

2021 -- H 5385

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- RECOGNITION OF NATIVE  
AMERICAN TRIBES

Introduced By: Representatives Vella-Wilkinson, Williams, Kazarian, Morales,  
Ruggiero, Donovan, and Caldwell

Date Introduced: February 05, 2021

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 42 of the General Laws entitled "STATE AFFAIRS AND  
2 GOVERNMENT" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 160

4 RECOGNITION OF NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES

5 **42-160-1. Seaconke Wampanoag tribe.**

6 (a) The state of Rhode Island officially recognizes the Seaconke Wampanoag tribe as a  
7 native American Indian tribe for the limited purpose of assisting this tribe in establishing eligibility  
8 for federal education, job training, and housing benefits and federal protection for the sale of  
9 artwork; qualifying for public and private grants for which Indian tribes or groups, or members  
10 thereof, may be eligible; protecting the ability of this tribe and their members to engage in  
11 traditional religious practices and ceremonies; preserving and protecting burial sites and artifacts;  
12 and ensuring that handicrafts made by tribal members may be sold as "Indian made."

13 (b) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed or interpreted as conferring recognition for  
14 any purpose except as expressly stated in subsection (a) of this section, or as evidence that a tribe  
15 has a state compact or state approval for the purposes of the federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act,  
16 25 U.S.C. § 2701 et seq. The limited state recognition accorded to this tribe named in subsection  
17 (a) of this section, shall not be construed to affect in any way a tribe or group's case for federal  
18 recognition, shall not confer the right of any tribe, group or individual to conduct gambling of any

1 [kind or to engage in the sale of motor fuels or tobacco and shall not constitute an acknowledgement](#)  
2 [of any claim by any tribe, group, or individual to any ancestral, tribal or other public or private](#)  
3 [lands.](#)

4 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- RECOGNITION OF NATIVE  
AMERICAN TRIBES

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1           This act would officially recognize the Seaconke Wampanoag tribe for the limited purposes  
2 of assisting in establishing eligibility for federal benefits and to protect the tribe in preserving  
3 artifacts, ceremonies and practices.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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