

City Of Holyoke

RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INDIGENOUS

PEOPLES DAY IN HOLYOKE

WHEREAS, Columbus Day has been celebrated unofficially since the early 18th century, and was officially made a federal holiday in 1937 to be celebrated on the second Monday of October, with M.G.L. Part I, Title I, chapter 4, section 7, clause 18 setting aside the second Monday of October as a Massachusetts state holiday, and M.G.L. Part I, Title II, chapter 6, section 12V providing that the Governor declare that day to be Columbus Day; and

WHEREAS, Columbus Day commemorates the landing of Christopher Columbus in the Americas specifically on the Caribbean islands of The Bahamas on October 12, 1492 and, later, on Hispaniola (present-day countries of the Dominican Republic and Haiti); and

WHEREAS, the first voyage of Columbus to the Americas initiated the transatlantic slave trade, journal entries from Columbus show his desire to enslave the Indigenous populations of the Caribbean, and he subsequently imprisoned and transported many hundreds of people to this end, including trafficking women and girls as young as 9; and

WHEREAS, Columbus' second voyage of 1493 was one of conquest, wherein seventeen ships were led by him to the New World, and his governorship of the Caribbean instituted systematic policies of slavery and extermination of Indigenous populations, especially the Taino/Arawak people whose population was reduced from approximately 8 million to 100,000 during Columbus' reign, being further reduced by the continuation of his policies until near-extinction in 1542; and

WHEREAS, the example of the Taino/Arawak people is merely indicative of the policies of Columbus and his men, and all told millions of Indigenous persons were exterminated in the Caribbean Basin alone; and

WHEREAS, though the introduction of European diseases may account for some of these deaths, starvation and overt extermination policies were mostly to blame, and thus these atrocities cannot be reasonably attributed to forces outside of the control of European colonialists; and

WHEREAS, the devastation of Indigenous populations would lead to the kidnapping, deaths, and enslavement of at least 10-12 million African people, and the profound effects of the transatlantic slave trade and African diaspora continue to be felt to the present day; and

WHEREAS, the cultures of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas are worthy of being promoted, their history is rich, diverse, and worthy of celebration, and the actions and policies of European colonizers of the Americas actively destroyed and suppressed parts of those cultures; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous Peoples of the lands that would later become known as the Americas have occupied these lands since time immemorial;

And WHEREAS, the City of Holyoke, Massachusetts (the “City”) has a history of opposing racism, this racism serving to perpetuate high rates of Indigenous poverty and leading to inequities in health, education, and housing; and

WHEREAS, the City wishes to honor our nation's Indigenous roots, history and contributions; and

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia, States of Alaska, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Vermont, Wisconsin, and localities including Somerville MA, Cambridge MA, Brookline MA, Marblehead MA, Northampton MA, Amherst MA, Easthampton MA, Portland ME, Los Angeles CA, San Francisco CA, Denver CO, Portland OR, Portland ME, Seattle WA, Columbus OH and many more have adopted Indigenous Peoples Day as a counter-celebration in lieu of Columbus Day, to promote Indigenous cultures and commemorate the history of Indigenous Peoples; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous Peoples Day was first proposed in Geneva in 1977 by a delegation of Native Nations to the United Nations-sponsored International Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations in the Americas; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, representatives from 120 Indigenous nations at the First Continental Conference on 500 Years of Indian Resistance unanimously passed a resolution to transform Columbus Day into an occasion to strengthen the process of continental unity and struggle towards liberation, and thereby use the occasion to reveal a more accurate historical record.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL VOTES AS FOLLOWS:

To establish that the second Monday of October henceforth be commemorated as Indigenous Peoples Day in Holyoke rather than Columbus Day, in recognition of the position of Indigenous Peoples as native to these lands, and the suffering they faced during and since the European conquest,

Be it further resolved that the people of Holyoke observe Indigenous Peoples Day by reflecting upon the dispossession of the homelands and villages of the Pocumtuck, Nipmuc, and other Indigenous people of this region who lived here for millennia prior to the arrival of European settlers, and upon the history of the other Indigenous Peoples who have lived in Holyoke, and to celebrate the survival of Indigenous Peoples against all odds, as well as to celebrate the thriving cultures and values that Indigenous Peoples have brought and continue to bring to our City and the wider community, and to reflect on the meanings, honor, and celebrate the names and language that are utilized for the places in our city and community.

Be it further resolved that Holyoke shall include Indigenous representation from the City inasmuch as possible and will also seek representation from Indigenous organizations in the area as well as other Holyoke community representation from segments of the community such as citizens, schools, non-profit organizations and businesses,

Be it further resolved the City Council encourages the Holyoke Public Schools to observe this day, with appropriate exercises and instruction in all schools around the time of Indigenous Peoples Day, to the end that the culture, history and diversity of Indigenous Peoples be celebrated and perpetuated,

Be it further resolved City of Council encourages businesses, organizations, and public institutions to recognize and observe Indigenous Peoples Day, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Clerk shall ensure that the Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, Mashpee Wampanoag Indian Tribal Council, the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), the Nipmuc Nation Tribal Council (including the Hassanamisco and Natick), the Assonet Band of Wampanoags, the Chappaquiddick Wampanoags, the Chaubunagungamaug Nipmuc, the Pocasset Wampanoag, the Herring Pond Wampanoag, and the Seaconke Wampanoag, all of which include descendants of those people indigenous to Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Commission of Indian Affairs, North American Indian Center of Boston, IndigenousPeoplesDayMA.org, United American Indians of New England, Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness, as well as the Holyoke School Committee and The Daily Hampshire Gazette, The Springfield Republican, The Holyoke Sun, receive a suitably endorsed copy of this Resolution.

Or take any action relative thereto.