

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

AN ACT

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

Introduced By: Senators Quezada, Thompson, Kallman, Acosta, Valverde, Mack, Raptakis, Appollonio, Euer, and Famiglietti
Date Introduced: February 06, 2026

Referred To: Senate Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs

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:

CHAPTER 169

RECOGNITION OF NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES

42-169-1. 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. ch. 29 § 2701 et seq. The limited state recognition accorded to this tribe named in
17 subsection (a) of this section, shall not be construed to affect in any way a tribe's or group's case
18 for federal recognition, shall not confer the right of any tribe, group or individual to conduct

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

- 1 This act would recognize the Seaconke Wampanoag tribe as a Native American Indian
- 2 tribe for the limited purpose of assisting this tribe in establishing eligibility for federal benefits and
- 3 privileges.
- 4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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