecticut history.

Jason Rojas, House Majority Leader, State of Connecticut:

The bill empowers the State Commission on Capitol Preservation and Restoration to establish a clear process for identifying and commissioning statues that represent the people and history of Connecticut. We have not added a statue since 1987 when Governor Grasso was added. We now have an opportunity to celebrate our history and see a storyboard around the perimeter of the building detailing our history in statues and medallions on our capitol building.

Cathy Osten, Senator, State of Connecticut:

It is important that we as a State and Governmental Institution recognize our past glories and successes but reckon with past tragedy. We must reflect upon and strengthen our relationship with the Native American tribes in the state. By removing the Statue of John Mason and including it as the part of an educational exhibit it would benefit tribal relations.

Andy Horowitz, Connecticut State Historian:

I have been proud to serve since 2023 as the Connecticut State Historian, it is appropriate and productive to have a State Historical Commission to advise the legislature about Capitol statues. It might be appropriate for the State Historical to serve as an ex officio member of the new State Historical Commission. The State Historian is selected by and from UConn's History Department and are respected by their professional peers and are a serious scholar.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed

Reported by: Pamela Bianca

Date: March 19, 2025