

## CITY OF NEWBURYPORT



## IN CITY COUNCIL

**ORDERED:**

February 27, 2023

**Resolution in Support of Changing the State Flag & Seal of Massachusetts**

**Whereas** the history of the Commonwealth is replete with instances of conflict between the European Colonists and the Native Nations of the region, who first extended the hand of friendship to the Colonists on their shores in 1620, and helped them to survive starvation during the settlers' first winters on their land;

**Whereas** members of the Native Nation for whom the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is named were ambushed and killed by Myles Standish, first commander of the Plymouth Colony, in April of 1623, barely two years after the Pilgrims arrived on their shores;

**Whereas** the naked Colonial broadsword brandished above the head of the Native man on the Massachusetts State Flag and Seal is modeled after Myles Standish's own broadsword, borrowed for that purpose from the Pilgrim Hall in Plymouth by the illustrator Edmund Garrett in 1884;

**Whereas** the belt binding the Native's cloak on the Flag and Seal is modeled after a belt worn by Metacomet, known to the English as King Philip, who was among the Wampanoag leaders who resorted to a mutually destructive war in 1675-76 in defense of Native lands against Colonial encroachment;

**Whereas** the proportions of the body of the Native man in the Flag and Seal were modeled from a Native skeleton kept in Winthrop, the bow modeled after a bow taken from a Native man shot and killed by a colonist in Sudbury in 1665, and his facial features taken from a photograph of an Ojibwe chief from Great Falls, Montana, considered by the illustrator to be a "fine specimen of an Indian," though not from Massachusetts;

**Whereas** the history of relations between Massachusetts since Colonial times and the Native Nations who continue to live within its borders includes the forced internment of thousands of so-called "praying Indians" on Deer Island, in Boston Harbor, where they died by the hundreds of exposure in 1675, their subsequent enslavement in Boston, Bermuda, and the Caribbean Islands, the offering of 40 pounds sterling as bounty for the scalps of Native men, women and children in Massachusetts beginning in 1686, increased to 100 pounds sterling for the scalps of Native adult males by 1722, half that amount for Native women and children;

**Whereas** Native Americans were legally prohibited from even stepping foot into Boston from 1675 until 2004, when that law was finally repealed;

**Whereas** the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landing of the colonists at Plymouth Plantation in the year 2020, afforded every citizen of the Commonwealth a chance to reflect upon this history and come to an awareness of the possibility of a better relationship between the descendants of Colonial immigrants and the Native Nations of the Commonwealth;

**Whereas** Native Americans have long suffered the many abuses of racism, the appropriation of their symbols for public schools and sports teams, the loss of their ancestral lands and the encroachment of their cultural lifeways;

**Whereas** the area now known as the City of Newburyport shares a rich Native history with modern tribal Nations like the Massachusett, the Mi'kmaq, the Pennacook and the Wabanaki, who inhabited this area for thousands of years before the first colonial settlers arrived in 1635;

Now, therefore, **BE IT RESOLVED** that the City of Newburyport hereby adopts this resolution in support of the work of the Special Commission Relative to the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth, established by a Resolve of the General Court in 2021 and appointed by the Governor to recommend changes to the current flag and seal of Massachusetts, and **in support of a new seal and motto for the Commonwealth** that may better reflect our aspirations for harmonious and respectful relations between all people who now call Massachusetts home. The city clerk shall forward a copy of this resolution to Sen. Marc Pacheco and Rep. Antonio Cabral, who serve as members of the Special Commission on the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth, and to Sen. Bruce Tarr and Rep. Dawne Shand with the request that they support the work of the aforementioned Special Commission and advocate for a new flag and seal for the Commonwealth.

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Councillor Heather L. Shand

**In City Council February 27, 2023:**

Motion refer to General Government by Councillor Khan, seconded by Councillor Cameron. Roll call vote. 9 yes, 2 no (JM, SZ). Motion passes.