

## CLOSING STATEMENT

There was a time in our history when the Native people of this country played an instrumental role in helping American troops to win the Revolutionary war.

But later, when it came to relations between the new states of America and the Indian nations, our Founding Fathers had the wisdom to foresee that the Federal government would be best suited to conduct relations with the sovereign tribes.

Today, most of the testimony we have received has come from parties who reside in the State of Connecticut, and I believe the parties have painted a very clear picture of their concerns.

However, there are other vantage points that perhaps have not been so clearly registered for the record today.

In 1637, there was a massacre in the State of Connecticut in which over 600 Indian men, women and children were killed.

From the testimony we have received today, it would seem that that war is still going on – although today it is with genealogists, archaeologists and historians that state and local governments wish to

arm themselves with to fight the recognition of the Native people who have always resided there.

In the 1600's, the State of Connecticut established five reservations for the Native people of that area, and those reservations continue to this day. Some have said that these reservations were only established to address the conditions of poverty that plagued the Native people, but it interesting to note that no reservations were created for other people in Connecticut suffering the conditions of poverty.

No, I think it can be safely said that the State of Connecticut has recognized the Indian people of their state for now almost 400 years.

There was a time in the history of that State when the Pequots were the economic center of commerce and trade.

Today, the Mashantucket Pequots and the Mohegans have become a mighty economic engine in the State – together they have made payments to the State of Connecticut of approximately 2.2 billion dollars over the past nine years – and those monies have in turn been made available to communities across the State.

They have provided jobs and employment when companies like

Electric Boat were forced to lay off hundreds of workers.

So it is a bit difficult to understand why there is such resistance in the State of Connecticut to the efforts of the Native tribes to secure Federal recognition of their status that the State has recognized for nearly 400 years.

There are other areas in the State of Connecticut that remain economically depressed.

These parties were not represented here today, but I have been told that they do not share the animus against the recognition of tribal groups that has been expressed here today.

So I conclude with the observation with which I began – we had very wise people in our Founding Fathers – who somehow foresaw this tension in relationships and decided to impose the national government into the mixture to preserve peace and harmony.

I hope that as their successors in office, we in the Congress can carry out the mission with which they have charged us, and find a way to bring an end to the wars against Indians.