



Legislative Testimony
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**Written Testimony Supporting House Resolution 8, A Resolution
Recognizing That All Land in Connecticut Was Once Native American
Territory**

Senator Flexer, Representative Blumenthal, Ranking Members Sampson and Mastrofrancesco, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

My name is Jess Zaccagnino, and I am the policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am writing to testify in strong support of House Resolution 8, A Resolution Recognizing That All Land in Connecticut Was Once Native American Territory.

The ACLU-CT is committed to defending the rights of Native Americans to be free from discrimination and governmental abuse of power. Native Americans have suffered discrimination and injustice at the hands of the government since this country's founding, yet contemporary discussions of civil rights all too often overlook the rights of Native Americans. Native American communities are among the most impoverished in the nation, and the stigma and intergenerational trauma of past discrimination regularly rears its head in the spheres of public health, education, and juvenile justice.¹ To even begin to reckon with the vast harm that this state has wrought on Native Americans and tribes like the Mohegans, the Pequots, and the Quinnipiacs, the government must formally recognize that the land that Connecticut occupies all was originally indigenous land.² Land acknowledgements are a powerful

¹ See, e.g., Mary G. Findling, *Discrimination in the United States: Experiences of Native Americans*, 54 HEALTH SERV. RES. 1431 (2019), <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31657013/>.

² Jordan Nathaniel Fenster, *UConn Map Traces History of Native American Land in Connecticut*, CT INSIDER (Oct. 18, 2021), <https://www.ctinsider.com/news/article/UConn-map-traces-history-of-Native-American-land-16541709.php>.

way to engage, not erase, this state's history and move towards a better and more inclusive future for all people in Connecticut. The ACLU-CT strongly supports House Resolution 8, and encourages this Committee to do the same.