

*Chief Sachem's Office*

# *Narragansett Indian Tribe*

1-401-364-1100 1-800-287-4225

Fax (401) 364-1104

JDD - 711

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **NARRAGANSETT INDIAN TRIBE OPPOSES STATE RECOGNITION OF AN INDIAN TRIBE SOLELY BY LEGISLATIVE ACTION**

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND – The Narragansett Indian Tribe opposes recognition by the State of Rhode Island of any Indian group, or tribe, absent a comprehensive study that definitively finds that the Indian group, or tribe, has continually existed as a tribal nation and has continually acted as a government with authority over its members within the State of Rhode Island. This should not occur without a thoroughly documented petition by the tribe, or group, that is reviewed by the State of Rhode Island acknowledging that there is adequate historical, anthropological, and genealogical evidence to grant recognition.

Merely having tribal members living in Rhode Island does not meet this test. There are many people from other Tribes living in Rhode Island, that does not make them a community worthy of acknowledging them as a government.

Currently, two bills have been introduced in the House of Representatives. The first, 2023-H 5020 would establish a process by which an Indian group, or community, could be recognized as a tribe. The second, 2023-H 5021 ignores that process and by legislative fiat would grant recognition by the State of Rhode Island to the Seaconke Wampanoag Tribe.

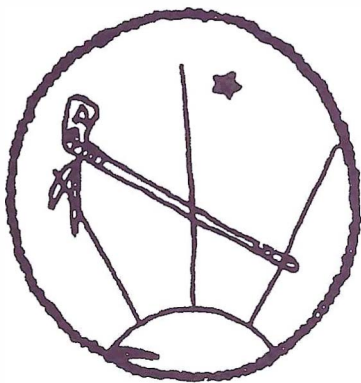
After decades of research, documentation and review the Narragansett Tribe was federally acknowledged and recognized by the United States as an Indian Nation. (*See*, 48 Fed. Reg. 6177-78, Feb. 10, 1983). The Narragansett Tribe is the only federally recognized and acknowledged Indian tribe in the State of Rhode Island. The findings and conclusions of its federal acknowledgment were that the Narragansett Indian Tribe “in aboriginal times, inhabited the area which is today the state of Rhode Island.”

House Bill 2023-H 5020 more closely tracks the process used by the Federal government to acknowledge a Tribe. While 2023-H 5021 falls far short of requiring any substantive review.

Chief Sachem Anthony Dean Stanton of the Narragansett Indian Tribe states - “No tribal group, or community, should be recognized absent a review by qualified experts of a petition containing sufficient historical, anthropological and genealogical evidence warranting recognition.”

*P.O. Box 1354 • 4533 South County Trail • Charlestown • Rhode Island 02813*

*This institution is an equal opportunity Employer/Provider*



# *Narragansett Indian Tribe*

1-401-364-1100 1-800-287-4225

Fax (401) 364-1104

TDD - 711

## *Chief Sachem's Office*

Chief Stanton further questions "Why would the State of Rhode Island, without review by experts, consider legislation that grants recognition to a single group, while at the same time, consider a second bill that establishes a recognition process? The State of Rhode Island has never acknowledged the Narragansett Tribe but has historically opposed the Tribe's exercise of its governmental powers."

Please contact John F. Killoy, Jr. at 401-792-9090 x 5 or [jkilloy@killoylaw.com](mailto:jkilloy@killoylaw.com) with any questions.