

Government Administration and Elections Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SJ-16

RESOLUTION CONDEMNING THE PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY OF
HARTFORD OF 1638 THAT SOUGHT TO ERADICATE THE PEQUOT

Title: CULTURAL IDENTITY.

Vote Date: 3/26/2025

Vote Action: Vote to Draft

PH Date: 3/14/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee
Sen. Catherine A. Osten 19th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

The Connecticut Colony in 1637 engaged in the complex conflict known as the Pequot War. The Connecticut Colony signed a treaty with the Pequot that confiscated their lands, condemned them to death and slavery, and forbid them to use their name of Pequot. There has been a growing demand to look at the previous atrocities that the State of Connecticut has committed and acknowledge the wrongdoing. The modern State of Connecticut is seen as the inheritor of the atrocities made by the Connecticut Colony. This resolution would seek to acknowledge the role that Connecticut played in atrocities committed against the Pequot people. This would help strengthen the relationship with the Pequot tribes.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language removed references to the Mohegan and the Narragansett Tribes. This change was made to continue having the conversation surrounding the treaty of Hartford at the input of a wide variety of stakeholders.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Cathy Osten, Senator, 19th District:

It is important that we as a State and Government, condemn and recognize the actions introduced by the Treat of Hartford of 1638. The treaty was signed to end the Pequot war and exterminate the Pequot cultural identity. This resolution benefits Connecticut Tribal relations and attempts to right wrongs of many before us.

Latoya, Cluff, Vice Chairwoman, Mashantucket Pequot Tribe:

This is a long-overdue condemnation of the genocidal provisions of the 1638 Treaty. The treaty formalized the attempted eradication of the Pequot people. The treaty stripped us of our lands, sold us into slavery, forbade us from gathering, and even outlawed the name Pequot. Despite all these efforts, we endured. The fact we are here today is a testament to our resilience. We have back our lands, our culture, and we contribute to Connecticut's economy. Passage would be a statement of moral clarity and an affirmation of the partnership between the State of Connecticut and the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation.

Andy Horowitz, Connecticut State Historian:

As Connecticut State Historian, it is my responsibility to provide information and advice to members of the government at all levels. Regarding SJ 16, the Pequot war was a complex historical process that should not be over simplified. The treaty confiscated the Pequots' land, condemned them either to death or slavery and declared that the Pequots shall no more be called Pequots. As you consider this resolution and why it may be important to condemn a nearly four-centuries old treaty, please read the recommendations in my testimony.

David Simon, Asst. Dean for Graduate Education, Yale University:

I have been Director of Yale's Genocide Studies Program and a board member of Voices of Hope that promotes Holocaust and genocide education. The Genocide Convention (formally the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide) centrally matches closely the definition to what the Treaty of Hartford commanded. We have a responsibility to acknowledge the complicated past in our own history.

Jennifer Kiku Langford McDona:

I live in Killingly and did not know about the Pequot War until being involved in the native mascot issue in Killingly in 2019. People owe it to the Indigenous people of Connecticut to learn their histories accurately and understand how this country's colonization continues to negatively impact their lives.

Judy Wyman:

As a teacher at the University of Hartford and co-chair of the Amplifying Indigenous Voices Affinity Network, I seek to help right the wrongs committed by my ancestors. It is common knowledge that the U.S. federal and state governments stole Indigenous lands and sought to destroy Indigenous communities, cultures, and traditions through violence, unjust laws, and policies. The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 and the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 have been efforts to reduce the negative practices against indigenous peoples. By supporting this bill Connecticut has a chance to continue the trend of reversing these practices.

Glenn Mitoma:

As a faculty member in Human Rights at Columbia University, I teach a course on genocide. Previously I served on the Connecticut Holocaust and Genocide Studies Advisory committee. The Treaty of Hartford is a dark stain on Connecticut history that undermines relations with our Tribal neighbors. By officially condemning and rejecting the genocidal logic of the treaty, that can redress a 378-year-old wrong. The bill signals the General Assembly's support of our sovereign partners and neighbors. We need to support a broader educational effort in our classrooms and communities to ensure an accurate understanding of this state.

CJ:

With over 500 federally recognized indigenous nations we must move forward from the centuries of genocidal programs. Removing policies, such as the Treaty of Hartford of 1638, are vital in restoring the territories and cultural of indigenous people.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed.

Reported by: Pamela Bianca

Date: March 27, 2025