

# **Government Administration and Elections Committee**

## **HOUSE FAVORABLE REPORT**

**Bill No.:** HR-10

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE CULTURE AND HERITAGE OF TAÍNO

**Title:** DESCENDANTS IN THIS STATE.

**Vote Date:** 3/26/2025

**Vote Action:** House Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/21/2025

**File No.:** 697

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### **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Government Administration & Elections Committee

### **CO-SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Rep. Christopher Rosario, 128<sup>th</sup> Dist.  
Rep. Geraldo C. Reyes, 75<sup>th</sup> Dist.  
Rep. Aundre Bumgardner, 41<sup>st</sup> Dist.  
Rep. James Sanchez, 6<sup>th</sup> Dist.

### **REASONS FOR BILL:**

The Taino people are an indigenous group to the Greater Antilles Islands in the Caribbean. Puerto Rico had a large population of Taino on the island. Connecticut has one of the largest Puerto Rican populations in the Country and this resolution would recognize those residents of Connecticut with Taino heritage for their historical and cultural contributions to the state. This resolution would help bring awareness to Taino culture and heritage, especially in Connecticut.

### **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

None expressed.

### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

Representative Geraldo Reyes, Jr., Deputy Speaker Pro Tempore, Connecticut General Assembly,

Melvette Hill, Executive Director, The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity (CWCSEO),

**Megan Baker, Lead Asian American Pacific Islander Policy Analyst, CWCSEO,**  
**Thomas Nuccio, Children's Policy Analyst, CWCSEO,**  
**Werner Oyanadel, Latino and Puerto Rican Policy Director, CWCSEO,**

Connecticut has one of the largest Puerto Rican populations in the country at approximately 8.2% of Connecticut's total population. Recognizing Taino heritage is an acknowledgement of the historical and cultural roots of many of our state's residents and their effects on the state's economy, workforce, and civic life. Many Puerto Ricans have contributed across key industries such as healthcare, education, public service, and labor force business development. Their entrepreneurial spirit, dedication to public service, and labor force participation have strengthened local economies and enriched the cultural fabric of Connecticut. This recognition is not just about honoring the past but also acknowledging the ongoing contributions to the state's prosperity and future growth.

**Rafael Feliciano-Roman, President & CEO, ACCC Taino Learning Community**

The Taino Resurgence Movement has been essential in the efforts to reclaim and revitalize Taino identity, culture, and history through diligent education of the public, strengthening communal ties, and preservation of their Indigenous heritage. For the past three years, the Cultural Center has hosted Taino Remembrance Day on the second Monday in October, providing reflection, education, and celebration of Taino heritage. The establishment of the Taino Learning Community has fostered deep cultural learning and ensured the transmission of knowledge and traditions to future generations. The passage of this House Resolution would be a powerful affirmation of the contributions and enduring presence of Taino people in Connecticut and would support ongoing efforts to educate, celebrate, and preserve Taino heritage.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Tanya Rodriguez, Independent Researcher on Tainoism**

Tainoism is not a tribal lineage, it is a social movement born in the 1970s that uses shallow interpretations of DNA, pandering to pan-Indigenous symbolism, and preaching from recycled academic citations to fabricate the illusion of a continuous Indigenous people. Having previously participated in Taino spaces, I walked away when I realized the Taino identity is a well-constructed fantasy that is not grounded in any historically continuous tribal heritage, language, or land-based governance. The legitimacy of actual Native American nations is rooted in documented, intergenerational continuity, treaty history, and sovereign recognition. A similar situation occurred in Hawai'i where the Huna cult co-opted Hawaiian terminology and belief systems to build a profitable, fraudulent industry under the guise of Indigenous authenticity. Huna used spiritual theater, academic closed-loop citation-stacking, and outsider validation to generate influence and credibility, practices similar to those of Tainoism are using. Today, Huna is universally denounced by native Hawaiians as a harmful misrepresentation of their culture. The legitimization of Tainoism as a tribal entity, cultural heritage, or Indigenous category, would endorse an identity fabricated in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, validate race-shifting rooted in self-identification, and undermine the legitimacy of the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan tribes. The harm from Tainoism does not come from those drawn into it, they are typically acting in good faith, and many are seeking healing, identity, and connection. The harm of Tainoism comes from the gift designed to exploit the members for institutional legitimacy and political access. Rejecting the recognition of

Tainoism is not an act of erasure but an act of protection for the sovereign Indigenous peoples of Connecticut.

**Reported by: Aston Foley**

**Date: 4/02/2025**