THE SPECIAL COMMISSION RELATIVE TO THE SEAL AND MOTTO OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

November 15, 2023

Final Report

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIRS

The current seal and motto of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts were last updated in 1898. Secretary of the Commonwealth William M. Olin began the process in 1894, in consultation with a small group of men that included the seal's designer, Edmund Garrett, and Professor F. W. Putnam. Most of the deliberations took place inside the State House, where Garrett and others reviewed sketches of skeletons held at the Peabody Museum at Harvard, a collection of clothing and portraits of Indigenous men from the Bureau of Ethnography in Washington D.C., and a collection of broadswords from the 17th century. In his artist's statement, Garrett recalled that "the head is a portrait of a Chippewa or Ojibwa Indian called Es Sence or Little Shell," while the body was based on a "skeleton [that] was found at Winthrop."

Garrett acknowledged that not everyone agreed on the selection of an Indigenous man in the seal. "During the progress of the work of preparing the seal," he noted, "many people objected that an Indian did not and should not stand for the state of Massachusetts. That the reputation of the Indian is bad in our country may not be denied, and the writer, who knows but little about him, cannot undertake his defense."

Garrett's words capture the ways by which a small group of men, working in private and emboldened by the prejudices of their time, shaped a seal that now appears on official documents, public buildings, uniforms, and the flag of a state which has—and will always—play a central role in Americans' understanding of democracy and liberty.

As co-chairs of the Special Commission, we thank the Commonwealth and our colleagues for taking a different path. For nearly two years, the members of the Commission have operated in public, as required by law through our online meetings. We chose balance in our leadership, starting with the selection of co-chairs and vice-chairs to ensure that representatives of Native tribes held positions equal to non-Native members. Together, we reckoned with a history that is painful and too often marginalized from public narratives about our state. We educated ourselves on the

histories and usages of state seals, looking to other states for guidance and best practices. We sought out public opinion, choosing to go beyond our charge in order to provide the people of Massachusetts with a voice in our recommendations. We acknowledged, time and again, that our efforts were only possible due to the decades of work led by activists including the late John Peters, known as Slow Turtle, and former State Representative Byron Rushing.

Perhaps most significantly, the Commission conducted its business with an emphasis on respectful, inclusive dialogue. We did not always agree, but we consistently agreed to listen to each other. In an era of deep division and rampant misinformation, we sought to represent our viewpoints and our communities with care and authenticity. Our membership included representatives of Native communities, legislators, subject matter experts, veterans, directors of cultural institutions, archivists, and artists. Charged with exploring the origins and interpretations of these ubiquitous public symbols, we prioritized collaboration over consensus, believing that the collection of information was the best way in which to fulfill the request of our enabling legislation.

This report seeks to sustain that approach by presenting our recommendations and explaining the range of views that shaped these recommendations. We believe the information contained herein clears the way for the challenging decisions required to change the seal and motto of the Commonwealth.

In closing, we wish to thank the many Massachusetts residents from different backgrounds who have reached out to the Commission in support of this work, with constructive criticism, questions, dissenting opinions, and suggestions. We are particularly grateful to educators and students who have sent in their ideas and encouragement, to the 79 Massachusetts communities that have voted to support this Commission’s work, to Kate Miller for her contributions to the Commission’s proceedings; and to Governor Healey and the Legislature for their trust and patience.

Sincerely,
Brian Boyles and Brian Moskwetah Weeden, Co-Chairs,
Michael Comeau and, Brittney Peauwe Wunnepog Walley, Co-Vice Chairs

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION

1. **Massachusetts should create a new design for the seal and motto of the Commonwealth.** The current seal and motto do not reflect and embody the historic and contemporary commitments of the commonwealth to peace, justice, liberty, and equality and to spreading the opportunities and advantages of education. As required by the enabling legislation, the Commission dedicated significant time to understanding the origins of the current seal and motto. Our deliberations produced a succinct history of the precedents and usages of the current seal and motto, including the process by which they were last updated in 1898. That earlier process was led by a small group of individuals, operating without transparency, and excluding almost all residents of the commonwealth. Members of that group expressed hostile views about Indigenous people even as they appropriated images of Indigenous people without soliciting input or participation from Indigenous residents. The result of that earlier process is a seal and motto that fall short of the commitments of the Commonwealth.

   Commission members brought to light the concerns of many residents regarding the harm and misunderstanding caused by the current seal and motto. Through the deliberations of the full Commission and its History and Usages subcommittee, the Commission has identified features that are harmful and/or misunderstood by the citizens of the Commonwealth. These include the heraldic charge, or Indigenous figure, which was designed without input from Indigenous residents and does not accurately reflect the history of Indigenous people in Massachusetts; the sword in the crest, positioned above that figure, which can be misunderstood to represent a celebration of the history of violence perpetuated by settlers against Indigenous populations; and the promises of the motto, which do not reflect the experiences of Indigenous people.

2. **Massachusetts should incorporate symbols and terms in a new seal and motto that are aspirational and inclusive of the diverse perspectives, histories and experiences of Massachusetts residents.** Following the decision to call for a new design, the Commission dedicated significant time and resources to identifying symbols and terms that could be included in a new seal and motto. Given the many images associated with Massachusetts, and the diverse interpretations of Commission members, these deliberations presented multiple opportunities for education and an appreciation of the challenges inherent in narrowing down all that Massachusetts represents to images and words that would reflect the commonwealth's many communities. The collection of input and views about a new seal and motto included the views expressed during Commission meetings, the commissioning of a statewide survey, and the input sent to the Commission by members of the public.

   The Commission's Research & Design Subcommittee learned about the best practices in seal and motto design, and about the processes conducted in other states as part of the redesign of seals and state flags. In many cases, states have separated the seal and the flag. They serve distinct purposes, with the best flags being easily rendered and replicated.

   Members expressed views on a variety of symbols, including those official symbols, such as the state bird (chickadee), flower (mayflower), and state fish (cod). These discussions revealed differences of interpretation that the Commission found worth consideration. For example, the mayflower connects back to the colonial era and the Pilgrims, whose actions included the forced displacement of Indigenous people. The cranberry, one Commission member noted, conjures mixed feelings among some Indigenous residents due to its relationship to colonialism.

The Commission appreciated the views of several of its Indigenous members who expressed support for keeping an Indigenous figure in the heraldic charge as a way to prevent additional erasure of their communities from the official history and iconography of the commonwealth. In addition, the Commission heard from members who believed that any human figure, regardless of their background, would be inherently exclusive, limiting the representation on the seal to a specific group or gender. Others expressed the view that a coat of arms is a Eurocentric concept which does not represent the breadth of populations in the commonwealth, and that the placement of an Indigenous person within such a concept is disrespectful of Indigenous culture and the experience of colonialism.

The Commission respects the different views on Indigenous representation in any new seal and recommends that the legislature prioritizes Indigenous participation in future decision-making about the seal and motto.

The Commission conducted two surveys of its members to compile a list of appropriate categories for potential symbols that could serve as the basis for a new design for the seal:

- Flora (examples: eastern white pine, elm tree, cranberries)
- Fauna (examples: chickadee, cod, feather, turkey)
- Geographic feature (examples: ocean, hills, coastline, state shape)

Commission members compiled a list of appropriate terms that could be included in a new motto:

- Commonwealth
- For the common good
- Equality
- Hope

- Liberty
- Names of Massachusetts tribal nations
- Peace
- Reciprocity

Input from Public Survey

From the outset of its work, the Commission understood that the current seal and motto are highly visible and used in a multitude of ways throughout the Commonwealth, in particular on the state flag, which serves as a banner for our service members in the armed forces. While the solicitation of public input was not included in the original legislation, the Commission felt strongly that a survey of the public would strengthen its recommendations and give legislators ample information for future decision-making.

In May 2023, the Commission contracted with the Center for Survey Research at the University of Massachusetts Boston (CSR) to create a survey that would inform the Commission on how residents view the seal and motto and to gather public input that represents the diversity of communities and perspectives in the Commonwealth.

Four members of the Commission–two Indigenous members and two non-Indigenous members, sustaining the Commission's equitable approach to leadership–advised CSR on the survey design. The survey included questions about information sources and how closely respondents followed news about the redesign; questions about the potential features in a new state seal; questions about the terms and phrases respondents would like to see in a new motto; and demographic questions (race, ethnicity, age, gender, length of time living in Massachusetts, and education level). The paper version of the survey was available in English and Spanish. The survey was set up in Qualtrics, a software

application for online data collection, and made available in eight languages – English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Khmer, Haitian Creole, and Russian.

The survey data were collected by CSR in August and September of 2023. CSR conducted a survey mailed to a random sample of 2,100 households in Massachusetts, and created a public survey URL link to a web-based version of the survey. This link to the web survey was distributed among listservs maintained by multiple Native American communities in Massachusetts and shared by the Commission via a press release. In addition to the statewide survey, CSR conducted seven small group discussions via Zoom with members of Indigenous communities in Massachusetts and other Massachusetts residents to gather additional qualitative data for this report. A total of 341 (16.72%) households completed the survey. A total of 10,433 respondents accessed the public online survey.

The full survey report is attached to this report. The report from CSR includes ample analysis of the responses. This information should serve to inform the decisions of the Legislature in the creation of a new seal and motto. As the CSR team notes, the right whale, the coast or shoreline, the shape of the state, and cranberries received the highest support from respondents, while the most popular terms in a new motto were Peace, Equality, Justice, and Liberty.

The survey also reflects the nuances and differences in interpretation of the seal, motto, state flag, and the varying degrees of support for changing these public symbols. The Commission notes that the Public Access Survey garnered participation by several groups (Black/African, Hispanic, Asian) that was disproportionate to the population of Massachusetts. The Commission feels strongly that any further iteration of the decision-making process regarding the seal and motto strive to include representation by members of these groups.

The Commission acknowledges an important choice for any new seal: How to retain representation of Native people in the seal and motto if the current figure is removed from the current seal? The majority of Native respondents to the public survey indicated a preference for keeping a figure on the seal. Several members of the Commission spoke to the concern of erasing Native people from the public record. This challenge will need to be addressed in the final design of a state seal and motto, and the Legislature should ensure Native representation in that process.

3. **A new seal should be commissioned through a public request for proposals that seeks a professional designer.** The Secretary of the Commonwealth should issue a request for proposals for a new seal based on the symbols and terms proposed by the Commission. The request would be for two initial sketches, three rounds of revision, and a purchase by the Commonwealth of the final version. A working group reporting to the Secretary of the Commonwealth will be responsible for validation, vetting, socializing, and providing actionable and concise feedback in order to stay within scope. The Commission recommends that the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office receives an appropriation to support this work.

4. **Massachusetts should dedicate more resources to educating the public about the Indigenous history and cultures of Massachusetts, the history and usages of the current seal and motto, the harm inflicted by the current seal and motto, and the efforts to change the seal and motto.** We must take this unique opportunity to create mechanisms for all of our residents to understand how our current symbols were adopted, what they mean to us today, and how and why some of these symbols are seen as inherently harmful by the Indigenous residents of the Commonwealth. Any successful educational program is built on a foundation of clearly articulated objectives for learning and a curriculum developed based on the essential questions and specific content areas that will

facilitate the achievement of those objectives. A framework included in this report reflects the Commission's recommendations for the overarching goals and key content areas of the educational programs, with these learning objectives:

a. Understand the historical underpinnings of seals, mottos, and flags and how they influence us today.
b. Learn about local Native history and the effects of colonization on Native communities from a Native perspective.
c. Explore the history and origins of the symbols and iconography of the current seal and motto and how they may be perceived differently over time and from different perspectives.

5. **An Advisory Commission reporting to the Secretary of the Commonwealth should be established to carry forward the Commission's recommendations to the completion of a new seal and motto.** The work of the Commission represents an important step in a journey that began decades ago, through the leadership of activists, including the late John Peters, also known as Slow Turtle, and former state representative Byron Rushing. We were fortunate to partner with our colleagues to complete this stage in that journey.

   The next group should be representative of the diversity, expertise and backgrounds of the people of Massachusetts. Membership in this working group should include the Secretary of the Commonwealth, who would also serve as Co-Chair along with a Co-Chair from an Indigenous tribal government, and include the leadership of the Indigenous tribal governments within Massachusetts, representatives from the Department of Early Education and Care, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (K-12), Department of Higher Education, the Adjutant General of the Massachusetts National Guard, the House and Senate Chairs of State Administration, the House and Senate Minority Leaders, the executive directors (or their designees) of the Massachusetts Commission on

Indian Affairs, the Massachusetts Office on Disability, Mass Humanities, Massachusetts Historical Commission, and Mass Cultural Council. In addition, the Commission emphasizes the need for educators and artists to be among the subject matter experts appointed by the Governor and/or the Secretary of the Commonwealth. The Advisory Commission would not exceed 19 members and would appoint a project coordinator to assist with the work. The work remaining includes:

- Final selection of symbols and terms for the new motto
- Selection of a seal designer and supervision of design
- Determination of relationship between seal and flag
- Creation of a new state flag
- Soliciting cost estimates for changing the seal and flag across the Commonwealth
- Ongoing review of the seal, motto, and flag to ensure that these symbols continue to represent the values and aspirations of the residents of the Commonwealth.

This body should be provided with a budget to carry out these duties. These duties will require substantial time and effort, and should be expected to be ongoing until a new seal and motto replace the current seal and motto. Finally, the Secretary of the Commonwealth should consider ways to institutionalize a review of the seal and motto so that future generations can ensure that the values and aspirations of Massachusetts are reflected in these public symbols.

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK 2021-2023

The Special Commission Relative to the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth was established in Chapter 2 of the Resolves of 2020, approved by Governor Charlie Baker on January 11, 2021 (see Attachment 1) The legislation established the Commission to…

> *"investigate the features of the official seal and motto of the commonwealth, under sections 1 to 6, inclusive, of chapter 2 of the General Laws, including those features that may be unwittingly harmful to or misunderstood by the citizens of the commonwealth; and (ii) examine and study the seal and motto of the commonwealth to ensure that they faithfully reflect and embody the historic and contemporary commitments of the commonwealth to peace, justice, liberty and equality and to spreading the opportunities and advantages of education."*

The legislation requested that the Commission…

> "*make recommendations for a revised or new design of the seal of the commonwealth and a revised or new motto of the commonwealth and shall make recommendations for an educational program on the history and meaning of the seal and motto."*

The first meeting of the Commission took place on July 17, 2021, but the appointment of a full slate of members was not completed until shortly before the Oct. 1, 2021, reporting deadline established in the enabling legislation. An extension to July 31, 2022, was granted, and at its January 18, 2022, meeting, the full Commission met for the first time.

Members agreed that a leadership structure of Co-Chairs and Co-Vice Chairs was an important step in setting a tone of partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the Commission. The Commission elected as Co-Chairs Brian Moskwetah Weeden, Chairman, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, and Brian Boyles, Executive Director, Mass Humanities, and elected Brittney Peauwe Wunnepog Walley, Representative,

Hassanamisco Nipmuc, and Michael Comeau, Executive Director, Massachusetts Archives & Commonwealth Museum, as Co-Vice Chairs.

At its February 15, 2022, meeting, the Commission engaged in a close reading of the enabling legislation to ensure that all members understood their responsibilities. During this conversation, and in many of the meetings that followed, Commission members recognized the individuals and groups whose advocacy preceded them and expressed an interest in documenting those efforts and the work of the Commission for posterity.

The Commission established three subcommittees:

- Histories & Usages, led by Co-Vice Chairs Walley and Comeau
- Research & Design, led by Co-Chair Weeden
- Public Consultation, led by Co-Chair Boyles

Over the next three months, the Commission and the subcommittees convened to explore the history of the seal and motto, and to respond to the question of harm and misunderstanding, as requested in the enabling legislation. These meetings revealed the different views of the members regarding the question of intent and impact as they relate to the creation of the seal. The efforts to educate all members on the elements and usages of the seal sparked robust discussions of Massachusetts history, the enduring influences of colonialism, and the ways in which public iconography shapes public memory. Indeed, the concept of the “public record” created an opportunity to fill in the gaps—intentional or neglectful—that continue to marginalize Indigenous people and their histories from the public’s understanding of the Commonwealth.

Indigenous members addressed the sword in the crest, which, while part of heraldic tradition, is positioned above the head of the Indigenous figure in a way that evokes the history of violence and marginalization committed by colonists against Indigenous people. The sword was frequently cited as the most egregious element in the seal, but not the only source of harm. The motto’s promise of peace by the sword is understood by some to be a celebration of a peace won by colonists through the violence committed by colonists against Native people. An Indigenous member pointed to the

enclosure of the Native figure within the confines of a coat of arms from the European tradition as similar to the enclosure of Native people within a system designed by Europeans to oppress and erase them. In a way, they noted, the seal is a perfect representation of that history, but certainly not one which the Commonwealth should wish to perpetuate.

Through these discussions, Indigenous members emphasized the need for acknowledgement of the validity of their experiences of the seal and motto. Their participation on the Commission, they noted, presented an opportunity to correct and expand the public record, not to compete with it.

At the Commission's May 17, 2022, meeting, Co-Chair Weeden asked that each member offer their perspective on whether the Commission should seek a full or partial revision of the seal and motto. The Commission voted unanimously for a comprehensive redesign of the seal and motto.

It is important to note that during the discussion that preceded this vote, members expressed perspectives that were nuanced, thoughtful, and responsive to their own experiences as well as the perspectives of their fellow members. The decision for a comprehensive redesign is perhaps the most significant achievement of the Commission. It has also proven to be the Commission's greatest challenge, one that the members sought to address over the preceding months.

At its June 21, 2022, meeting, the Commission heard a report by Micah Whitson, a Commission member who participated in the redesign of the Mississippi state flag. At the outset of his presentation, Whitson pointed to a problem of choosing a symbol for Massachusetts, which lacks a communal icon along the lines of the "lone star" in Texas or the bear in California. In his review of flag designs, Whitson explained that Massachusetts maintains links between the state's coat of arms, seal and state flag, but that there are other ways to treat these relationships. Seals can be complicated, but a flag should be easy for a child to draw and include minimal lettering. Human imagery can be seen to limit a seal or flag's representation of the entire state. Brief statements work best for mottos (examples: Rhode Island's "Hope"). Whitson suggested a process

by which the Commission could decide the contents of the seal and set the design parameters, then hire an illustrator to produce two designs for the Legislature to select. The final seal would be designed by a lithographer. A summary of this process is included in the Commission's final recommendations.

At its July 19, 2022, meeting, the Commission reviewed a letter submitted by member Chairwoman Cheryl Andrews-Maltais on behalf of the Tribal Council of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah that expressed the tribe's requests for changing the seal and motto. The letter called for the removal of the sword and motto, the removal of the downward facing arrow held by the Indigenous figure, and the replacement of the Indigenous figure with that of Ousamequin as represented on Coles Hill in Plymouth. The letter explained that the tribe wanted to ensure that the historical connection between the Wampanoag and the original settlers would not be erased from the seal. The discussion that followed included member Elizabeth Solomon's clarification that there existed multiple tribal entities in Massachusetts at the time of colonization that interacted with European settlers, and that the presenting of one tribe's history would mean excluding the histories of other tribes.

The Commission explored ways to gather public input that could shape its final recommendations. In July, the Public Consultation Subcommittee heard from Steve Koczela, MassINC Polling on how to use polling to gauge public interest on iconography. Given the expense of a poll, the Commission requested support from the legislature to cover expenses of $100,000. (This request was eventually included in the economic development bill that passed in November 2022.)

At its August 16, 2022, meeting, Co-Chair Walley reviewed the Massachusetts General Law regarding the coat of arms, seal and flag:

> *Chapter 2, Section 1: Coat of arms of the commonwealth*
>
> *Section 1. The coat of arms of the commonwealth shall consist of a blue shield with an Indian thereon, dressed in a shirt, leggings, and moccasins, holding in his right hand a bow, and in his left hand an arrow, point downward, all of gold; and,*

in the upper right-hand corner of the field a silver star of five points. The crest shall be, on a wreath of gold and blue, a right arm, bent at the elbow, clothed and ruffled, and grasping a broad sword, all of gold. The motto "Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem" shall appear in gold on a blue ribbon.

Chapter 2, Section 2: Seal of the Commonwealth

Section 2. The seal of the commonwealth shall be circular in form, bearing upon its face a representation of the arms of the commonwealth encircled with the inscription within a beaded border, "Sigillum Re publicae Massachusettensis". The colors of the arms shall not be an essential part of said seal, and an impression from a seal engraved according to said design, on any commission, paper, or document shall be valid without such colors or the representation thereof by heraldic lines or marks.

The linkage between the coat of arms, seal, and state flag was the subject of ongoing conversations. Commission members understood that any changes recommended for the seal or motto would trigger changes to the flag, and that the Commission could recommend modifying the relationship between all three pieces in its final recommendation. Because the Commission ultimately proposes only possible changes to the seal, a final recommendation is not made regarding its relationship with the flag. Several members expressed support for an update to the MGL that would relate to the flag to the seal, but allow for a simpler design for the flag.

The issues of potential replacement images and terms, and the avenues for public input continued to drive the conversations for the subcommittees. At its September 13, 2022, meeting, the Public Consultation Subcommittee heard video testimony from David Detmold of the Change the Massachusetts State Flag, which has worked through town meeting votes to gather support for changing the flag and, since the Commission's inception in 2021, to express support for the work of the Commission. At the time of the subcommittee meeting, Detmold had helped to coordinate successful town meeting and city council votes in 54 municipalities in the Commonwealth since 2018, losing only two of those votes. At the time of this report, 79 towns and municipalities have approved

support for changing the flag: Acton, Amesbury, Amherst, Arlington, Ashby, Ashfield, Athol, Barre, Becket, Belchertown, Belmont, Bernardston, Bolton, Brewster, Brookfield, Brookline, Buckland, Cambridge, Charlemont, Chatham, Colrain, Conway, Cummington, Deerfield, Dennis, Eastham, Easthampton, Erving, Falmouth, Gill, Goshen, Grafton, Great Barrington, Greenfield, Hadley, Hanson, Harvard, Heath, Ipswich, Lee, Leverett, Leyden, Lincoln, Lunenburg, Merrimac, Montague, Newbury, Newburyport, New Salem, Northampton, Northfield, Orange, Orleans, Pelham, Petersham, Plainfield, Provincetown, Rowe, Royalston, Shelburne, Shutesbury, South Hadley, Stockbridge, Sturbridge, Sunderland, Swampscott, Truro, Warwick, Wellfleet, Wendell, West Brookfield, West Newbury, Westhampton, Whately, Williamsburg, Williamstown, Windsor. As Detmold noted, the towns reflected a diverse range of voting patterns on other issues, and varied geographically and economically.

The Commission spent much of September and October discussing ways to partner with outside entities to collect public feedback. Ideas included public forums and the hiring of a facilitator to maintain respectful and productive conversations in public forums, public polling, and the creation of materials to educate the public on the seal and motto. With the December 31 deadline looming, and the request for funding still unresolved, the Commission decided to survey its members to establish which symbols and terms were the most popular among members. Two surveys were conducted in October and November to narrow down the lists. The full lists are included in Attachment 3. These lists would later shape the public survey designed and implemented in 2023.

On November 10, 2022, Gov. Baker signed a $3.76B economic development and closeout bill that included a $100,000 allocation for the Commission. Not included in the final bill, however, was the Commission’s request for a reporting extension to June 30, 2023. The Commission received guidance that the $100,000 would need to be spent before the Commission’s term ended. In addition, the Commission was required to find a third party that could administer the funds.

With just six weeks to use these resources, the Commission decided to complete an Interim Report calling for an extension to allow it to fulfill its charge by making final recommendations, conducting a public survey, and building a framework for educating the public on the seal and motto. The report was submitted to Governor Baker and the clerks of the House and Senate on December 31, 2022.

On March 23, 2023, Governor Maura Healey approved an extension for the Commission to complete its work and make recommendations no later than November 15, 2023.

Co-Chair Boyles and member John Peters worked to confirm that the Executive Office for Administration and Finance could administer the funds. Co-Chair Boyles and Co-Vice Chair Walley met with The Center for Survey Research at University of Massachusetts Boston (CSR) to gauge their capacity to conduct a public survey with an emphasis on outreach to Indigenous residents, veterans and a diverse cross-section of the public.

At its June 13, 2023, meeting, the Commission reviewed a proposal from CSR to administer the survey. The total approved cost of the survey was $84,796. Members emphasized the need for the survey to be available in multiple languages, the role of Commission members in assisting with outreach to their communities, the importance of limiting the votes to Massachusetts residents, and the clarity needed regarding small group interviews.

The meeting also included a first review of the Recommendations for an Educational Program on the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, drafted by Commission member Elizabeth Solomon in response to the enabling legislation’s request for an education program. In its Interim Report, the Commission had noted that its work presented a teachable moment, and that Massachusetts deserved more resources for learning the histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples.

The approved framework sets Learning Objectives:

- Understand the historical underpinnings of seals, mottos, and flags and how they influence us today.

- Learn about local Native history and the effects of colonization on Native communities from a Native perspective.

- Explore the history and origins of the symbols and iconography of the current seal and motto and how they may be perceived differently over time and from different perspectives.

Essential Questions:

- Why do we use symbols like flags and mottos?

- How do the symbols we use reflect who we are and what we value?

- Whose perspectives influence the adoption of symbols? Who is left out?

- How and why might symbols change over time?

Key Content:

- Indigenous history and culture of Massachusetts and New England. Since the current seal and motto prominently feature both a Native figure as well symbols directly related to our colonial history, it is critical that an education program about the seal and motto delve into the historical and cultural histories that influences the use of these symbols. This should include the long history of Indigenous Peoples prior to colonization, the effects of colonization on local Native communities, and the contributions that Native communities have made to our current culture.

- The historical and current uses of seals, coats of arms, flags, and mottos. As appropriate to grade level or audience,

- The specific history of the seals and mottos of both colonial and post-colonial Massachusetts and the history of the contemporary effort to change the current seal and motto.

The Commission approved the Recommendations for an Educational Program at its November 1, 2023, meeting.

On October 10, 2023, the Commission heard a presentation on the initial findings from Lee Hargraves, Interim Director, Center for Survey Research, who was joined by his colleagues Dragana Bolcic-Jankovic, Senior Research Fellow, Center for Survey Research, and Carol Cosenza, Research Fellow, Center for Survey Research.

The public survey opened on August 17, 2023. Four Commission members, Brig. Gen. Leonid Kondratiuk, Co-Vice Chair Walley, Donna Curtin, and John Peters, assisted in the design of the survey, which was approved by the Institutional Review Board at UMass Boston. The Questionnaire was organized in 4 sections:

- Following the news – included questions about the most common way to get information about what is happening in Massachusetts and how closely respondents followed the news about the redesign of the Massachusetts seal and motto.
- Redesigning the state seal – included questions about different potential features that respondents thought would be important to have on the seal, and how much they would like or dislike those features. Suggested elements were taken from the Commission's Interim Report and included geographic features, examples of the state's flora and fauna, representation of different population groups, and other potential symbols for the state seal.
- Changing the state motto – included questions about different aspirational words or phrases respondents would like to see in the new motto, whether the motto should be part of the new seal, and in what language the motto should be written.
- Demographics – included questions about how long respondents have lived in Massachusetts, age, gender, education level, and race and ethnicity.

A mailing was sent on August 17, 2023, for the Representative Sample Survey (RSS) of Massachusetts residents. The mailing included an online option, which was formatted as a 4-page self-administered paper instrument printed in English and Spanish, while the online survey was available in eight languages—English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Khmer, Haitian Creole, and Russian. This survey closed on October 2, 2023.

On August 17, 2023, a Public Sample Survey (PSS), administered online only, was sent to listservs of Indigenous communities in Massachusetts, to the members of the Massachusetts Veterans Service Officers Association, to the newsletters and social media of many of the Commission members. A public invitation was shared widely through the press, including *The Boston Herald*, WCVB-TV, WBUR, the Associated Press, Boston.com, and numerous local outlets. The public link closed on September 27, 2023.

In addition to the statewide survey, CSR conducted seven small group discussions via Zoom with members of Indigenous communities in Massachusetts and other Massachusetts residents to gather additional qualitative data for the report. The participants were recruited through researchers' networks from the UMass centers and institutes, and with assistance from members of the Commission.

The full survey report, including the questionnaire, results, methodology and analysis of CSR is included in this report. The Commission reviewed the survey results on October 10 and again on November 1. The Commission made several observations:

- The response to the Public Sample Survey exceeded CSR's expectations, with more than 10,000 residents completing the survey.
- The response of the Public Sample Survey did not reflect the diversity of Massachusetts, with several groups responding at rates that were lower than their representation in the population of the Commonwealth.
- Native and Indigenous respondents were in general more informed about the efforts to change the seal and motto.

- The majority of Native and Indigenous respondents supported the inclusion of an Indigenous figure on the seal.
- The low response rate to the PSS by residents from Spanish or French speaking demographics may have influenced the percentage that voted to abandon the Latin language for the motto. 70% preferred English language for the motto, followed by Indigenous People's language (14.4%), and only 11.7% selected Latin.

The full survey results and analysis are attached to this report. This information should serve to inform the decisions of the Legislature in the creation of a new seal and motto. As the CSR team notes, the right whale, the coast or shoreline, the shape of the state, and cranberries received the highest support from respondents, while the most popular terms in a new motto were Peace, Equality, Justice, and Liberty.

The survey also reflects the nuances and differences in interpretation of the seal, motto, state flag, and the varying degrees of support for changing these public symbols. The Commission notes that the Public Access Survey garnered participation by several groups (Black/African, Hispanic, Asian) that was disproportionate to the population of Massachusetts. The Commission feels strongly that any further iteration of the decision-making process regarding the seal and motto strive to include representation by members of these groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ON THE SEAL AND MOTTO OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Submitted by
Elizabeth Solomon
Commission Member
Representative of the Massachusett Tribe at Ponkapoag
October 30, 2023

Overview

The legislation establishing this Commission requests “recommendations for an educational program on the history and meaning of the seal and motto.” The Commonwealth’s seal, flag and motto stand as representations of the values, goals, and aspirations of the institution of the Commonwealth and its people. The Commission believes that examining the seal and motto provides a teachable moment and a valuable opportunity for meaningful conversations among all residents of the Commonwealth about our history, our values and aspirations, and the symbols that best represent them. This examination also provides a unique opening for positive and reparative engagement with the Commonwealth’s Native communities. We believe that this process will benefit all residents.

The current seal and motto are currently widely disseminated within multiple media. Residents encounter their symbols daily. In addition to the Commonwealth’s flag which is widely flown throughout the Commonwealth in both government and private settings, the seal appears on state websites, on street signs and bridges, and on all official state correspondence, publications, and documents. However, the symbolic elements of the seal and motto are representative of a history that is both complicated and unfolding. Our most common historical narratives focus almost exclusively on European colonization and its role in the development of the United States while providing minimal insight into the histories and influences of both Indigenous and African American

communities, both of which are fundamental to a complete understanding of where we have been and where we are going. Significantly, our Native communities have long objected to multiple elements of the iconography of the current seal and motto as harmful. We now have an opportunity to understand the histories underpinning those harms both in the pursuit of developing and teaching a fuller history of Massachusetts and as one means of beginning to undertake overdue reparative work.

We must take this unique opportunity to create mechanisms for all of our residents to understand how our current symbols were adopted, what they mean to us today, and how and why some of these symbols are seen as inherently harmful by the Indigenous residents of the Commonwealth.

Educational Program Goals and Content Parameters:

Any successful educational program is built on a foundation of clearly articulated objectives for learning and a curriculum developed based on the essential questions and specific content areas that will facilitate the achievement of those objectives. This section outlines the commission's recommendations for the overarching goals and key content areas of the educational program.

Learning objectives:

- Understand the historical underpinnings of seals, mottos, and flags and how they influence us today.
- Learn about local Native history and the effects of colonization on Native communities from a Native perspective.
- Explore the history and origins of the symbols and iconography of the current seal and motto and how they may be perceived differently over time and from different perspectives.

Essential Questions:

- Why do we use symbols like flags and mottos?

- How do the symbols we use reflect who we are and what we value?
- Whose perspectives influence the adoption of symbols? Who is left out?
- How and why might symbols change over time?

Key content:

- Indigenous history and culture of Massachusetts and New England. Since the current seal and motto prominently feature both a Native figure as well symbols directly related to our colonial history, it is critical that an education program about the seal and motto delve into the historical and cultural histories the influences the use of these symbols. This should include the long history of Indigenous peoples prior to colonization, the effects of colonization on local Native communities, and the contributions that Native communities have made to our current culture.
- The historical and current uses of seals, coats of arms, flags, and mottos. As appropriate to grade level or audience,
- The specific history of the seals and mottos of both colonial and post-colonial Massachusetts and the history of the contemporary effort to change the current seal and motto.

Targeted Audiences

The developers of effective curricula carefully design them to meet the unique needs of the specific learners or audiences that are being targeted. However, examining and reimagining the symbols and iconography that represent the Commonwealth impacts all the Commonwealth's residents and education around this process necessarily spans multiple audiences with very different needs. The learning, objectives, essential questions, and key content areas outlined in the "Educational Program Goals and Content Parameters" above apply to all aspects of the broad educational program. However, the commission has identified two essential audiences that the program

should target, both which have unique needs. We outline these audiences below with specific recommendations for both content and execution.

K-12 Students

- The development of mandatory curriculum modules as part of the state learning standards on local history and culture. Specific modules should be designed to be used at designated grade levels in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms.
- The development of the curriculum modules should be undertaken by paid professional educational designers. Close collaboration with paid representatives of local Native communities will be required to ensure the incorporation of Native history and perspectives into all aspects of the curriculum.
- The legislature should enact legislation for the development and design of learning modules tailored to grade levels in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms and to allocate funds to support the awarding of an RFP that support the costs of this work. Award criteria should include experience with the development of curricula that include and incorporate Indigenous perspectives.
- For the K-12 learners we suggest the addition of the following key content areas to the overarching "Educational Program Goals and Content Parameters."
    - Hear contemporary indigenous voices and perspectives
    - Integration of the content of these modules with education on the workings of governments
    - Exposure to the analysis of sources
        - What makes a source primary or secondary?
        - What reliable information can be gleaned from primary sources? What is missing and why?
        - How do we adjust for what is lacking from primary sources?
        - How do we decide on what is a reliable source?

Massachusetts Adult Residents

- A public educational campaign targeted to the public on the work of the Commission as the legislature considers our recommendations.
- The development of educational materials for the public should be contracted out to by the appropriate controlling body. Close collaboration with paid representatives of local Native communities is required.
- The products should include easily accessible materials that summarize the final report of the commission as well a bibliography to facilitate the needs of residents who wish to explore the issues in-depth.
- Products produced should include materials in multiple media and must be presented at a comprehension level accessible to the public.
- Design different dissemination methods to reach multiple types of learners and multiple constituencies so that all residents have access to these materials.
- Provide widespread access to these educational materials through the use of publicly available and highly utilized distribution sites such as public libraries, government offices, and senior and community centers.
- For the public we suggest the addition of the following key content areas to the overarching Educational Program Goals and Content Parameters.
    - Prominently feature the current Seal and the Motto of the Commonwealth. Although it appears on the state flag as well as in many other places, it is likely that because of its ubiquity, that many members of the public may encounter the images without “seeing” them.
    - Overview of the work of the Commission
    - Information on where the seal and motto regularly show up.
    - Brief history of the elements of the current flag
    - Explanation of how the elements may be interpreted by different constituencies and residents. What elements are seen problematic?
    - Brief history of the move to change the seal and motto.

Conclusion

The Commonwealth's seal, flag, and motto stand as representations of the values, goals, and aspirations of the institution of the Commonwealth and its people. For nearly half a century there have been voices calling for changes to our current seal, flag, and motto. While it is the responsibility of the legislature to consider the recommendations of this commission, the images and designs that make up our seal, motto, and flag are something that concerns and affects all residents of the Commonwealth. Our hope is that the proposed educational program will inform the public on the issues involved in the work of this commission, educate our students on how the ongoing intersections of Native and Euro-American histories influence both the past and the present, and that all of our residents actively engage in considering how the Commonwealth wishes to represent itself both internally and the world. We believe that both our current residents and future generations can learn from the process of exploring these symbols and imagining new ones.

BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE GREAT SEAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Submitted by Michael Comeau and Leonid Kondratiuk

A “seal” is a device used to create an impression on wax, paper, or some other medium that conveys personal or corporate symbolism or authority. The term commonly refers to either a matrix or die cast from a hard substance on which an image, either in relief or intaglio, has been produced, though the term in some instances can also allude to the actual impression made by the device as well. The use of seals can be traced to early civilizations, and have existed in various forms throughout most of recorded history. As writing in earlier times was a skill mastered by few regardless of station, for centuries people would signify acceptance of a document by affixing their symbols or coats-of-arms on soft wax attached to the manuscript. The seal device was commonly an instrument carried by a person for this purpose, or an engraved marking on a signet ring worn by the owner. Generally, these engravings would be distinctively personalized, as they served as the “signature” of the individual. Likewise, the prevalence of illiteracy forced many to seek absolute assurance of the contents of documents and papers before they would affix their seal. This practice of validating documents with a seal would gradually evolve into the larger convention of authenticating officials records in similar fashion.[1]

The use of national coats-of-arms and seals also date back to antiquity, and continuance of this custom as an assertion of sovereignty extends to the present day. In England, the use of royal seals dates back to the late 7th or early 8th centuries, with the earliest seal to survive in contemporary wax impressions being that of Edward the Confessor. Though the tradition of using seals with documents extends back to ancient Mesopotamia, early Anglo-Saxon seal matrices were more probably inspired by contemporary continental precedents such as papal seals.[2]

As colonies in North America were established under the authority of Great Britain, armorial seals were created for their use. In the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the earliest seals - embossed on paper or impressed into wax by a mechanical screw press – validated activity of the General Court and certified proclamations and commissions. In both the New World and back in England, the seal would serve as tangible acknowledgement of the governor's authority in the colony as well as the King's sanctification of that authority in absentia.[3]

Chapter VI, Article IV of the Massachusetts Constitution requires that, "All commission shall be in the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, signed by the governor and attested by the secretary or his deputy and have the Great Seal of the Commonwealth affixed thereto." [4] Custody of the Seal is charged to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, who "shall have the custody of the State Seal; and copies of records and papers in his office, certified by him, and authenticated by the State Seal, shall be evidence in like manner as the originals."[5]

The New England Colony for a Plantation in Massachusetts Bay was authorized to have a seal by the Charter of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England granted by Charles I in 1629.[6] The first General Letter to Governor John Endecott and his Council in Massachusetts Bay dated April 17, 1629 states "We haue caused a comon seale to bee made, which wee send by Mr. Sharpe." In a postscript the Governor, still in England, wrote that he had sent over "the Companyes seale in silver, by Mr. Samuel Sharpe, a passenger in the *George*."[7]

The seal itself was oval in shape, depicting a Native Person holding a bow and arrow, standing between two pine trees. The arrow is held in downward position, as a gesture of peace. A word balloon is attached to the Native Person that reads, "Come over and

help us." This is taken from a prayer of a man of Macedonia to St. Paul (Acts, XVI:9).[8] Authorities of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, like their counterparts in Plymouth, saw Native Peoples as analogous to pagan Macedonians who were desperate for the light of the gospel.[9] As Brona Simon, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Historical Commission and State Archeologist, explains, the inclusion of a Native Person with the word balloon was used by John Eliot as a propaganda tool to convert Indigenous Peoples in the eastern part of Massachusetts and establish "praying towns". These transculturated Native Christians, or "Praying Indians," lived in both Anglo and Indian worlds, and were products of the overtly missionizing intent the Colony sought to memorialize on its seal.[10]

In his report to the Committee on the Judiciary that accompanied the Act that codified the state seal in 1885[11], William H. Whitmore states that the seal delivered by Mr. Sharpe, "was the only one used for over fifty years or until the abrogation of the first Charter in 1684." In truth, the story was a bit more complex, with more than one (applied by either hand or screw) used by future Governors until revocation of the Charter. Joseph Dudley, serving as president of a provisional council governing Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, Maine, Narragansett, and Plymouth, used a similar seal with the figure of an Indian until the arrival of Sir Edmund Andros in December 1686.[12]

Andros, serving as Governor of the Dominion of New England formed in 1686 by James II, was furnished with a new, two-sided seal. On one side, there was the King in his robes with two kneeling figures – a colonist and a Native Person. The reverse side depicted a lion, a unicorn, and a crown. Subsequent Governors affixed their personal seals to commissions issued to officers in the military.

Andros was imprisoned and the Dominion of New England overthrown on April 18, 1689, shortly after news of the Glorious Revolution in England had reached Boston. In its place an extralegal provisional government known as the Council for the Safety of the People and Conservation of the Peace was established. Returning to the form of

government in effect in 1684, this new provisional government existed until 1692, when the charter for the new Province of the Massachusetts Bay was brought to Boston.

The new charter, signed by King William and Queen Mary on October 7, 1691 and inaugurated in Boston on May 14, 1692, provided that, “Orders Lawes Statutes and Ordinances Instructions and Directions as shall be soe made under the Seale of our said Province or Territory shall be Carefully and duely observed kept and performed,”.[13] The seal itself was the Royal coat-of-arms of William and Mary, and was used with minor variations until 1714, at which time it was replaced by the Seal of George I, followed by that of George II and George III upon their respective ascensions to the throne. As the Governor served as Commander-in-Chief of the provincial forces under the Province Charter, all commissions to officers in the military service were issued under a Privy Seal, bearing the personal coat-of-arms of the governor.[14]

Following the Boston Tea Party in December, 1773, Parliament passed a series of punitive measures in early 1774 known collectively as the “Coercive” or “Intolerable” Acts. Implementation of these Acts by Royal Governor Gen. Thomas Gage resulted in his dissolution of the Assembly in June 1774, at which point the Assembly resolved itself into the first of three Provincial Congresses. After consultation with the Continental Congress in regard to a permanent government, a newly elected General Court “resumed” government under a modified version of the 1691 Province Charter on July 19, 1775.

With Gage retaining custody of the Royal Seal, and his authority no longer recognized by the province, a new seal was ordered by the Council, the body in which executive power had been vested. Action in this regard was initiated by a Council Order dated July 28, 1775, forming a “Committee to Consider what is necessary to be done relative to a Colony Seal.”[15] A report attending this order reveals that an initial design of an “Indian holding a Tomahawk & Cap of Liberty,” be replaced with an “English American holding a Sword in the right hand Magna Charta in the Left hand with the words Magna Charta imprinted on it.” The report also for the first time introduces the motto, “*Petit sub*

libertate quietem.”.” The quote, attributed to the English politician, political theorist, and soldier Algernon Sidney, was adjusted to read, “*Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem*.”[16]

As an ambassador to the court of Denmark, Sidney had inscribed these words in a book of mottos which lay in the Kings library (“Every noble stranger who came to Denmark was allowed to write a motto or verse in the King’s book of mottos”).[17] Sidney’s *Discourses Concerning Government*, a defense of republicanism and popular government and repudiation of royal absolutism and the divine right of kings, had some influence on political thinking in the American Colonies at the time of the Revolution.

The full text of Sidney’s inscription reads, *Manus haec inimica tyrannis ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem*. This translates as, *This hand, an enemy of tyrants, seeks with the sword a quiet peace under liberty*. The Massachusetts motto uses only the second part of this sentence. Often loosely translated as, *by the sword we seek peace, but peace only under liberty*, its more literal translation reads, *she seeks with the sword a quiet peace under liberty*. Within the literal translation, the pronoun “she” alludes to the subject “hand” from Sidney’s full quotation, itself modified by the clause, “an enemy to tyrants.” The seal itself, which was engraved by Paul Revere, became known as the “Sword in Hand” seal, and remained in use for the next five years.

With adoption of the 1780 Constitution for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, it was decided that a replacement seal more symbolic of the history and purpose of Massachusetts – with independence then firmly established in America – be devised. To this end, a joint committee was formed and a report created for submission to the Governor and Council.[18] For reasons impossible to discern from the public record, the report was rejected by the Senate and a special committee was convened, which in turn approved the initial report and referred it to the Governor and Council.[19]

The next evidence of action found in the public record is a Council Order dated December, 13th 1780, appointing Nathan Cushing as a Committee to devise a new Seal.

It is here that the details later codified into the current coat-of arms and motto were laid out. Cushing's design, which replaced the English-American with a Native Person as the feature element, incorporated a heraldic presentation: the Crest (the ruffled sleeve and hand holding a sword); the Wreath or Torse (the braided ribbon beneath the Crest); the Escutcheon (the shield, of Norman design); the Mullet or Mollette (the 5-point star within the shield); the Heraldic Charge (the Native Person depicted on the shield); and the Bottom Banner in which the motto appears. Cushing's description of the device for the Seal is as follows:

…Sapphire, an Indian dressed in his Shirt, Moggasins, belted proper, in his right Hand a Bow Topaz, in his left an Arrow, its point towards the Base; of the second on the Dexter side of the Indian's head a Star, Pearl, for one the United States of America.
Crest On a Wreath a Dexter Arm cloathed & ruffled proper, grasping a Broad Sword, the Pummel and Hilt Topaz, with this motto Ense petit placidam Sub Libertate Quietem -[20]

Though the artistic representation of the coat-of-arms would vary over time, the basics of its construct remained constant.

There is no record of any subsequent action taken by the Legislature. William H. Whitmore, in his 1885 Report to the Committee on the Judiciary, surmised that, "Probably the members thought that acceptance of the report, referring the matter to the Governor and Council, was sufficient, without the enactment of a law conferring on them the power to define and establish the seal." The lack of legislation defining strict regulation as to the seal's representation, however, resulted in many stylized interpretations – in Whitmore's words, "a ludicrous amount of variation from the standard" – being used over the years.[21]

The lack of legal adoption by authority of the Legislature led to the Great Seal being prescribed in its present form by statute in 1885.[22] It is in this legislative Act that the distinction between the seal and the arms was drawn: the Great Seal of the Commonwealth being the circular boundary bearing the inscription, *Sigillum Reipublicae*

Massachusettensis, and the arms consisting of the coat-of-arms and motto positioned within.[23] The specific components of each, as well as the approved color scheme, are also defined within the statute. Pursuant to the statute, the seal,

…shall be circular in form, and shall bear upon its face a representation of the arms of the Commonwealth, with an inscription round about such representation, consisting of the words "Sigillum Reipublicae Massachusettensis"; but the colors of such arms shall not be an essential part of said seal, and an impression from a engraved seal according to said design, on any commission, paper or document of any kind, shall be valid to all intents and purposes whether such colors, or the representation of such colors by the customary heraldic lines or marks, be employed or not.

The arms, which form the central part of the Great Seal,

...shall consist of a shield, whereof the field or surface is blue, and thereon an Indian dressed in his shirt and moccasins, holding in his right hand a bow, and in his left hand an arrow, point downward, all of gold; and in the upper corner above his right arm, a silver star with five points. The crest shall be a wreath of blue and gold, whereon is a right arm, bent at the elbow, and clothed and ruffled, the hand grasping a broadsword, all of gold. The motto shall be "Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem."

Well-known 19th century illustrator and painter Edmund H. Garrett, under the direction of Secretary of the Commonwealth William H. Olin, was selected to produce the final design, which was approved pursuant to St. 1898, c. 519.[24] In an article published in 1900 in the *New England Magazine*, Garrett provided insight from his perspective as to the various elements included in his final design, as well as the rationale of he and the principle specialists involved in their selection and application.[25]

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 2, Section 5 places custodial responsibility of the Seal of the Commonwealth upon the state secretary, and all representations of the arms, seal, and flags of the Commonwealth are to strictly conform with specifications

prepared by the secretary in 1971.[26] Promulgated regulations for the specifications, use, display, and manufacture of the Great Seal are defined within 950 CMR 34.00.

The use of the coat-of-arms and the Great Seal of the Commonwealth for advertising or commercial purposes is prohibited by law. In addition to commissions, all records certified by the Secretary must bear the Great Seal. Permission to use the coat-of-arms and the Great Seal must be obtained from the Secretary of the Commonwealth.[27]



Key Findings from the Survey about the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

October 2023

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INTRODUCTION

In 2021, Governor Charlie Baker created a Special Commission to review and recommend changes to the Massachusetts State Seal and Motto. The Center for Survey Research at the University of Massachusetts Boston (CSR) was contracted by the Special Commission Relative to the Official Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth to conduct a survey of Massachusetts' residents to gather their input about elements of a revised or new design of the state seal and motto. The survey was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at UMass Boston.

The survey data were collected by CSR in August and September of 2023. CSR conducted a survey mailed to a random sample of households in Massachusetts and created a public survey URL link to a web-based version of the survey. This link to the web survey was distributed among listservs maintained by multiple Native American communities in Massachusetts and shared by the Special Commission via a press release. In addition to the statewide survey, CSR conducted seven small group discussions via Zoom with members of Indigenous communities in Massachusetts and other Massachusetts residents to gather additional qualitative data for this report.

This report provides important background information about the survey instrument, survey sample, data collection efforts, survey responses, important considerations for data analysis, and key findings from both quantitative and qualitative data collection efforts.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

CSR worked with the Special Commission to develop a 4-page survey instrument based on the findings highlighted in the Commission's December 2022 Interim Report. This report included information gleaned from surveying Commission members about symbols, words, and phrases that could be used on the state seal and motto. The final survey included the following areas:

1) Following the news – included questions about the most common way to get information about what is happening in Massachusetts and how closely respondents followed the news about the redesign of the Massachusetts seal and motto.
2) Redesigning the state seal – included questions about different potential features that respondents thought would be important to have on the seal, and how much they would like or dislike those features. Suggested elements were taken from the Commission's Interim Report and included geographic features, examples of the state's flora and fauna, representation of different population groups, and other potential symbols for the state seal.
3) Changing the state motto – included questions about different aspirational words or phrases respondents would like to see in the new motto, whether the motto should be part of the new seal, and in what language the motto should be written.
4) Demographics – included questions about how long respondents have lived in Massachusetts, age, gender, education level, and race and ethnicity.

The formatted paper version of the survey is included in Appendix D. The survey was translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Khmer, Haitian Creole, and Russian. The paper version of the survey was available in English and Spanish. The survey was set up in Qualtrics, a software application for online data collection, and made available in eight languages – English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Khmer, Haitian Creole, and Russian.

SURVEY SAMPLE

The survey was sent to and completed by two separate groups of people. The first was a probability sample, which is a representative sample of Massachusetts residents created from a random sample of households in the state. The second group is a non-probability sample, which was the public-access sample. The public sample is a convenience sample created by widely distributing a link to a web-based survey.

For the **representative (probability) sample**, CSR used an address-based sample (ABS) of 2,100 randomly selected Massachusetts households, drawn by Marketing Systems Group (MSG).[1] The representative sample was surveyed by mail with an option to complete the survey online via Qualtrics. Within each selected household, the mailed invitation asked the oldest or youngest adult (18 or older) to complete the survey. Households were randomly assigned to ask either the oldest or youngest member to respond. In this report, we label this survey the RSS—Representative Sample Survey. More details about the data collection are included in later sections of this report.

This ABS sample included addresses of households with a regular postal address, as well as those for which P.O. boxes are the only way to get mail, throwbacks (addresses that are street addresses, but actual mail deliveries are made to customers' P.O. boxes), rural routes, educational (addresses that are not dorms, but housing near a campus), and highway contract addresses. It excluded traditional P.O. boxes, seasonal residents (addresses given mail only during a specific season, i.e., summer only residence), drops, and known vacant households (delivery points that have been unoccupied for 90 days or longer).

For the **public (non-probability) sample**, the Special Commission and partners sent invitations via email to the listservs of Native American and Indigenous communities in Massachusetts and via press release inviting Massachusetts residents to complete the survey online. In this report, we label this survey the PAS—Public Access Survey. Robust outreach efforts via a press release were picked up by multiple media outlets, including local television, several newspapers, and towns. Distribution via multiple listservs and email distribution among Native American and Indigenous communities resulted in 244 Native American or Alaska Native respondents (2.5% of

[1] https://www.m-s-g.com/Pages/genesys/address_based_sample

PAS respondents), and about a half of those identified with Northeastern Indigenous communities. A total of 10,433 respondents accessed the public online survey.

The data collected from the public survey are not combined with the survey data from the representative sample of 2,100 randomly selected addresses; therefore, the key findings from each sample will be reported separately.

DATA COLLECTION

For the **representative sample survey (RSS)**, the mail survey was formatted as a 4-page self-administered paper instrument printed in English and Spanish, and the online survey was available in eight languages—English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Khmer, Haitian Creole, and Russian.

The initial mailing to the representative sample was sent on August 17, 2023, and it was addressed to the sample name provided by MSG or “current resident” at selected addresses. The mailing included a cover letter in English and Spanish, paper survey in English and Spanish, a list of short instructions about how to complete the survey online in six other languages (Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Khmer, Haitian Creole, and Russian), $5 cash incentive, and a postage paid envelope. Appendices B and C present the two survey invitations in English and Spanish. The Questionnaire is included in Appendix D.

The second mailing was sent on September 7 to those who did not respond by that date, and included the same materials as the initial mailing, but no cash incentive. The survey was closed on October 2, 2023.

For the **Public Access Survey (PAS)**, the online survey link was distributed on August 17, 2023, via email to the listservs of Native American and Indigenous communities in Massachusetts and via press release. The public link was closed on September 27, 2023.

SURVEY RESPONSE

The initial sample size for the **RSS** was 2,100 addresses of Massachusetts households. Selected households were excluded from the sample if the mailing was returned as an undeliverable address. The undeliverable mailings received by September 5 that were marked as “vacant households” (n=29) were replaced with new address and mailed on September 6, 2023, increasing the sample size to 2,129 cases. Table 1 below summarizes the response outcomes. The “refused” category includes only those who explicitly refused by returning a blank survey. The rest who did not return a questionnaire also refused to participate but did not do so explicitly. They are listed in the table as “no response.”

Table 1. Representative Sample Survey (RSS) Response Rate

Sampled	Total eligible (Excludes undeliverable mail)	No response	Refused	Total completed surveys	*Paper surveys*	*Online surveys*	Response Rate*
2129	2045	1682	21	342	*250*	*92*	16.72%

* Response rate = Total completed surveys / (Total eligible)

For the representative sample, a total of 342 surveys were completed – 337 surveys in English, 4 in Spanish, and 1 in Chinese. Of the 342 surveys, 250 were completed on paper and 92 online. Trained coders keyed the answers from the paper survey into a data file and then it was imported into an SPSS data file. It was then combined with the representative sample survey data collected online and checked for errors and inconsistencies.

For the **PAS**, all data were collected online and imported into an SPSS data file. Qualtrics has a fraud protection feature that was enabled to prevent fraudulent data,[2] such as survey responses from bots or people taking the survey multiple times. As noted above, a total of 10,433 respondents accessed the public survey online. CSR examined the survey data and excluded 299 responses because they were duplicate completions, were partially completed without answering the minimum number of questions, or were out of state respondents. The public survey therefore includes 10,134 completed surveys and does not include:

- anyone who marked "I already did it;"
- anyone who does not live in Massachusetts; and
- any incomplete surveys (respondents who did not provide age, race, or zip code were excluded from analyses).

Of the 10,134 completed surveys, 10,124 were completed in English, 7 in Spanish, 2 in Portuguese, and 1 in Russian.

The invitations via email to the listservs of Native American and Indigenous communities in Massachusetts and via press release resulted in 244 surveys completed by respondents who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native. Thus, we can report on the opinions of Native American respondents.

CONSIDERATIONS AND LIMITATIONS FOR DATA ANALYSIS

The frequency distributions from the RSS and PAS are provided as two separate worksheets in an Excel workbook. All analyses reported in the key findings below were conducted using IBM_SPSS version 28 and were presented in the form of descriptive statistics and bivariate analyses. For the RSS bivariate tables data are weighted to

[2] https://www.qualtrics.com/support/survey-platform/survey-module/survey-checker/fraud-detection

match population characteristics of Massachusetts and include Pearson chi-square tests ($p<0.05$).

To account for differential nonresponse to the survey associated with respondent personal characteristics, we weighted the RSS representative data to match the American Community Survey (ACS)[3] estimates for age, gender, and level of education. The ACS is a survey conducted by the U.S. Census to collect detailed information about the population and is often used to compare survey responses to population characteristics. A description of the survey weights is presented in Appendix A.

In presenting results of the PAS, tests of statistical significance are not appropriate given the non-probability nature of the sample and the exceptionally large sample size (n=10,134). It is likely that with so many respondents in the PAS that slight differences would be statistically significant. Moreover, statistical significance tests assume random sampling from a population, also suggesting that such tests are inappropriate for understanding differences among respondent groups. We recommend assessing the magnitude of any differences, for example, by respondent age or ethnicity. We also focus our attention on preferences for the state seal and motto where there appears to be a consensus.

It is important to consider limitations of the survey estimates, even when the data are collected using a representative (probability) sample, and even more so when the data are collected using a convenience (non-probability) sample. The following are common sources of error: 1) *nonresponse error*, which is a result of the fact that those who do not respond to surveys can have different experiences and perceptions from those who do; 2) *measurement error*, which is a result of the fact that the survey data are based on respondents' answers to questions which may not always be completely accurate; and 3) *sampling error,* (often called the margin of error) which is not strictly an error but a result of the fact that the data come from a sample of a population not from all population members, and therefore, the estimates from the sample can differ from those of the entire population due to random variation. Sampling error is a function of the number of respondents. When the data are collected using a representative sample (RSS) with known probabilities of selection, the sampling error is addressed by the creation of confidence intervals around survey estimates; however, for the non-probability samples (PAS), those confidence intervals cannot be created, since there are no known probabilities of selection. Also, for non-probability samples, there is an unknown amount of bias that may be associated with respondents' self-selection into the sample.

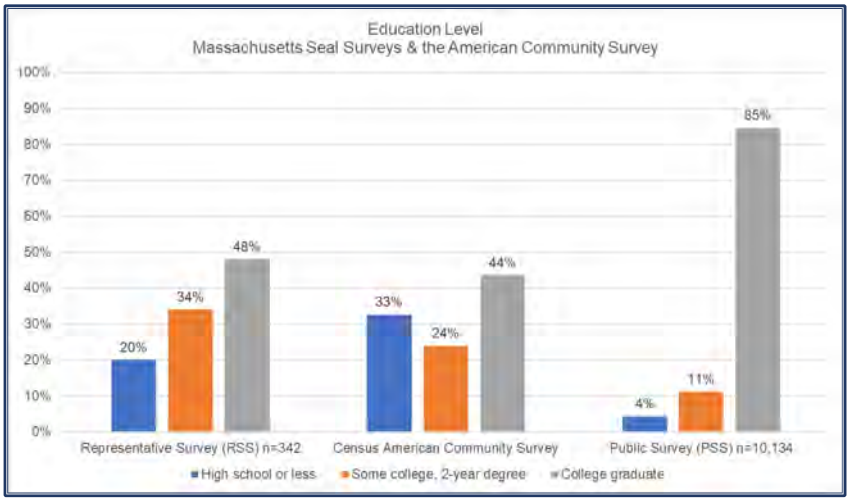
Both surveys, the Representative Sample Survey (RSS) and the Public Access Survey (PAS), may have varying levels of response biases. With a 16% response rate, many potential respondents opted out of the RSS, and they were residents with fewer years of education, who were younger, more likely men, and who were members of some racial or ethnic groups. We can modestly correct disproportionate responses

[3] https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs

using survey weights. But with 342 respondents, we cannot do more than adjust for a few respondent characteristics—age (< 65, 65 and older), education (college, no college), and gender (female or male). With more than 10,000 respondents to the PAS, many college-educated residents opted in, such that over 80% of respondents reported having a college degree. However, with a large sample, we have many more respondents from diverse racial and ethnic groups and can examine results accordingly. However, since the model is not based on a random sample, we cannot calculate weights for the public open-access data.

Another important consideration is related to the education levels in the Public Access Survey (PAS) compared to the representative (RSS) and American Community Survey (ACS). As shown in the figure below, 85% of the PAS respondents reported completing a 4-year college degree or higher, compared to 46% in RSS and 44% in ACS. Thus, response from the public to the state seal and motto survey was very robust among Massachusetts residents who have completed a college degree.

Figure 1. Educational Level Comparison of RSS, PAS, and ACS



Note: The RSS is weighted to match the college education levels of the ACS estimates along with weights for race, age, and gender.

Table 2 shows the demographic profile of respondents who completed either the RSS or the PAS. As is common in all social surveys, some respondents skipped questions and are identified as “missing responses.” All percentages are calculated for the total number of respondents who answered the question. In the sections that follow, we first describe findings of the RSS (see page 9) and then describe findings from the PAS (see page 13). We will discuss the respondents’ personal characteristics such as age, gender, level of education, and race or ethnicity; then, we compare similarities and differences between results of the two surveys.

The RSS used an address-based sample, and we can identify in which region of the state each respondent resides. The PAS asked respondents to provide a zip code for their residence. Around 1 percent of PAS respondents (n=136) did not provide a zip code.

Table 2. Demographic Profile of the Two Surveys—the RSS and the PAS

Representative Sample Survey*			Public Access Survey		
Age	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Age**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
18 to 24	12	3.7	18 to 24	607	6.1
25 to 34	22	6.7	25 to 34	1627	16.3
35 to 44	45	13.6	35 to 44	1844	18.4
45 to 54	68	20.5	45 to 54	1657	16.6
55 to 64	106	32.0	55 to 64	1890	18.9
65 to 74	43	13.1	65 to 74	1651	16.5
75 or older	34	10.4	75 or older	722	7.2
TOTAL	331	100.0	TOTAL	9998	100.0
Missing response	11		*Missing response*	136	
Gender	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Gender**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Female	169	50.9	Female	5811	58.7
Male	161	48.5	Male	3680	37.2
Transgender, nonbinary	2	0.6	Transgender, nonbinary	407	4.1
TOTAL	333	100.0	TOTAL	9898	100.0
Missing response	9		*Missing response*	236	
Education	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Education**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
8th grade or less	6	1.9	8th grade or less	32	0.3
Some high school	7	2.0	Some high school	52	0.5
High school or GED	54	15.9	High school or GED	351	3.5
Some college	114	34.0	Some college	1116	11.1
4-year college or high	55	46.1	4-year college or high		
TOTAL	337	100.0	TOTAL	10018	100.0
Missing response	5		*Missing response*	116	
Race and Ethnicity	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Race and Ethnicity**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Asian/Pacific Islander	19	5.7	Asian/Pacific Islander	210	2.2
Black, non-Hispanic	26	7.9	Black, non-Hispanic	111	1.1
Hispanic	35	10.8	Hispanic	375	3.9
Native American	8	2.3	Native American	244	2.5
White, non-Hispanic	241	73.0	White, non-Hispanic	8388	86.3
Multiple, Other	1	0.2	Multiple, Other	388	4.0
TOTAL	329	100.0	TOTAL	9716	100.0
Missing response	13		*Missing response*	418	
Massachusetts Region	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Massachusetts Region**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Central	58	16.9	Central	1372	13.7
Greater Boston	65	18.9	Greater Boston	3827	38.3
MetroWest	11	3.2	MetroWest	365	3.7
Northeast	55	16.0	Northeast	1833	18.3
Southeast & Cape	90	26.4	Southeast & Cape	1373	13.7
Western	64	18.6	Western	1228	12.3
TOTAL	342	100.0	TOTAL	9998	100.0
			Missing zip code	136	

Note: All percentages are calculated for respondents who answered each demographic question.
* Weighted by age, gender, and education to match the ACS.

KEY FINDINGS – REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE SURVEY (RSS)

Demographic Profile of RSS Respondents

As noted earlier, the survey data from the representative sample were weighted to match the data to the American Community Survey (ACS) estimates for age, gender, and level of education. Therefore, the data presented for the RSS are weighted percentages.

Most of the RSS respondents (86.9%) lived more than 15 years in Massachusetts, while 4% lived in the state less than 5 years, 4.3% lived 5 to 10 years, and 4.8% lived 11 to 15 years in Massachusetts. Table 2 shows that most RSS respondents reported living in the Southeast and Cape (26.4%), followed by Greater Boston region (18.9%), the Western region (18.6%), Central (16.9%), Northeast (16%), and MetroWest (3.2%). With respect to age, 24% were between the ages 18 and 44, 52.5% between 45 and 64, and 23.5% were 65 years or older. Slightly over one-half of RSS respondents were female, 48.5% male, 0.6% transgender or reported using another term to describe their gender. With respect to education, 46.1% had a 4-year college degree or higher, 34% reported having some college or a 2-year degree, and 19.9% reported having high school degree or less. With respect to ethnicity, 2.3% were American Indian or Alaska Native, 5.7% Asian, 7.9% Black/African American, 10.8% Hispanic, 73% White, and 0.2% selected other or multiple races.

Following the News

To better understand opinions and preferences of respondents regarding the revisions of the state seal and motto, the survey first asked two questions about respondents' news consumption. When asked about the most common way they get news about what is happening in Massachusetts, most RSS respondents said that they get their news from television, followed by online news websites or apps (see Table 3).

Table 3. The Most Common Way RSS Respondents Get News About What Is Happening in Massachusetts

News source	RSS %
Print newspapers	5.4
Radio	6.2
Television	42.8
Online news websites or apps	28.9
Social networking websites or apps	16.1
Other	0.5

Note: Total % vary slightly due to rounding

We asked RSS respondents how closely they followed the news about the redesign of the seal and motto, and only 10.6% of RSS respondents reported fairly or very closely following the news, while 89.4% said they did not follow the news too closely or not at all.

We examined the relationship between how closely respondents followed the news about the revision of the seal and motto and respondents' age, gender, and level of education, finding statistically significant differences by age and education (see Table 4). We observed that respondents from the youngest age group did not follow the news about the revision of the seal and motto, as none of the 18- to 44-year-old respondents (n=59) reported following the news *fairly* or *very closely*.

Table 4. How Closely RSS Respondents Followed the News About the Redesign of the Seal and Motto by Demographic Characteristics

	Very or fairly closely %	Not too closely or not at all %	*p-value*
Age			*0.003*
18-44	0	100	
45-64	13.9	86.1	
65+	11.7	88.3	
Gender			*ns*
Female	9.5	90.5	
Male	11.3	88.8	
Education			*0.010*
High school or less	18.2	81.8	
Some college or 2-year degree	4.4	95.6	
4-year college degree	9.7	90.3	

Note: Total % vary slightly due to rounding

Views About Symbols for the Seal

We asked RSS respondents a series of questions about different features and symbols they would consider for the revised seal. One series of questions asked about different natural features, one series asked about local plants, trees, or flowers, one about local wildlife, and one asked about other potential symbols, including having the representation of diverse groups of people and a few other symbols. Table 4 presents the results for all the symbols or features included in the survey. We sorted the list by the percentage of respondents who either *strongly* or *somewhat* liked each element from highest to lowest. Thus, the list represents respondents' most preferred symbols or features. The top six that were liked by more than 50% of respondents include the shape of Massachusetts, the coast or shoreline of the state, a right whale (state marine mammal), the mayflower (state flower), cranberries, and having a Native American or Indigenous person represented on the seal (see Table 5).

Table 5. Most Preferred Symbols According to RSS Respondents

Symbol	Strongly like %	Somewhat like %	Strongly or somewhat like (Highest to lowest) %
Shape of Massachusetts	34.9	34.7	69.6
Coast or Shoreline	26.1	32.4	58.5
Right whale	27.5	30.9	58.4
Mayflower	26.5	29.5	56.0
Cranberries	20.3	33.5	53.8
Native American or Indigenous person	30.2	22.0	52.2
American elm tree	17.7	31.3	49.0
Black-capped chickadee	20.5	27.8	48.3
Cod	16.5	27.1	43.6
Red-tailed hawk	17.3	25.0	42.3
Mountains or hills	14.2	27.9	42.1
The Capitol dome	11.8	28.2	40.0
Waterways or riverways	12.5	25.0	37.5
People from different backgrounds	19.1	15.8	34.9
A rising sun	14.2	18.2	32.4
A colonial person	17.0	16.0	33.0
Turkey	13.0	18.1	31.1
Pine tree	11.3	19.0	30.3
Clasped hands	11.1	12.8	23.9
A feather	7.1	13.9	21.0
A white star	6.6	13.5	20.1

Note: Each item had a small number of missing responses that are excluded in reported %

Almost three-quarters of the RSS respondents (73.2%) thought that the state seal should be on the Massachusetts flag. We found no statistically significant differences in this opinion by age, gender, or education.

Views About Words, Phrases, and Language for the Motto

The most preferred word for the motto among RSS respondents (either liked *strongly* or *somewhat*) was *Peace* (72.2%), followed by *Liberty* and *Equality,* which were liked by around two thirds of all RSS respondents, 69.4% and 64.5% respectively (see Table 6).

Table 6. Most Preferred Words for the Motto According to RSS Respondents

Word	Strongly like %	Somewhat like %	Strongly or somewhat like (Highest to lowest) %
Peace	47.1	25.1	72.2
Liberty	39.7	29.7	69.4
Equality	37.1	27.4	64.5
Justice	38.5	24.1	62.6
Commonwealth	27.5	29.5	57.0
Hope	28.7	25.1	53.8
Common good	25.5	27.8	53.3
Service	17.4	27.1	44.5

Note: Each item had a small number of missing responses that are excluded in reported percentages.

The Special Commission's Interim Report offered three possible phrases for the state motto. When asked to select which of the three they most preferred, 43.1% of RSS respondents selected *Peace, Justice, Equality*, while 27.1% said that none of the phrases would be their first choice (see Table 7).

Table 7. The Best Phrase for the Motto According to RSS Respondents

Phrase	RSS %
For the Common Good	21.3
Peace, Justice, Equality	43.1
Service, Justice, Equality	8.5
None of the above phrases	27.1

Note: Total % vary slightly due to rounding

Similar to the responses when asked whether the seal should be on the state flag, over three-quarters of RSS respondents (76.1%) thought that the state motto should be on the Massachusetts flag. Again, there were no statistically significant differences in this opinion by age, gender, or education.

Table 8 shows that most RSS respondents (70%) preferred English for the motto with about 14% stating that they would prefer a Native or Indigenous People's language. Latin, which is the current language of the motto, was selected by less than 12%.

Table 8. The Best Language for the Motto According to RSS Respondents

Language	RSS %
English	70.0
Latin	11.7
Native or Indigenous People's language	14.4
Other/multiple	3.9

Note: Total % vary slightly due to rounding

KEY FINDINGS – PUBLIC ACCESS SURVEY (PAS)

Demographic Profile of PAS Respondents

Most of the PAS respondents (81.4%) have lived in Massachusetts for more than 15 years, while 5.2% have lived here less than 5 years. About 7% lived in the state for 5 to 10 years, and 6% lived 11 to 15 years in Massachusetts. Table 2 on page 8 shows that most PAS respondents reported living in the Greater Boston region (38.3%), followed by the Northeast region (18.3%), Central (13.7%), Southeast and Cape (13.7%), Western (12.3%), and MetroWest (3.6%).

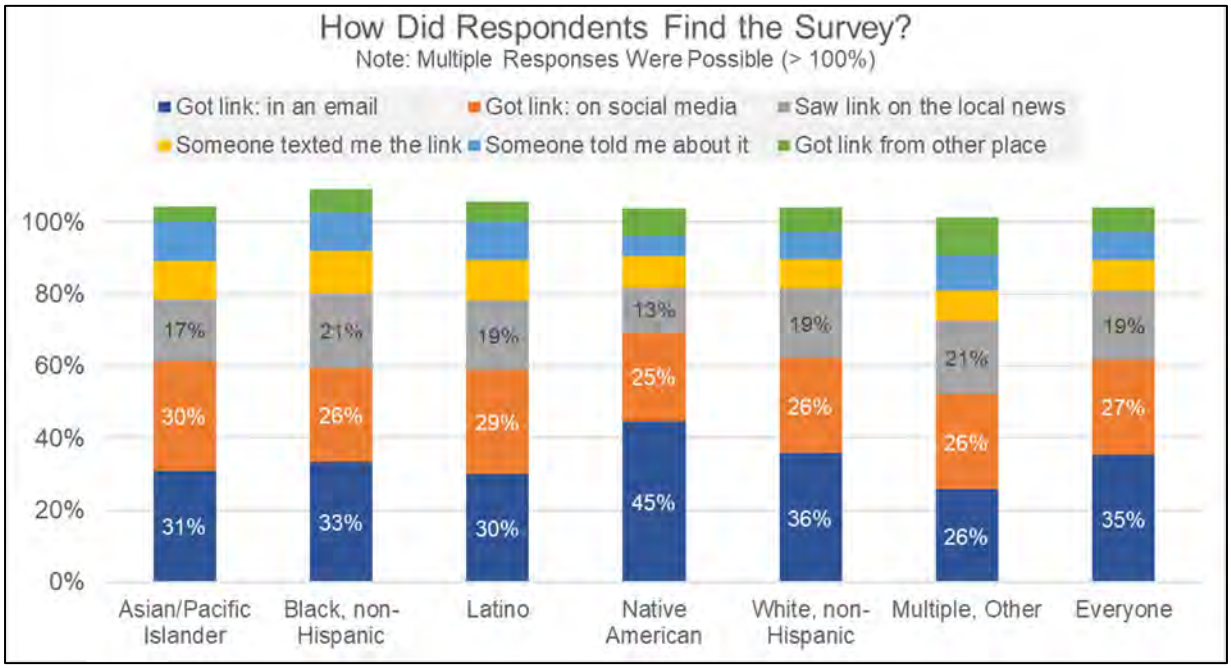
With respect to age, 40.8% were between the ages 18 and 44, 35.5% between 45 and 64, and 23.7% were 65 years or older. A majority of the PAS respondents were female (58.7%), 37.2% male, 1.5% transgender, and 2.7% reported using another term to describe their gender. The overwhelming majority of the PAS respondents (84.5%) reported having a 4-year college degree or higher, 11.1% reported having some college or a 2-year degree, and 4.3% reported having a high school degree or less. With respect to ethnicity, 2.5% were American Indian or Alaska Native, 2.2% Asian, 1.1% Black/African American, 3.9% Hispanic, 86.3% White, and 4% selected other or multiple races.

As noted earlier, the invitations via email to the listservs of Indigenous communities in Massachusetts and via public release resulted in 244 respondents who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native. With respect to age, Native American respondents were similar to the overall public sample, with 44% being between the ages 18 and 44, 35.4% between 45 and 64, and 20.6% being 65 years or older. A majority of Native American respondents were female (56%), 35.3% male, 4.1% transgender, and 4.6% reported using another term to describe their gender. Also, almost two-thirds (65.2%) reported having a 4-year college degree or higher, 27.5% reported having some college or a 2-year degree, and 7.4% reported having a high school degree or less. Findings from the Native American respondents will be presented separately in comparison to the overall public sample.

Figure 2 presents information about how respondents found the public survey based on multiple survey questions. Some respondents selected more than one link to the survey. Thus, percentages are slightly over 100 percent.

Most PAS respondents (overall sample) found the survey via email or social media. Native American respondents were most likely (70%) to have responded to the survey based on either email or a link on social media, more than the other racial and ethnic groups (fewer than 62%).

Figure 2. How Did Respondents Find the Survey



Following the News

The survey asked about the most common way respondents get news regarding what is happening in Massachusetts. Most of the PAS respondents (overall sample) and Native Americans respondents got their news from online news websites and apps, followed by social networking websites or apps and television (see Table 8).

Table 8. The Most Common Way PAS Respondents (Overall) and Native Americans Respondents Get News About What Is Happening in Massachusetts

News source	PAS overall sample %	Native American Respondents %
Print newspapers	6.7	4.1
Radio	10.2	7.4
Television	10.3	14.3
Online news websites or apps	52.3	43.4
Social networking websites or apps	18.1	24.2
Friends, Word of Mouth	0.7	2.0
Other	1.8	4.5

Note: Total % vary slightly due to rounding

When asked how closely they followed the news about the redesign of the seal and motto, only 26.2% of the overall public sample followed the news fairly or very closely, compared to 60.6% of Native American respondents.

Next, we explored whether following the news about the redesign differed by age, gender, and education (see Table 9). For the PAS respondents (overall sample), *very* or *fairly closely* following the news increased with age and was higher for men than

women. With respect to education there was a less clear pattern, which might have been a result of the high educational attainment of PAS respondents (84.5% reported having a 4-year college degree or higher).

Table 9. How Closely PAS Respondents (Overall) Followed the News About the Redesign of the Seal and Motto by Demographic Characteristics

Respondent Characteristics	Very or fairly closely %	Not too closely or not at all %
Age		
18-44	22.3	77.7
45-64	27.2	72.8
65+	31.5	68.5
Gender		
Female	22.9	77.1
Male	31.8	68.2
Education		
High school or less	22.5	77.5
Some college or 2-year degree	29.3	70.7
4-year college degree	26.1	73.9

Note: Total % vary slightly due to rounding

When we examined views among Native American respondents, we found similar patterns: that is, *very* or *fairly closely* following the news increased with age and was higher for men than women (see Table 10). Again, with respect to education, there was a less clear pattern which might have been a result of the high educational attainment of Native American respondents (65.2% reported having a 4-year college degree or higher, and 27.5% reported having some college or 2-year degree).

Table 10. How Closely Native Americans Followed the News About the Redesign of The Seal and Motto by Demographic Characteristics

Respondent characteristics	Very or fairly closely %	Not too closely or not at all %
Age		
18-44	56.1	43.9
45-64	62.8	37.2
65+	68.0	32.0
Gender		
Female	59.3	40.7
Male	64.7	35.3
Education		
High school or less	61.1	38.9
Some college or 2-year degree	62.7	37.3
4-year college degree	59.7	40.3

Note: Total % vary slightly due to rounding

Views About Symbols for the Seal

Table 11 presents the preferences for symbols according to the PAS respondents (overall sample) in the order from the most to the least liked. The top

seven choices that were liked *strongly* or *somewhat* by more than 50% of respondents include the right whale (state marine mammal), coast or shoreline, cranberries, black-capped chickadee (state bird), mayflower (state flower), cod, and the shape of Massachusetts.

Table 11. Most Preferred Symbols for the Seal According to PAS Respondents (Overall)

Symbol	Strongly like %	Somewhat like %	Strongly or somewhat like (Highest to lowest) %
Right whale	32.2	32.5	64.7
Coast or shoreline	26.4	37.7	64.1
Cranberries	24.5	37.1	61.6
Black-capped chickadee	23.6	32.8	56.4
Mayflower	21.7	34.1	55.8
Cod	22.1	30.8	52.9
Shape of Massachusetts	18.6	32.6	51.2
American elm tree	14.6	33.5	48.1
Waterways or riverways	14.8	32.3	47.1
Mountains or hills	13.8	33.0	46.8
Red-tailed hawk	15.6	29.1	44.7
A Native American or Indigenous person	20.2	20.8	41.0
Pine tree	14.6	25.8	40.4
The Capitol dome	8.4	26.1	34.5
A rising sun	10.0	24.2	34.2
People from different backgrounds	14.5	18.5	33.0
Turkey	12.4	20.5	32.9
Clasped hands	7.5	16.5	24.0
A colonial person	8.7	13.0	21.7
A white star	5.7	14.8	20.5
A feather	5.0	15.0	20.0

Note: Each item had a small number of missing responses that are excluded in reported %

Among the Native Americans respondents, there were eight choices that were liked *strongly* or *somewhat* by more than 50% of respondents. The most liked was the representation of a Native American or Indigenous person, followed by coast or shoreline, cranberries, and the right whale, which were the top three choices for the PAS respondents overall (see Table 12).

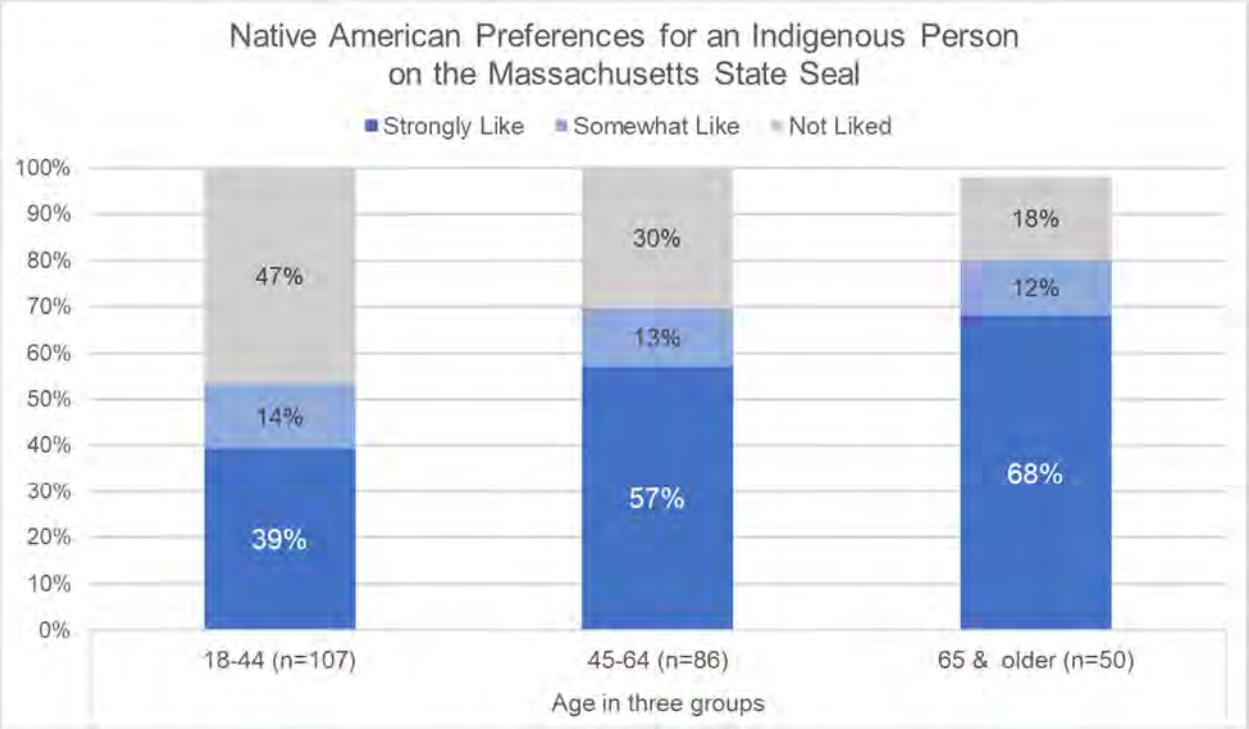
Table 12. Preferred Symbols for The Seal Among Native American Respondents

Symbol	Strongly like %	Somewhat like %	Strongly or somewhat like (Highest to lowest) %
A Native American or Indigenous person	51.9	13.2	65.1
Coast or shoreline	27.1	35.4	62.5
Cranberries	25.6	36.8	62.4
Right whale	33.3	27.1	60.4
Red-tailed hawk	34.9	21.7	56.6
Waterways or riverways	26.6	29	55.6
A rising sun	27.4	27	54.4
Mountains or hills	20.4	31.9	52.3
Pine tree	25.9	22.6	48.5
American elm tree	15.8	30.8	46.6
Cod	16.1	26.3	42.4
A feather	21.8	19.3	41.1
Black-capped chickadee	20.3	20.7	41
Shape of Massachusetts	13.9	24.8	38.7
Turkey	15.1	19.7	34.8
Mayflower	12.6	17.6	30.2
People from different backgrounds	11.7	16.3	28
A white star	7.2	12.2	19.4
Clasped hands	4.7	13.6	18.3
A colonial person	7.3	8.5	15.8
The Capitol Dome	3.8	11.8	15.6

Note: Each item had a small number of missing responses that are excluded in reported %

To understand patterns of preference for an Indigenous person on the state seal, we examined the association between age of Native respondents and their *strongly liking* a Native American on the seal, shown in Figure 3. Older Native American respondents were most likely to prefer an Indigenous person on the seal. Over two-thirds of Native American respondents aged 65 and older *strongly liked* having an Indigenous Person on the state seal, compared to only 39% of 18 to 44-year-old respondents *strongly liking* an Indigenous Person on the seal.

Figure 3. Preferences for an Indigenous Person on the State Seal among Native American Respondents by Age



Almost two-thirds of the PAS respondents overall (64.4%) and Native American respondents (70.5%) thought that the state seal should be on the Massachusetts flag.

Table 13 shows preferences among all racial and ethnic groups for symbols on the Massachusetts state seal. Except for the strong preference for a Native American or Indigenous person on the seal by Native American respondents, the top three choices were the right whale (state marine mammal), coastline or seashore, and cranberries (state berry).

Table 13. Most Preferred Symbols for The Seal by Race and Ethnicity

Symbols on Seals	Asian/Pacific Islander (n=210)	Black, non-Hispanic (n=111)	Latino Hispanic (n=375)	Native American (n=244)	White, non-Hispanic (n=8388)	Multiple, Other (n=388)	TOTAL (n=10134)
Right whale (state marine mammal)	72%	58%	61%	59%	65%	56%	64%
Coastline or seashore	72%	65%	61%	61%	64%	51%	64%
Cranberries (state berry)	58%	59%	58%	62%	62%	52%	61%
Black-capped chickadee (state bird)	57%	49%	52%	40%	57%	47%	56%
Mayflower (state flower)	56%	47%	53%	30%	57%	48%	55%
Cod (state fish)	60%	44%	53%	41%	53%	45%	52%
The shape of Massachusetts	48%	61%	43%	38%	53%	38%	51%
American elm tree (state tree)	49%	50%	47%	46%	48%	44%	48%
Waterways or riverways	59%	52%	51%	55%	47%	39%	47%
Mountains or hills	47%	54%	45%	50%	47%	37%	47%
Red-tailed hawk	50%	48%	47%	55%	44%	37%	44%
Pine tree	45%	42%	42%	48%	39%	40%	40%
Native American/Indigenous person	35%	44%	47%	65%	38%	48%	40%
The Capitol dome	36%	41%	33%	15%	35%	23%	34%
A rising sun	39%	43%	37%	53%	33%	30%	34%
People from different backgrounds	44%	47%	35%	27%	33%	26%	33%
Turkey (state game bird)	38%	27%	34%	34%	32%	30%	32%
Clasped hands	20%	23%	21%	18%	25%	16%	24%
A colonial person	11%	8%	19%	15%	21%	23%	21%
A white star	28%	21%	29%	19%	20%	18%	20%
A feather	21%	21%	26%	40%	19%	20%	20%

Note: Percentages lower than 50% are shaded in gray text; 418 respondents did not answer the race or ethnicity questions.

Views About Words, Phrases, and Language for the Motto

Table 14 shows that the most preferred word for the motto (*liked strongly* or *somewhat*) among the PAS respondents was *Peace* (71.1%). The second most liked was *Equality*, and the third choice was *Common good*.

Table 14. Most Preferred Words for the Motto According to PAS Respondents (Overall)

Word	Strongly like %	Somewhat like %	Strongly or somewhat like (Highest to lowest) %
Peace	42.0	29.1	71.1
Equality	40.6	27.7	68.3
Common good	35.7	32.0	67.7
Justice	39.1	27.8	66.9
Liberty	37.0	29.7	66.7
Commonwealth	29.9	30.3	60.2
Hope	27.5	28.9	56.4
Service	22.2	27.7	49.9

Note: Each item had a small number of missing responses that are excluded in reported %

When we examined the preferences of Native Americans respondents (see Table 15), again, as with the RSS and PAS respondents, the number one choice was *Peace*. For Native Americans, *Justice* was the second and *Liberty* was their third choice.

Table 15. Most Preferred Words for the Motto According to Native American Respondents

Word	Strongly like %	Somewhat like %	Strongly or somewhat like (Highest to lowest) %
Peace	45.6	22.4	68.0
Justice	34.3	26.4	60.7
Liberty	40.2	18.0	58.2
Equality	34.3	23.4	57.7
Hope	28.5	26.8	55.3
Common good	24.2	25.0	49.2
Service	19.3	25.6	44.9
Commonwealth	17.1	22.9	40.0

Note: Each item had a small number of missing responses that are excluded in reported %

Table 16 presents phrases that were suggested for the state motto. None of the phrases had a clear preference, although a little over a third of the overall public sample preferred *For the Common Good*. More than 40% of the Native American respondents reported that they did not like any of the options offered.

Table 16. The Best Phrase for the Motto According to PAS Respondents (Overall) and Native Americans Respondents - Top 2 Highlighted

Phrase	PAS overall sample %	Native American respondents %
For the Common Good	35.1	18.8
Peace, Justice, Equality	26.0	26.7
Service, Justice, Equality	10.0	12.5
None of the above phrases	28.9	42.1

Note: Total % vary slightly due to rounding

Much like when respondents were asked about whether the seal should be on the flag, around three-quarters all PAS respondents (75.3%) and the Native American respondents (69.7%) thought that the state motto should be on the Massachusetts flag.

Table 17 shows that a majority of the overall public sample (57.2%) preferred using English for the motto, followed by an Indigenous People's language (23.2%), whereas the majority of the Native American respondents preferred an Indigenous People's language (52.7%) followed by English (28.9%).

Table 17. Language Preferences for the State Motto by Race and Ethnicity

Language	Asian/Pac. Islander	Black, non-Hispanic	Latino Hispanic	Native American	White, non-Hispanic	Multiple, Other	PAS Overall
English	46.1%	47.3%	36.7%	28.9%	59.9%	46.7%	57.2
Latin	17.5%	15.5%	25.8%	13.0%	16.2%	26.5%	17.4
Indigenous People's language	35.9%	34.5%	34.5%	52.7%	21.7%	24.7%	23.2
Other/multiple	0.5%	2.7%	3.0%	5.4%	2.2%	2.1%	2.2

Note: Total % vary slightly due to rounding

KEY COMPARISONS BETWEEN RSS AND PAS

This section summarizes nine key differences and similarities in the survey responses from two surveys—one using a representative sample of household respondents (RSS) and the other based on a public access link to a web-based survey (PAS).

The two survey respondent groups differed in terms of where they get their news about what is happening in Massachusetts, how closely they followed the news about the redesign, their preference for the phrase and their preference for the language of the motto. Given that many respondents to the PAS learned about the survey via email or social media and tended to have college degrees, it is not surprising that PAS respondents reported frequent use of online news.

We found that RSS and PAS respondents shared similar views about preferences for the symbols for the seal, words for the motto, and whether the seal and motto should be on the Massachusetts flag.

Listed below are the major differences and similarities between the two sources of information about public opinion related to the state seal and motto.

1. Table 18 shows that, although most of the RSS respondents got their news from television, for the PAS respondents, the top source of news was online news websites or apps.

Table 18. The Most Common Way Respondents Get News About What Is Happening in Massachusetts

News source	RSS %	PAS %
Print newspapers	5.4	6.7
Radio	6.2	10.2
Television	42.8	10.3
Online news websites or apps	28.9	52.3
Social networking websites or apps	16.1	18.1
Friends, Word of Mouth		.7
Other	0.5	1.8

Note: Total % vary slightly due to rounding

2. When asked how closely they followed the news about the redesign of the seal and motto, only 10.6% of RSS respondents reported fairly or very closely following the news, compared to 26.2% of PAS respondents.

3. Table 19 presents the public and representative survey results by respondent characteristics. We examined those who followed the news about the redesign *very* or *fairly closely* by age, gender, and education, and found that the RSS respondents followed the news less closely than the PAS respondents, especially the youngest RSS respondents (18-44). Men in both groups followed the news more closely than

women. With respect to education, the RSS respondents with less education reported following the news more closely than more educated respondents, which was not the case among the PAS respondents.

Table 19. Percent of Respondents who Very or Fairly Closely Followed the News About the Seal and Motto by Demographic Characteristics

Respondent characteristics	RSS %	PAS %
Age		
18-44	0.0	22.3
45-64	13.9	27.2
65+	11.7	31.5
Gender		
Female	9.5	22.9
Male	11.3	31.8
Education		
High school or less	18.2	22.5
Some college or 2-year degree	4.4	29.3
4-year college degree	9.7	26.1

Note: Total % vary slightly due to rounding

4. Table 20 shows how both survey groups' most preferred symbols for the seal were coast or shoreline and the right whale. Cranberries scored in the top three or top five for both groups. The shape of Massachusetts was the most liked in the RSS respondent group, but was preferred by fewer PAS respondents, although it was liked by more than 50% of the PAS respondents. The state flower, the mayflower, scored in the top five in both groups.

Table 20. Most Preferred Symbols (Strongly or Somewhat Liked by 50% or More)

Symbol	RSS %	Symbol	PAS %
Shape of Massachusetts	69.6	Right whale	64.7
Coast or Shoreline	58.5	Coast or shoreline	64.1
Right whale	58.4	Cranberries	61.6
Mayflower	56.0	Black-capped chickadee	56.4
Cranberries	53.8	Mayflower	55.8
A Native American or Indigenous person	52.2	Cod	52.9
		Shape of Massachusetts	51.2

Note: Each item had a small number of missing responses that are excluded in reported %

5. With respect to the preferred words for the motto, see Table 21. Peace was the winner in both groups. *Equality* scored high in both groups – it was number two in PAS and number three in RSS. The third word that was liked by both groups was *Justice*.

Table 21. Most Preferred Words for the Motto (Strongly or Somewhat Liked by 50% or More)

Word	RSS %	Word	PAS %
Peace	72.2	Peace	71.1
Liberty	69.4	Equality	68.3
Equality	64.5	Common good	67.7
Justice	62.6	Justice	66.9
Commonwealth	57.0	Liberty	66.7
Hope	53.8	Commonwealth	60.2
Common good	53.3	Hope	56.4
Service	44.5	Service	49.9

Note: Each item had a small number of missing responses that are excluded in reported %

6. Table 22 shows that there was less agreement with respect to the most preferred phrase – it was *Peace, Justice, Equality* for the RSS group and *For the Common Good* for the PAS group.

Table 22. The Best Phrase for the Motto

Phrase	RSS %	PAS %
For the Common Good	21.3	35.1
Peace, Justice, Equality	43.1	26.0
Service, Justice, Equality	8.5	10.0
None of the above phrases	27.1	28.9

Note: Total % vary slightly due to rounding

7. The majority of the RSS respondents (73.2%) and PAS respondents (64.4%) thought that the state seal should be on the Massachusetts flag.

8. Similarly, three-quarters of the RSS respondents (76.1%) and PAS respondents (75.3%) thought that the state motto should be on the Massachusetts flag.

9. Table 23 shows that although a majority of the RSS and PAS respondents preferred English language for the motto, this preference was higher among the RSS respondents (70% vs 57.2%). In the PAS group, close to 1 in 4 respondents (23.2%) selected a Native or Indigenous People's language, compared to 14.4% in the RSS sample.

Table 23. The Best Language for the Motto

Language	RSS %	PAS %
English	70.0	57.2
Latin	11.7	17.4
Native or Indigenous People's language	14.4	23.2
Other/multiple	3.9	2.2

Note: Total % vary slightly due to rounding

KEY FINDINGS – SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

CSR conducted seven small group discussions via Zoom with members of Indigenous communities in Massachusetts and other Massachusetts residents between August 23 and September 8, 2023. The purpose of the group discussions was to gather additional input about residents' views and knowledge about the state seal and motto, the role of a seal and motto, as well as their opinions about symbols they deemed appropriate for a seal, and words and phrases appropriate for a motto. Three senior researchers moderated the groups, with one moderator per discussion group. The groups were scheduled during the morning, afternoon, and evening hours to accommodate various participants' availabilities. The number of participants per group ranged from two to six, and a total of twenty-five residents participated.

The participants were recruited through researchers' networks from the UMass centers and institutes, including the use of the snow-ball sample that involved asking participants in the earlier discussion groups if they can pass the invitation to their acquaintances who might want to take part. CSR recruited residents from different regions of Massachusetts, who varied by race and ethnicity, gender, age, and education. Five participants were from the Boston region, eight from Metro, two from Central, three from Northeast, and seven from the Western region. With respect to race/ethnicity, there were six American Indian or Alaska Native participants, ten White participants, six Asian participants, two Hispanic/Latino participants, and one Black participant. Twenty participants were female and five were male. With respect to age, participants were between 34 and 84, with seven participants under the age of 40, four between the age of 40 and 49, five between 50 and 59, five between 60 and 69, and four participants who were 70 years or older. Finally, with respect to education, two participants had a high school diploma, one had some college experience, eight held a college degree, and the remaining nine had advanced graduate degrees.

Summary of Small Group Discussions

The Seal/Motto Recognition

When participants were asked about the last time they saw the seal or motto, most mentioned seeing the seal in some official representation -- at the state house, senate building, city hall, on official documents, the state flag, and the like. Some of the participants came from the UMass campus network, and a couple mentioned seeing the seal at graduation, on graduation pins, and that the seal was prominent at UMass Amherst. One person mentioned knowing a UMass student who went on a hunger strike to replace the seal. Some of the participants were knowledgeable about the efforts to replace the seal, whereas others hardly knew what the seal looked like. Similarly, many participants did not recognize the seal on the state flag.

The groups included participants who were long-term Massachusetts residents, some born and raised, as well as those who moved to Massachusetts recently, including some immigrants. A few had to think hard about the specifics of the seal, as they knew they had seen it but could not remember the details. A couple of respondents even admitted that they had to look up the seal and motto on the Internet before the

group discussion. While most people could remember seeing the seal (even if they did not know the details of the seal), the motto was far less familiar to them. A couple of people mentioned that they knew the motto was in Latin, and that they had heard what it said and knew it was not something they supported.

Knowledge about the Efforts to Revise the State Seal and Motto

Most participants heard some news about the efforts to revise the seal and motto, but there was a notable distinction between participants who are Native Americans and other participants in terms of their knowledge about the process and the timeline. On the one hand, the participants who are Native Americans or have ties to the Native American community had been following the process very closely. Some were personally engaged in the process of ensuring that the new seal is more honoring to their community; one mentioned signing a petition; and one mentioned that the seal was on a lot of state rugs and that Native American students at UMass Amherst organized and raised the issue about people wiping their muddy shoes on those rugs and on the face depicted on the seal. The efforts made by these UMass Amherst students resulted in the library holding a focus group which then lead to the removal of those rugs from the library.

On the other hand, most of the other participants who heard something about the efforts to redesign the seal could not recall the details, some were not clear about the reasons for the change, and a few said they knew nothing about the effort or the process. Those who heard about the efforts mentioned seeing some news in the Boston Globe, print and online news media, on television, and from friends or co-workers. Some of the participants asked about the steps in the process, who will be involved in the actual redesign (e.g., will artists be involved not just legislators), whether people will have an option to vote online for different options, how the decisions will be made and “where the buck stops.”

Role for the Seal

Many participants acknowledged that the seal is typically used on official documents and that the practical purpose of the seal is for administrative purposes to represent official state documents. Some people, when asked about the purpose of the seal, did not think there was any significant purpose. Some thought that if the seal is used to represent the people and history of the state it should be something that everyone would be proud of, and certainly should not be something that would offend any groups or communities. The participants were not necessarily opposed to the idea that the seal would represent Native tribes but thought it should be done in a way that is respectful, accurate, and does not perpetuate stereotypes. One participant mentioned that the Indigenous person depicted on the current seal is not from Massachusetts because they are not wearing the correct regalia and is more likely to be from a West or Midwest Ojibwe tribe.

While many thought that the seal has a place on official state documents, the official letterhead, and on driver’s licenses, many also did not think that the seal should be on the flag, and some did not know it was on the flag. One person said that the fact

that the seal is on the flag shows it is something that Massachusetts supports. Two people discussed that the seal is like a company logo and that it can be used for "marketing" purposes. One person wondered about the significance of the white color of the flag. Group interview participants noted that some states have seals that are not on the state flags. Opinions about the role of the seal on the state flag were mixed. Some participants thought the seal should not be on the flag (that the seal and the flag should be separate), and others noted that if the seal is to be on the flag that it should be updated.

Symbols for the Seal

The participants were very engaged in the discussion about the symbols and themes that they thought would be appropriate for the seal. Some of the issues with the current seal included the opinion that it is hard to discern that the seal represents Massachusetts, because there is no state name or the year it became a state. Having the motto in Latin, which most people do not understand, makes it even more difficult to identify the seal's relationship to Massachusetts. The questions were also raised about the purpose of the seal and whether it should represent the past or the future (looking back or looking forward), and the impression that the current seal looks like a coat of arms which is anachronistic.

One participant suggested that a seal should include a depiction of something that is safe, secure, gives hope (similar to the seal of Rhode Island). It should also be large and easy to see what the symbols represent, and not have something that may be offensive to any groups, or be small, packed, and hard to read.

The participants wanted to see something that truly represents Massachusetts, and many preferred natural to the built symbols (e.g., a landscape rather than the Capitol dome). Some thought that a tree like an elm tree would be boring, and that cod, although it is a state fish and liked by some participants, would not be a good symbol because people might confuse it with haddock. Consideration was given to the chickadee, red tailed hawk, turkey, wildlife, and quahog, but the animal that was most frequently mentioned was the whale. The reasons for liking the whale include that it is an important part of Massachusetts history, that the whaling industry was a big reason people came to New England and Massachusetts specifically, that it represents ocean and coastline, and since the whales are now endangered, including them on a seal would raise awareness.

Different trees, flowers, and the changing of foliage were mentioned, but very frequently mentioned and liked by many were cranberries; this includes one person who suggested the cranberry color for the flag (of note, another person brought up the white color of the flag and suggested that the flag needs more color). Several people liked the shape (outline) of Massachusetts as a possible symbol for the seal, because it is unique and recognizable.

Aside from depictions of plants, animals, and various natural elements, the participants frequently mentioned that they would like the seal to represent positive aspects of Massachusetts, such as community, diversity, and inclusion. Participants

noted that Massachusetts is becoming a diverse state, with many different racial, ethnic, and other groups, and one person suggested having a depiction of different communities by age, race, ethnicity, etc. as something they would like to see on the seal. One person mentioned that rather than just having an Indigenous person, the seal could depict Puritan and Indigenous people side by side. Participants also mentioned education (Massachusetts having the first public school in the nation and many colleges), healthcare and health industry, achievements in biotech, justice, equality, and other industries or areas that Massachusetts is leading the charge.

Thoughts about the Motto

The participants were very engaged in the discussion about the motto. Overwhelmingly, they did not want the motto to be in Latin and preferred it to be in English or Wampanoag. The comments about the current motto included that it is very colonial, not very peaceful, and that since it is in Latin most people do not know what it means. This raises questions about the purpose of the motto when people do not know it or do not know what it means, and that the motto does not resonate today because its creation was inspired by aggressive thinking that conveys colonialism, racism, and the removal of liberties from the Indigenous population.

Several words and phrases were mentioned for the potential new motto, but education, followed by diversity, was the most frequent. Other aspirational words included community, opportunity, innovation (leader in everything from cranberries to biotech), inclusion, equality, progressiveness (progressive policies), independence (emblematic of Massachusetts), freedom (“free for all” on the Boston public library), welcoming, environmentally sustainable, service (JFK’s statement “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country”), liberty (but would need to redefine and make it relevant to contemporary society), and “liberty by the pen” instead of the sword.

Some ideas for the motto phrases included wanting something that is catchy like “live free or die”; one person mentioned “Brains first, and then hard work” (from Winnie the Pooh); and a couple people suggested having a motto in a native language (Wampanoag) such as “we live and work together,” “harmony,” “Land of the First Light,” or “Land of the rising sun.”

Communicating the Process to the Public

The participants were interested in the process and thought that the designs should be shown to the public for approval, online voting, or some other way to obtain feedback and ensure that the new seal is not unintentionally offensive to any groups. People are looking for transparency from the state, which could include occasional feature articles and advertising through the media (traditional as well as social media to reach younger people). One person suggested direct outreach to different communities to see if they want to have a say in the change. One person said that from a Native perspective, Massachusetts has a lot to do to repair their relationship with the Native Indigenous communities, and this could be an opportunity for that. One person also noted that public education about the seal and motto needs to be improved.

Key Observations from Group Interviews

The participants in each of the group interviews were very engaged in the discussion. One limitation of such interviews is that the recruiting process may tend to identify people who have enthusiasm for the topic. However, we observed that many of the participants were unaware of the efforts in Massachusetts to redesign the state seal and motto. On the other hand, a few participants have been engaged in discussion about the seal dating to their college experiences and seeing the seal on University of Massachusetts official materials.

The key takeaways varied from group to group, but some of the things the participants preferred to see in the seal included symbols depicting nature, rather than buildings or “human representation.” They would also not like the seal to include the American flag, anything that symbolizes violence (a gun, sword, cannon, etc.), or representations of money. The participants also emphasized that Massachusetts is a leader in progressive polices, education, industry, and innovation, and felt that those should be portrayed in some way.

Many participants also agreed that it would be good to honor Indigenous communities of Massachusetts but were not sure how to do it. They also saw the change as an opportunity for a teaching moment to learn about the existence of the seal and motto, its history, and the violence it represents. The participants were enthusiastic about the idea that the seal and motto should also be a “branding” opportunity for Massachusetts, and thought it had to be something unique to the state. Cranberries, either as a symbol or the color, were very popular, as well as the whale, and the shape or outline of the state. The imagery of clasped hands, feathers, white star, rising sun, or Capitol Dome were seen as too generic. For the motto there was an emphasis on knowledge/education and community/diversity.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This report provided key findings from the survey about the Official Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth collected using surveys of a representative sample of Massachusetts residents (the RSS), an open-invitation web-based survey distributed via public outreach (the PAS), and findings from the small group discussions. The report also provided insights into differences between respondents from the representative sample survey and Public Access Survey, including some important limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the findings.

Most Massachusetts residents appear to not be focusing attention to ongoing discussions to revise or redesign the state seal and motto. However, members of Native American communities are likely to be closely following news reports about the state seal. In fact, over one-half of Native American survey respondents reported they were closely watching the news about the state seal and motto.

We found that the right whale was very popular – it was liked by about 60% of respondents, regardless of the survey sample or population. The coast or shoreline was also well liked – by about 60% regardless of the survey sample or population. Almost

two thirds of Native American respondents liked having a Native American or Indigenous person represented on the seal. This preference was higher with older Native American respondents.

From the small group discussions, we learned that participants thought that the representation of a Native American or Indigenous person(s) should be done in a way that is respectful, does not perpetuate stereotypes, and accurately represents Indigenous People. Cranberries were popular, and an idea brought up in the group discussion mentioned that the color of cranberries could be used for the flag. With respect to the motto, Peace, Liberty, Equality, and Justice were preferred for the motto, and Peace was identified as the most popular across surveys or population.

With respect to language for the state motto, English was preferred in the RSS and PAS, followed by a Native or Indigenous People's language, and among Native Americans a language spoken by Indigenous People would be preferred.

Additional insights can be addressed by future analyses which are beyond the scope of this report.

This work could not have been successful without the efforts of many people. The Center for Survey Research would like to thank the members of the Special Commission who helped with the survey development and outreach efforts; members of Native American communities who shared invitations to participate in the survey and group discussions; the staff at the Center for Survey Research who did the survey work; and especially the residents of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts who responded to the two surveys.

Appendix A. Creating Survey Weights for the Representative Sample Survey

First, we examined four respondent characteristics that might be used for survey weights—age, gender, education, and race or ethnicity. Creating a 4-characteristic weight was not feasible due to the small numbers of respondents in each cross-tabulated cell. In other words, if each respondent characteristic had two levels (e.g., age 18-65 and 65+), it would result in 16 separate cells to present 342 respondents with respondents unequally distributed among cells. Moreover, since only 66 respondents were people of color, it was not advisable to create a race or ethnicity survey weight. Any attempt to do so would create sample cases with relatively large weights. This, in turn, gives too much influence on a small number of sample cases and creates large standard errors.

Table A1 shows the distribution of household respondents by age, gender, and education. We used 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) data for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to represent the demographic characteristics of adults (aged 18 or older) in the state.[4]

Table A1. Respondent characteristics used to create survey weights

Characteristics	Mass Seal Household Survey		ACS/Census	
	%	n	%	n
Age				
18-64	54.0785%	179	77.8864%	4,438,674
65+	45.9215%	152	22.1136%	1,260,234
	100.0000%	331	100.0000%	5,698,908
Gender				
Female	55.2870%	183	51.4896%	2,934,345
Male	44.7130%	148	48.5104%	2,764,563
	100.0000%	331	100.0000%	5,698,908
Education				
Some college or less	41.2463%	139	56.4391%	3,186,546
College plus	58.7537%	198	43.5609%	2,459,440
	100.0000%	337	100.0000%	5,645,986

Second, based on percentages in Table A1, we calculated weights for each respondent characteristic—age, gender, and education. For example, the sample weight for respondents aged 18 to 64 is equal to 0.778864 divided by 0.540785 or 1.44025.

[4] https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT1Y2022.B01001A?q=race+ethnicity&g=040XX00US25

Table A2. Survey weights for each respondent characteristic

Survey Weights	
Characteristics	Weights
Age	
18-64	1.44025
65+	0.48155
Gender	
Female	0.93131
Male	1.08493
Education	
Some college	1.36834
College plus	0.74142

Third, we calculated final survey weights as multiplicative weights. For example, to create a survey weight for 18- to 64-year-old women with some college, we multiplied 1.44025 * 0.93131 * 1.36834 and calculated a survey weight of 1.83539. Note that some rounding error does occur in creating weights. These weights are presented in Table A3.

Table A3. Multiplicative survey weights for the Representative Sample Survey (RSS)

FINAL WEIGHTS			
Age	Gender	Education	WEIGHT
18-64	Female	Some college	1.83539
18-64	Female	College plus	0.99448
18-64	Male	Some college	2.13812
18-64	Male	College plus	1.15851
65+	Female	Some college	0.61367
65+	Female	College plus	0.33251
65+	Male	Some college	0.71489
65+	Male	College plus	0.38735

Finally, to ensure that the final sample size with weighted data equals the original sample size, we created an additional weight to account for rounding error and missing information on respondent characteristics used to create weights. This produced a simple adjustment to recenter survey weights around 1.0 to sum to original sample size. In other words, we used the survey weight and noted that the weighted sample size for frequencies was 339, instead of 342. Thus, our final weight for the survey equal to the WEIGHT divided by (339/342). Any respondent with missing information on weighting variables received a survey weight of 1.

All data used in the survey report used these final survey weights in SPSS.

Appendix B: 1st Mailing Invitation

Special Commission Relative to the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Summer 2023

Dear Massachusetts Resident,

We are writing to invite you to join us in designing a new seal and motto for Massachusetts.

On behalf of the Special Commission Relative to the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth, we asked the Center for Survey Research at the University of Massachusetts Boston (CSR) to work with us and help us learn how residents view the seal and motto and to gather public input that represents the diversity of communities and perspectives in the Commonwealth.

Enclosed you will find a survey that asks about your familiarity with the current seal and motto of the Commonwealth and your input on the new design. We're enclosing $5 as a thank you.

How can I help? Complete the survey and let us know what you think! We would like the **«Oldest_Youngest»** adult in the household to complete the survey. It should take less than 10 minutes of your time. You can either:

- Fill out the enclosed paper survey and mail it back to us in the prepaid envelope
- Or you can answer the survey online - this will save postage costs and ensure that your answers get to us quickly. To complete the survey online:

Please go to**: https://bit.ly/MassSealSurvey**
and enter this code: **«CSRID»**

Why this survey is important? By answering this survey, you will contribute to the creation of a more inclusive state symbol that represents all residents, regardless of background or origin.

Are my answers confidential? Your answers are confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside the research team. All answers will be combined into a general report that will make recommendations for the new design of the seal and motto.

What if I have other questions? If you have any questions, please contact Ebony Haley at CSR at 617-287-7205 or email her at Ebony.Haley@umb.edu.

Thank you for taking the time to contribute to our work. Together, we can create a symbol that reflects the spirit and unity of Massachusetts.

Brian Boyles (Co-Chair)
Mass Humanities

Brian Mosquera Weeden (Co-Chair)
Chairman, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

Michael Comeau (Co-Vice Chair)
Massachusetts Archives & Commonwealth Museum

Brittney Walley (Co-Vice Chair)
Representative, Hassanamisco Nipmuc Tribe

Español al Otro Lado

Special Commission Relative to the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Verano de 2023

Estimado residente de Massachusetts:

Le escribimos para invitarlo a unirse a nosotros en el diseño de un sello y un lema nuevos para Massachusetts.

En nombre de la Comisión Especial Relativa al Sello y Lema de la Mancomunidad, le pedimos al Centro de Investigación de Encuestas de la Universidad de Massachusetts Boston (CSR) que trabaje con nosotros y nos ayude a conocer la opinión de los residentes sobre el sello y el lema, y a recopilar aportes públicos que representen la diversidad de comunidades y perspectivas de la mancomunidad.

Encontrará una encuesta adjunta en la que se le pregunta sobre su familiaridad con el sello y el lema actuales de la mancomunidad, y su opinión sobre el nuevo diseño. Adjuntamos $5 como agradecimiento.

¿Cómo puedo ayudar? Complete la encuesta y háganos saber lo que piensa. Nos gustaría que el adulto **«SpanOldestYoungest»** del hogar complete la encuesta. Debería tardar menos de 10 minutos en responderla. Puede optar por lo siguiente:

- Puede completar la encuesta adjunta en papel y enviárnosla por correo en el sobre franqueado
- O puede responder la encuesta en línea; esto ahorrará costos de envío y garantizará que sus respuestas nos lleguen rápidamente.

Por favor, visite: **https://bit.ly/MassSealSurvey**
e ingrese este código: **«CSRID»**

¿Por qué es importante esta encuesta? Si responde a esta encuesta, contribuirá a la creación de un símbolo estatal más inclusivo que represente a todos los residentes, independientemente de su origen u procedencia.

¿Son confidenciales mis respuestas? Sus respuestas son confidenciales y no se compartirán con nadie ajeno al equipo de investigación. Todas las respuestas se combinarán en un informe general donde se harán recomendaciones para el nuevo diseño del sello y el lema.

¿Qué pasa si tengo otras preguntas? Si tiene alguna pregunta, llame a Ebony Haley al CSR al 617-287-7205 o envíele un correo electrónico a Ebony.Haley@umb.edu.

Gracias por dedicar su tiempo a ayudarnos con nuestro trabajo. Juntos podemos crear un símbolo que refleje el espíritu y la unidad de Massachusetts.

Brian Boyles (Co-Chair)
Mass Humanities

Brian Moskwetah Weeden (Co-Chair)
Chairman, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

Michael Comeau (Co-Vice Chair)
Massachusetts Archives & Commonwealth Museum

Brittney Walley (Co-Vice Chair)
Representative, Hassanamisco Nipmuc Tribe

English on Other Side

Appendix C: 2nd Mailing Invitation

Special Commission Relative to the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

September 2023

Dear Massachusetts Resident,

Recently, we sent you a survey asking about your opinion about what might be included in a new seal and motto for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. If you have already responded, thank you! If you haven't responded yet, please take a few minutes today to complete the enclosed paper survey or go online to do it.

Your opinion is important. There are few opportunities for residents to participate in the work of the Commonwealth. This survey is one way that you can help create a symbol that reflects the values of our state, showing the principles that unite us and celebrate our shared vision for the future.

We have to close the survey on September 27. Many Massachusetts residents have already taken the time to respond to the survey and we want to give you a chance to contribute to the creation of a state symbol that represents all residents.

Please ask the **«Oldest_Youngest» adult** in your household to:

- Complete the enclosed paper survey and return it in the enclosed postage paid envelope

  OR

- Answer the survey online to save postage costs and make sure that your answers get to us before the deadline. To complete the survey online:

Please go to**: https://bit.ly/MassSealSurvey**

and enter this code: **«CSRID»**

Do I have to answer this? No, it is your choice. However, if you don't respond, we won't have an accurate picture of how people like you feel - so your response really matters.

What if I have other questions? If you have any questions, please contact Ebony Haley at the Center for Survey Research at 617-287-7205 or email her at Ebony.Haley@umb.edu.

Your voice matters, and we encourage you to complete this survey. It will take a short amount of your time, but its impact will be with us for years to come.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Brian Boyles (Co-Chair)
Mass Humanities

Brian Moskwetah Weeden (Co-Chair)
Chairman, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

Michael Comeau (Co-Vice Chair)
Massachusetts Archives & Commonwealth Museum

Brittney Walley (Co-Vice Chair)
Representative, Hassanamisco Nipmuc Tribe

Special Commission Relative to the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Septiembre, 2023

Estimado residente de Massachusetts:

Recientemente, le enviamos una encuesta en la que le preguntábamos su opinión sobre lo que podría incluirse en un sello y un lema nuevos para la mancomunidad de Massachusetts. Si ya ha respondido, ¡gracias! Si aún no ha respondido, tómese unos minutos hoy para completar la encuesta adjunta impresa o respóndala en línea.

Su opinión es importante. Hay pocas oportunidades para que los residentes participen en el trabajo de la mancomunidad. Esta encuesta es una forma de ayudar a crear un símbolo que refleje los valores de nuestro estado, mostrando los principios que nos unen y celebrando nuestra visión compartida de futuro.

Tenemos que cerrar la encuesta el 27 de septiembre. Muchos residentes de Massachusetts ya han dedicado tiempo a responder a la encuesta y queremos darle la oportunidad de contribuir a la creación de un símbolo estatal que represente a todos los residentes.

Pida el adulto **«SpanOldestYoungest»** del hogar que:

- completa la encuesta adjunta y enviárnosla por correo en el sobre franqueado
- O responda a la encuesta en línea para ahorrarse los gastos de envío y asegurarse de que sus respuestas nos lleguen antes de la fecha límite. Para completar la encuesta en línea:

Por favor, visite: **https://bit.ly/MassSealSurvey**

e ingrese este código: **«CSRID»**

¿Tengo que contestar? No, es su elección. Sin embargo, queremos que nuestros resultados sean precisos, y no queremos dejar fuera a personas que ven las cosas como usted las ve.

¿Qué pasa si tengo preguntas sobre la encuesta? Si tiene otras preguntas sobre la encuesta, por favor, llame a Ebony Haley en CSR al 617-287-7205 o envíele un correo electrónico a Ebony.Haley@umb.edu.

Su voz importa y lo alentamos a que complete esta encuesta. Le llevará poco tiempo, pero su impacto nos acompañará durante años.

Gracias de antemano por su ayuda.

Brian Boyles (Co-Chair)
Mass Humanities

Brian Moskwetah Weeden (Co-Chair)
Chairman, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

Michael Comeau (Co-Vice Chair)
Massachusetts Archives & Commonwealth Museum

Brittney Walley (Co-Vice Chair)
Representative, Hassanamisco Nipmuc Tribe

Appendix D: Survey Questionnaire

Survey about the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Instructions

- Please fill out this survey and return it in the postage-paid envelope.
- Your participation in this study is voluntary. If there is a question you would rather not answer, skip it, and go on to the next question.
- Thank you for taking the time to help with this very important project.

1. What is the <u>most common</u> way that you get news about what is happening in Massachusetts? Please select one.

- ☐ Print newspapers
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Online news websites or apps
- ☐ Social networking websites or apps
- ☐ Other → *Please describe*: _____

2. In 2021, Governor Charlie Baker created a Special Commission to review and recommend changes to the Massachusetts state seal and motto. How closely have you been following news about the redesign of the Massachusetts state seal and motto?

- ☐ Very closely
- ☐ Fairly closely
- ☐ Not too closely
- ☐ Not at all

REDESIGNING THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE SEAL

A bit of background about state seals

- U.S. states have seals as symbols of authority and official recognition.
- State seals are used on official documents, such as laws and proclamations, to verify their validity.
- State seals are designed to represent the shared values, history, and identity of a state.

<u>MASSACHUSETTS STATE SEAL</u>



3. Some states have seals showing the geography or natural features of their state, such as the hills or waterways. How important would it be to you to have some of the natural features of Massachusetts represented on a new Massachusetts state seal?

- ☐ Not important at all
- ☐ A little important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Very important

4. How much would you like or dislike having each of the following natural features on a new Massachusetts state seal?

	Strongly Dislike	Somewhat Dislike	Neither Dislike nor Like	Somewhat Like	Strongly Like
The shape of Massachusetts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coastline or seashore	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mountains or hills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Waterways or riverways	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. Other state seals have local plants, trees, or flowers on them, such as their state flower or state tree. How important would it be to you to have plants, trees, or flowers on a new Massachusetts state seal?

- ☐ Not important at all
- ☐ A little important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Very important

6. How much would you like or dislike having each of the following on a new Massachusetts state seal?

	Strongly Dislike	Somewhat Dislike	Neither Dislike nor Like	Somewhat Like	Strongly Like
American elm tree (state tree)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cranberries (state berry)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mayflower (state flower)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pine tree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. Local wildlife, including animals such as state birds, are also represented on some states' seals. How important would it be to you to have local wildlife on a new Massachusetts state seal?

- ☐ Not important at all
- ☐ A little important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Very important

8. How much would you like or dislike having each of the following on a new Massachusetts state seal?

	Strongly Dislike	Somewhat Dislike	Neither Dislike nor Like	Somewhat Like	Strongly Like
Red-tailed hawk	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Turkey (state game bird)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Black-capped chickadee (state bird)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Right whale (state marine mammal)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cod (state fish)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. How much would you like or dislike having each of the following on a new Massachusetts state seal? [81]

	Strongly Dislike ↓	Somewhat Dislike ↓	Neither Dislike nor Like ↓	Somewhat Like ↓	Strongly Like ↓
A colonial person	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A Native American or Indigenous person	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People from different backgrounds	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Clasped hands	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A feather	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A rising sun	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A white star	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Capitol dome	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. Are there any other symbols that you think represent Massachusetts that should be on the state seal?

☐ Yes → *Please describe*: _____

☐ No

11. Some states have their state seal on their state flag and others don't. Currently, the Massachusetts state flag is the state seal on a white background. Do you think the Massachusetts state seal should be on the Massachusetts state flag?

☐ Yes

☐ No

CHANGING THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE MOTTO

A bit of background about state mottos

- A state motto is a phrase or sentence that states a unifying belief, goal, or intention.
- A state motto can express the shared aspirations and identity of a state and its residents.

MASSACHUSETTS STATE MOTTO

Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem

(By the sword we seek peace, but peace only under liberty)

12. The Special Commission would like to create a new motto that is something the residents of Massachusetts can aspire and work towards together. How much do you like or dislike having the following words in a new Massachusetts state motto?

	Strongly Dislike ↓	Somewhat Dislike ↓	Neither Dislike nor Like ↓	Somewhat Like ↓	Strongly Like ↓
Common good	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Commonwealth	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Equality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hope	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Justice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Liberty	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Peace	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. In your opinion, which of the following phrases would be <u>best</u> for the new Massachusetts state motto? Please select one.

- ☐ For the Common Good
- ☐ Peace, Justice, Equality
- ☐ Service, Justice, Equality
- ☐ None of the above phrases

14. Do you think that the motto should be part of the new Massachusetts state seal?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

15. In what language should the state motto be written? Please select one.

- ☐ English
- ☐ Latin
- ☐ A language spoken by Native or Indigenous Peoples of Massachusetts
- ☐ Another language→ _____

ABOUT YOU

16. How long have you lived in Massachusetts?

- ☐ Less than 5 years
- ☐ 5 to 10 years
- ☐ 11 to 15 years
- ☐ More than 15 years

17. Counting yourself, how many people 18 years old or older live in your household?

_____Write in number of adults in household

18. What is your age?

- ☐ 18 to 24
- ☐ 25 to 34
- ☐ 35 to 44
- ☐ 45 to 54
- ☐ 55 to 64
- ☐ 65 to 74
- ☐ 75 or older

19. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ I use a different term → *Please describe:*

_____

20. What is the highest grade or level of school that you have completed?

- ☐ 8th grade or less
- ☐ Some high school, but did not graduate
- ☐ High school graduate or GED
- ☐ Some college or 2-year degree
- ☐ 4-year college degree or higher

21. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent?

- ☐ Yes, Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ No, not Hispanic or Latino

22. What is your race? Mark one or more.

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native → Please print the name of your principal tribe or nation:

  _____
  _
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White
- ☐ Other → *Please describe:*_____

Thank you! Please return the completed survey in the postage-paid envelope.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Commission extends its thanks to the generations of Massachusetts residents whose advocacy made this work possible; to the legislators who sponsored the enabling legislation, Senator Jason M. Lewis, Representative Lindsay Sabadosa, and former Representative Nika C. Elugardo, and their co-sponsors; to Governors Baker and Healey; to Seamus Corbett, Rick Makulis, Debora Collins, and Nancy A. Delahunt; to Lee Hargraves, Carol Cosenza, Cedric Woods, Nicole Cohee, Dragana Bolcic-Jankovic, and the Center for Survey Research at the University of Massachusetts Boston; to Diane Feltner and Amber Tubbs; and to Kate Miller.

We thank the many members of the public who contacted the Commission to express opinions, ideas, questions, and challenges. We are especially grateful to the many students and educators who dedicated their time to following our efforts and creating their own versions of the seal, motto, and flag; and to the 79 towns that voted to support the work of the Commission.

Signed by the Governor, Chapter 2 of the Resolves of 2020 – January 11, 2021

RESOLVE PROVIDING FOR THE CREATION OF A SPECIAL COMMISSION RELATIVE TO THE SEAL AND MOTTO OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Resolved, That there shall be a special commission to: (i) investigate the features of the official seal and motto of the commonwealth, under sections 1 to 6, inclusive, of chapter 2 of the General Laws, including those features that may be unwittingly harmful to or misunderstood by the citizens of the commonwealth; and (ii) examine and study the seal and motto of the commonwealth to ensure that they faithfully reflect and embody the historic and contemporary commitments of the commonwealth to peace, justice, liberty and equality and to spreading the opportunities and advantages of education.

The commission shall make recommendations for a revised or new design of the seal of the commonwealth and a revised or new motto of the commonwealth and shall make recommendations for an educational program on the history and meaning of the seal and motto.

The commission shall consist of: the executive director of the commission on Indian affairs or a designee; 5 members appointed by the commission on Indian affairs who are lineal descendants of tribes with a historical presence in the commonwealth; the state secretary or a designee; the chairs of the joint committee on state administration and regulatory oversight; the senate minority leader or a designee; the house minority leader or a designee; the executive director of the Massachusetts historical commission or a designee; the executive director of the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy or a designee; the executive director of the Massachusetts cultural council or a designee; and 5 members appointed by the governor who shall have relevant cultural and historical expertise. The members shall select a chair and vice chair of the commission.

Not later than October 1, 2021, the commission shall submit a detailed report with its proposals and recommendations, along with drafts of legislation necessary to carry out its recommendations, to the clerks of the senate and house of representatives, the joint committee on state administration and regulatory oversight and the governor. The clerks of the senate and house of representatives shall make the report available to the public via the internet. The commission shall not receive funds appropriated by the commonwealth; provided, however, that the commission may seek, accept and expend grants or gifts of money and professional, consulting, clerical or other services and supplies from the federal government or any other private or public source in the course of its investigation and study subject to the provisions of chapter 268A of the General Laws. The commissioners shall be appointed not more than 60 days after the effective date of this resolve. The special commission shall dissolve 60 days after the submission of the report, unless upon a 2/3rd vote of the commission an extension is deemed necessary and is ordered to complete the purpose of the commission; provided, however, that the time frame of the extension must be specified in the motion to grant the commission the extension.

Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth
October 11, 2023, at 1:00PM
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Commission Members Present:
Brian Boyles (Chair), Michael Comeau (Vice-Chair), Brittney Walley (Vice-Chair), John Peters, Rep. Antonio Cabral, Sen. Nick Collins, Kelly Bennet, Elizabeth Solomon, Chairwoman Melissa Ferretti, Micah Whitson, Brigadier General Leonid Kondratiuk, Brenton Simons, Donna Curtin, Jim Wallace

Absent/Excused:
Chairman Brian Weeden (Chair),Michael Vincent Amato, Rep. David Vieira, Brona Simon, Chairwoman Cheryl Andrews-Maltais

Invited Guests:
Lee Hargraves, Carol Cosenza, Dragana Bolcic-Jankovic

Brian Boyles, 1:01PM
Call to Order, Roll Call of Commission, Introductory Remarks

Brian Boyles, 1:04PM
Delivered Chairs Report which included a wrap-up of work done to-date, including the Interim Report, approval of a deadline extension to Nov 15th to submit the Final Report, the public survey conducted by the Center for Survey Research at UMass Boston, and work on an education framework and recommendations.

Sen. Nick Collins, 1:05PM
Asked for a description of the charge of the Commission to better understand the role of the Co-Chair of Joint Committee on State Administration & Regulatory Oversight

Brian Boyles, 1:05PM
Replied that the purpose of the Commission is to investigate the features of the official seal and motto of the Commonwealth and make recommendations to ensure they reflect and embody the historic and contemporary commitments of the Commonwealth to Justice, Equality and education for all. We were asked to make recommendations for or advised or a new design of the ceiling motto and an educational program on the history and meaning of the current motto.

Brian Boyles, 1:06PM
Expressed thanks to several members of the Commission who helped in the early design stage of this survey including Brigadier General Kondratiuk, Vice-Chair Walley, Donna Curtain, and John Peters and thanks to the many organizations and groups that helped us get the word out including the tribal nations, Massachusetts Veterans Service Officers Association, Mass Cultural Council and several other groups; led to a robust response; reminded Commission of next meeting; introduced Lee Hargraves;

Lee Hargraves, 1:07PM (refer to PowerPoint slides as a reference)
Joined by colleagues Carol Cosenza and Dragana Bolcic-Jankovic; shared screen for a PowerPoint presentation; research was approved and reviewed by the Institutional Review Board at UMass Boston; designed a survey to gather public input in two ways (1) representative sample survey (RSS) of Massachusetts residents distributed via mail by the United States Post Office and (2) public sample survey (PSS) distributed via email to list serves from various Indigenous communities and a public invitation through a press release, which was picked up by multiple media outlets; finally, ran a series of online small group discussions; will discuss preliminary findings today, the full report will have more details, including methodological notes, sample size, and demographics, etc.

Highlights from the preliminary report include:

- Regarding the survey populations, educational level was a significant difference between the public and representative survey
- Difference in the Indigenous response vs. others in the PSS survey is significant
- In the RSS, the most preferred symbols were (1) the shape of MA (2) the coastline, and (3) the right whale. The most preferred words were (1) peace, (2) liberty, and (3) equality. 70% preferred the motto was English, 14.4% preferred an motto in an Indigenous language.
- In the PSS, 10,134 people were included; support for including an Indigenous figure on the flag broke down my age bracket: 39% for ages 18-44, 57% for ages 45-64, and 65% for ages 65+
- Regarding small group discussion, there was a preference for natural elements over man-made images, wanted to see a connection to education, industry, and innovation, wanted to find a way to honor Indigenous communities, supported removing the sword and any reference to violence, and wanted to highlight diversity and education; right whale and coastline proved very popular; the Indigenous members wanted representation on the seal; preference for cranberries or use of the color; Peace, Liberty, Equality, & Justice for a motto; English or multiple language, especially Indigenous languages, for the motto

Brian Boyles, 1:28PM
Asked what the next steps were to finalize the survey report and if 10,000 respondents was a robust response.

Lee Hargraves, 1:30PM
Replied that the final report will include the methodologic details, the complete analysis of the survey results and provide a descriptive report of the implications; added that 10,000 is the largest response to this type of survey that he has seen and proves that outreach efforts succeed, but also means that it will take more time to properly analyze all the data

Sen. Nick Collins, 1:31PM
Inquired about the number of respondents who spoke English as a second language; believes that would alter the response to the use of Latin in the motto

Carol Cosenza, 1:32PM
Replied that they offered the survey in eight different language, but only 10 took the survey in a language other than English, all were in Spanish; believed that is partly explained by the fact that

education level was very high and the way it was distributed in the media it probably didn't get into the newspapers that were not English speaking newspapers.

Elizabeth Solomon, 1:34PM
Also expressed concern with diversity and the low participation from POC outside of the Indigenous community; found it interesting that the small group discussions mentioned diversity, but that was an area that the survey didn't capture a full picture, probably as a result of trend towards high education levels; survey analysis should recognize the strength and weakness of this particular survey; the Commission should concentrate recommendations on ways to increase outreach to other POC, the immigrant community, ESOL, etc.

Carol Cosenza, 1:37PM
Explained that was why was important to have both the representative sample and the open public sample; 10,000 people in that open public sample was a good response, but they tried to target with representative sample; time constraints were a factor

Micah Whitson, 1:37PM
Supplied two observations – (1) I lived in the Commonwealth for 16 years, had I could not tell you what a right whale is and was really surprised to see that showing up so much in survey results; and (2) my 4th grader recently reminded me of political maps and seeing the state outline of Massachusetts that the coast is kind of geographic and exists, but the western part and northern southern part of the states are very much manned made. This was interesting just to see how you know between the different survey groups, what the thoughts were about what representative government, the way that we practice it will help shape our States and things like that just to see how that was considered a non man-made kind of element.

Sen. Nick Collins, 1:40PM
Asked for clarification that the Native American on the flag was the number one response for the seal and the word peace was the first for the motto

Lee Hargraves, 1:40PM
Replied having a Native American on the seal for the Native American respondents to the public survey, that was the one that had the the highest number of strong and somewhat liking about 68%, I think.

Brian Boyles, 1:41PM
Mentioned that he will share a copy of the presentation with the public and the Commission

Jim Wallace, 1:42PM
Asked for clarification on the number of respondents being 10,000+, but only 244 were Indigenous people; stated that seemed lower than he would have expected for this effort.

Donna Curtin, 1:42PM
Asked how the UMass percentages of the respondents to the survey, Native Americans and other communities, compared to the overall population in Massachusetts; that detail will help Commission understand if 244 is a significantly low response rate or if it is in keeping with the population trends

John Peters, 1:43PM
Replied that a 2.5% response rate is just about equal to the overall Indigenous population in Massachusetts or might actually be slightly higher

Sen. Nick Collins, 1:44PM
Asked if there will be another meeting to discuss the final report on the survey results

Brian Boyles, 1:44PM
Replied that yes, there will be another meeting in two weeks time when we will have more discussion on how we take these findings and put them into our final recommendations; shifted to conversation on the educational framework

Elizabeth Solomon, 1:45PM
Suggested Commission consider reordering the sections to put the highlights and goals for the educational program at the top, to emphasize the need for reparative actions to compensate for the legacy of harm created by the current design, and to also emphasize the long Indigenous history of the Commonwealth; reiterated that the Commission was asked to make recommendations for an education program, not to develop one, so there is an issue of capacity to take into consideration -- the idea is that this would be something that the state would take on, but we need to think about the messages we want people to take back and who needs to be part of the conversation.

Micah Whitson, 1:50PM
Mentioned that the flag is the main mechanism by which most people interact with our seal on a regular basis; asked if the education program got into the vexillology of the flag because it is slightly different than the seal and motto.

Elizabeth Solomon, 1:50PM
Replied that one of the most important aspects I looked at were the different needs of the different audiences this program would be speaking to – it would be important for state legislators and government officials to have that fine vexillogical detail because they will be making the final decision on what the elements are, but for school children, the focus would be on what a flag is and what it represents

Donna Curtin, 1:51PM
Asked for the intention behind the use of “may” in the essential question section when it asks “Who may be left out?”

Elizabeth Solomon, 1:51PM
Replied that she was trying to explain that the people who are making the decisions on the flag or seal or the motto – the Legislature – are not historically representative of the people who live in the Commonwealth; it is trying to have people realize that how these decisions get made are not necessarily how we're trying to do it now with broader public input and things like that; will work on clarifying the language, maybe it should be “who has been left out?”

Michael Comeau, 1:54PM
Mentioned that one take-away he had from the survey results was the vast majority of people just don’t think about the seal at all, so that also tells us that they don’t know how it came to be what

it is today, so it is important to fill-in those details; the historical record does speak to their intentions and should be presented accurately as what those individuals thought they were achieving with the design, but there were glaring omissions from that process, namely, there was no participation from native communities and that needs to be parsed out and highlighted, too.

Elizabeth Solomon, 1:56PM
Replied that she sees this educational framework needs to meet a few objectives (1) people need to understand flags, seals, and mottos; (2) they need to understand that the Commission is recommending a major change and what are the issues around that and (3) to provide context on the Commission's work, charge, and the history of this process; mentioned a concern that when we going into the background, we do so in a balanced way that is not making assumptions about the intentions of people from the 1800s; will speak directly with Michael Comeau on the best approach to this directly

Brian Boyles, 1:57PM
Mentioned that the Commission does have the artist statement to refer to.

Kelly Bennett, 1:58PM
Suggested that under the Public Education campaign section, consider including the consortium of Public Libraries as resource sharing in this whole process.

Sen. Nick Collins, 1:59PM
Asked when did the sword get put on the top?

Brig. General Len Kondratiuk, 1:59PM
Replied that this flag goes back to 1787 when it was the MA Regimental Color; we don't know who designed it, but the sword is the Crest and the rest is this seal, which makes the coat of arms 1890; so you got the state seal, which is one thing, and then you got the militia flag, which became the state flag in 1908, so it's two different heraldic items that we're talking about.

Brian Boyles, 2;00PM
Mentioned that the Brigadier General and and Vice-Chair Comeau prepared a document around that history and it will be part of report; moving forward, there is work to do analyzing the survey results and updating the educational framework to incorporate the pieces into the final report; will need the assistance of the legislators who are on our Commission to translate these recommendations into legislation.

Sen. Nick Collins, 2:02PM
Made MOTION to ADJOURN; SECONDED by Elizabeth Solomon

Brian Boyles, 2:02PM
ROLL CALL vote on Motion to Adjourn; no dissent, no abstentions

Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth
November 1, 2023, at 1:00PM
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Commission Members Present:
Brian Boyles (Chair), Chairman Brian Weeden (Chair), Michael Comeau (Vice-Chair), Brittney Walley (Vice-Chair), John Peters, Rep. Antonio Cabral, Sen. Nick Collins, Kelly Bennet, Elizabeth Solomon, Chairwoman Melissa Ferretti, Micah Whitson, Brigadier General Leonid Kondratiuk, Brenton Simons, Donna Curtin

Absent/Excused:
Michael Vincent Amato, Rep. David Vieira, Brona Simon, Chairwoman Cheryl Andrews-Maltais, Jim Wallace

Brian Weeden, 01:02PM
Call to Order, Reading of Meeting Agenda and Public Notice, Roll Call for Attendance; addressed technical difficulties; began Chairs' Report and asked Vice-Chairs and Kate for feedback on discussion.

Kate Miller, 1:07PM
Reminded Commission of the upcoming November 15th deadline and the need to solidify the recommendations to include in the final report, so work on it can progress.

Brittney R Walley, 1:09PM
Mentioned that there will be another meeting on November 8th and that the chairs would welcome any thoughts on the report and what aspects to include in the Commission's final recommendations.

John Peters, 1:10PM
Mentioned that he was thinking of his father and how many years he spent trying to get to this point; believes that the primary focus should be on taking the sword off the image rather than changing the whole design because it will be extremely difficult and time consuming to change everything.

Donna Curtin, 1:12PM
Stated that she found the public survey information to be profoundly helpful and gives a few points where we can consolidate out thoughts about certain points of agreement; for instance, she found it striking that many people responded that they believe the seal should be on the flag; there seems to be some gelling around images and words, but less settled on the language to be used in a new motto with the majority preferring English, but strong preference in Indigenous communities for an Indigenous language..

Nick Collins, 1:14PM
Mentioned that the Legislature recently passed a law ensuring language access; concerned that

the public survey did not reach out to residents who do not speak English as a first language, believes they would show a stronger preference for maintaining the Latin as Latin is a foundation for their native languages. Had questions about the term Massachusetts and how it relates to an Indigenous language and whether that implies that Latin and an Indigenous language are currently on the seal.

Elizabeth Solomon, 1:17PM
Replied that the term “Massachusetts” means “place at the hills” in their Indigenous language, but the word itself is a transliteration of an oral language into English; it would be a misnomer to say that both Latin and an Indigenous language are currently on the seal; offered to speak with Senator Collins outside of meeting to provide further clarification

Elizabeth Solomon, 1:21PM
Made recommendation that the full survey be inserted into the final report, so the public can see the actual language of each question because that can impact how a person answers; for example, the responses on the connection between the seal and flag did not provide any context for why a change might be a good or bad thing; would like to include a section that outlines the strength and weaknesses of the survey and identifies some of the communities that were unintentionally not included; need to explicitly state the history of harm in the current seal design.

Brenton Simons, 1:25PM
Agreed with many of Elizabeth Solomon’s points; the survey is not a vote, but it is helpful to understand trend lines and trains of thought that exist in the public; recommended that the Chairs put together a checklist for things that must get done before the Commission can finalize the final report.

Brian Boyles, 1:27PM
Mentioned that the Interim Report can serve as a foundation for building the Final Report; it will include the survey and the results; require approval of the educational framework, conversation on the relationship between the seal and flag, and discussion on the RFP process for a designer.

Micah Whitson, 1:28PM
Asked where in the report did the results indicate that the public wanted to maintain the link between the seal and flag?; there were qualitative questions that indicated that they did not think they should be related; also agreed with Brenton’s comments that a survey are good for determining trendlines, but asking non-flag designers whether something should feature on the image, is not a recommendation we should make.

Donna Curtin, 1:30PM
Referenced page 18 where it says almost 2/3 of the PS respondents overall and native respondents 70.5% thought that the state seal should be on the Massachusetts flag.

Brittney R Walley, 1:30PM
Mentioned that the survey provides useful data, but data is only as good as the questions asked, and that brings the conversation back to the relationship between the seal and the flag which is not widely understood; people use the terms interchangeably, but they are not here in MA, which

changes how the Commission should approach its recommendations on the MGL; they serve different purposes; recommended the Commission moves forward with recommendations that allow for flexibility between the seal and flag

Kate Miller, 1:33PM
Reminded the Commission that the image that is so frequently the topic of discussion is the coat of arms, not seal or the flag; currently, these elements are linked in the law and changing one creates a ripple effect that changes the other pieces; when making recommendations, you need to make the language precise to see the changes you are aiming to make.

Sen. Nick Collins, 1:35PM
Asked if the Commission should be considering extending the deadline for the Commission to submit its final report; an amendment could be offered in the supp. budget pending before the Legislature

Donna Curtin, 1:36PM
Agreed that the survey results are not the end all be all; on the question of the relationship between the seal, coat of arms, and the flag, how does the Commission express this connection to the public?; each serves a different purpose and we have learned from experts that it may be better for the flag design to proceed independently, but how do we take the content of the survey and frame our own recommendations for the seal coat of arms motto that we are commissioned with?

Brian Boyles, 1:38PM
Agreed that the Commission needed to start envisioning the structure of the report because it could help with decision-making; important to keep the distinction between the survey and the report in mind – the survey represents public opinion, which the Commission agreed was important and even went beyond its charge to gather – but the report is the product of the work of the Commission, which is the body asked to make recommendations based off their expertise and deliberations; the Commission voted to redesign the seal and the motto and that decision informed the approach; the report could include: taking the seal and the flag and making them two separate entities, acknowledgment that there was no consensus on the question of human representation, but the survey did provide some guidance on elements that the public would favor, describe the complications of the difficult dialogue the Commission has been engaged in for the past two years, and provide a description of a process for finding a seal designer and identifying who would carry the work forward.

Michael Comeau, 1:42PM
Agreed that the seal and the flag can be separate entities, which was included in the historical note included in the Interim Report; need to focus on what needs to be done for finalize recommendations.

Elizabeth Solomon, 1:43PM
Regarding the educational framework, made adjustments to the order based on conversation at last meeting, expanded the introduction and conclusion sections to provide more context and better describe goals; looked at overarching goals of the two audiences; removed the section on

education for legislators because the report itself would provide that material and probably not appropriate in an educational framework model

Donna Curtin, 1:46PM
Mentioned that she would like to have more time to compare this version of the educational framework with the previous draft to formulate thoughts

Chairman Brian Weeden, 1:47PM
Suggested the vote on the educational framework be put on the agenda for the next meeting

Brittney R Walley, 1:48PM
Reminded the Commission of all the decisions yet to be made; believes the educational framework is solid and should be voted on today

Brian Boyles, 1:48PM
Made a MOTION to approve the educational framework; SECONDED by Brittney Walley

Chairman Brian Weeden, 1:49PM
ROLL CALL Vote; Yea – Peters, Comeau, Cabral, Boyles, Bennett, Walley, Solomon, Ferretti, Whitson, Kondratiuk, Simons, Curtin,

Sen. Nick Collins, 1:51PM
Asked for an explanation of the public campaign for adults, would it subject to appropriation?; supports the program for K-12, establishing curricula statewide would be a huge win, but hesitates to support a PR campaign using taxpayer dollars; would be more comfortable if it is led by the Secretary of the Commonwealth who responsibilities include public information campaigns and maintaining the archives

Elizabeth Solomon, 1:53PM
Responded that yes, none of it can happen without an appropriation; it is an effort to educate the public on the process of modifying the image through the dissemination of information to senior centers, libraries, community centers, etc, because this imagery will represent the entire Commonwealth and we should want the residents to understand what the issues are and how we hope to address them; would provide an overview of the work of the Commission, a brief history of the elements of the current flag and the explanation of the elements and those elements may be interpreted by different constituencies and residents, and a brief history of the movement to change the seal and motto; has no problem with shifting the responsibility to the Secretary of the Commonwealth from a public relations firm

Sen. Nick Collins, 1:54PM
Made a MOTION to modify the language in the educational framework referencing the hiring of a public relations firm to coordinate an adult education program to shift that responsibility to the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s office; SECONDED by Brian Boyles; opened up for discussion

Michael Comeau, 1:56PM

Mentioned that he would prefer to have the opinion and input of the Secretary of the Commonwealth as to the feasibility of the responsibility and the possibility of it turning into an unfunded mandate

Elizabeth Solomon, 1:57PM
Mentioned that it is important for the development of the public education campaign that there needs to be close collaboration with paid representatives of local native communities.

Brid. Gen. Len Kondratiuk, 1:57PM
Asked for clarification on the amendment being voted on.

Elizabeth Solomon, 1:57PM
Replied that the language currently says “the development of educational materials for the public should be contracted out to a public relations or public education entity”; this would change to say that the development of the educational materials for the public would be developed and distributed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth

Brid. Gen. Len Kondratiuk, 1:58PM
Asked for Michael Comeau’s perspective on this change; believes it to be a significant alteration to the plan that was discussed at length by the Commission earlier

Michael Comeau, 1:58PM
Mentioned it might be feasible, but it would depend on whether the Secretary has the resources to do it effectively; the possibility of an unfunded mandate is a valid restraint; cannot make that determination now without consulting with him

Elizabeth Solomon, 2:00 PM
Said that she could make it clearer in the recommendation that the Legislature would need to appropriate funding

Donna Curtin, 2:00PM
Mentioned that this is a recommendation that will be presented and the Legislature will deliberate on it and decide if it wants to move forward or make changes to the proposal; suggested that is may be simpler to not assign it to a particular entity, but allow the legislature to determine the best way to move proceed, including what might need to be appropriated to implement the recommendation.

Sen. Nick Collins, 2:00PM
Concerned that the Commission has already made two edits based off this discussion and that there is no option to vote against it; momentum will change when it gets to Committee

Brian Boyles, 2:01PM
Mentioned that Commission is making recommendations for what to include in this report and then will approve the full report and send it forward; will need legislative members to help identify where these recommendations should live within the legislature or other government bodies; It feels to me like we can approve this framework knowing that we're going do a pass

where we really dole out where it should be, and I think keeping in mind that yes, we don't want to give anyone an unfunded mandate.

Chairman Brian Weeden, 2:01PM
Point of order – Brian Boyles will be taking over on running the rest of this meeting.

Rep. Antonio Cabral, 2:02PM
Mentioned that it's appropriate to make that amendment now, but also important to remember that this is a recommendation. These recommendations will go to the clerk, and not necessarily the right to the committee. If they appear in the form of legislation at some point down the line, they will come to Joint Committee on State Administration. Otherwise, the report lies with the clerk.

Brian Boyles, 2:03PM
State that if no one has any objections, going to say that the motion passed. Asked Sen. Collins if he wants to vote otherwise

Sen. Nick Collins, 2:04PM
Asked several questions again about the PR firm contract and who would be making that decision; informed that the language would be altered to accommodate the conversation that was just had regarding the Secretary of State; confused as the intent of the motion

Rep. Antonio Cabral, 2:04PM
Suggested the line be altered from ‘shall’ to ‘may’ to give the Secretary of the Commonwealth the option to do it in-house of to seek a firm to manage the details

Brian Boyles, 2:06PM
Stated that what they were trying to approve was everything else that's in this document, knowing that we don't want to revisit everything else since in this document, when we have one meeting left next week; if we feel that an amendment they could remove that language is enough then I think that between myself and Vice-Chair Comeau we can certainly reach out to the Secretary of State's office, but I think again, there's a lot to be done on that part and I wouldn't want that question to drag down the great work that's been done this framework and kind of put that behind us, so I can start to incorporate it into the report.

Michael Comeau, 2:08PM
Suggested the language be amended to say that this particular action item will be coordinated by the appropriate authority, which I would agree with is probably the Secretary of State’s office, but that would be the easiest way to make the language a bit more ambiguous; made a MOTION to table the previous amendment and adjust the language to match the above; SECONDED by Collins

Elizabeth Solomon, 2:09PM
Asked for the appropriate language to edit the document

Michael Comeau, 2:10PM

Stated “The development of educational materials for the public should be assigned to the appropriate controlling authority.”
Brian Boyles, 2:11PM
Called for a Voice Vote to approve Motion; Approved with no dissent or abstentions

Brian Boyles, 2:12PM
Referenced conversations had on the subcommittee and committee level around the best practices of separating seal and flag, keeping them in conversation with each other, and determining whether the final recommendation would include this in the work for a future body; opened the floor to the question of that relationship

Brittney R Walley, 2:12PM
Reminded Commission of the current relationship between the coat of arms, the seal, and the flag and the ripple effect a change in one has on the others; put the current MGL language in the Teams Chat

Micah Whitson, 2:13PM
Recommended that law be rewritten so the seal does not have to appear on the flag; believes that once you have a seal that is rendered from a coat of arms, you could decide whether or not to put it on the flag, but suggested the Commission recommend that the law sever that requirement; this separation will also help in the consideration of visuals for a seal, but the different purposes and uses of a flag and seal, should be weigh the imagery differently; for example, cranberries might work well for a seal, but not on a flag.

John Peters, 2:15PM
Raised the concern that severing the link between the flag and the seal opens up the possibility that the current imagery might be retained in one or the other; this goes against the main reason why the Indigenous community asked for change

Sen. Nick Collins, 2:16PM
Stated that he would not support separating the seal and the flag; modifying the language in both sections would cause confusion

Micah Whitson, 2:17PM
Stated that report would emphasize that harm is present in the current imagery; suggested that the Commission change the seal, and it would by default, change the flag, but if we remove a sword from anything, it will ultimately have to be removed from everything. I would recommend that they be separate.

Kate Miller, 2:18PM
Made a point of clarification; the image being discussed is the coat of arms; changing the seal or the flag alone does not take away the sword; if you plan to remove the sword, you must modify the coat of arms

Brittney R Walley, 2:19PM
Shares concerns with John Peters that the image might continue to be used somewhere; suggested that recommendations make clear that the design of the coat of arms, the seal, and the flag should be in conversation and consistent with each other, also keeping in mind, that the Commission voted for a complete redesign

Elizabeth Solomon, 2:20PM
Suggested the coat of arms is the key to this conversation, that the only way to get to what we need to do is to recommend specific legislation to change the coat of arms

Michael Comeau, 2:21PM
Confirmed that the seal is the circular piece around the coat of arms; seal and coat of arms are used interchangeably in common practice, but they are two separate elements in law; the coat of arms is the piece that has caused controversy.

Sen. Nick Collins, 2:22PM
Asked if the charge of the Commission included the coat of arms or was it restricted to the seal and motto; concerned about the scope of the recommendations; opposition to the split would still stand

Michael Comeau, 2:22PM
Replied that the legislation refers to the seal because it is a common misconception that the image is the seal and it has been more convenient to call it that, but the image is the coat of arms; mentioned that the Commission did include an explanation regarding that distinction in its Interim Report and were careful to point out the link and that the image is the point of concern; the coat of arms, not the seal, also appears on the flag; if you do not amend the coat of arms, then you cannot amend the image on the seal or the motto; the motto is attached to the coat of arms and the sword, which has been the point of discussion and debate, is the upper part of the coat of arms

Brid. Gen. Len Kondratiuk, 2:25PM
Suggested that another avenue would be to amend Section 2 on the seal and not touch the language on the coat of arms; just have a separate seal and flag

Brittney R Walley, 2:25PM
Mentioned that the Commission's work is caught between the letter of the law and the spirit of the law, so we recommendations are made, they should be comprehensive of all three elements we are discussion now

Brian Boyles, 2:25PM
Summarized that the Commission understands that there is currently a "trickle down" effect acting on the seal and flag; if a change is made to the seal, it will affect the flag; the Commission also knows that seals are not typically used on flags, so a traditional reframing of the seal might not make for a great flag; there is a decision that needs to be made on whether the recommendation separates the flag and the seal, or designs a seal that can live on the flag; but

decision should also be made within a realistic framework for the time we have left to complete the report

Brian Boyles, 2:28PM
Opened discussion on the logistics of writing the report; appreciates Sen. Collins suggestion of an extension but does not believe that would be the right path forward; possible to provide a report by Nov 15th.

Rep. Antonio Cabral, 2:29PM
Agreed with Brian Boyles that an extension is not necessary; would not support another extension; Commission should come to a conclusion and submit a report by the 15th; members would have the option of voting no or reserving their rights

Brenton Simons, 2:30PM
Reiterated point made earlier which is having a crisp agenda next time with the bullet points for what we want to accomplish, and I would even suggest a loading time to them; agrees there's no point in yet a third term for us, I think we ought to conclude in this in this present second term.

Brian Boyles, 2:31PM
Stated intention to provide a draft of a report with an agenda for review at least a day before the next meeting; asked that Commission make time to read the document; will be reaching out to legislative members to get guidance

Brittney R Walley, 2:32PM
Made MOTION to ADJOURN; SECONDED by Rep. Cabral; Approved by Voice Vote; no dissent or abstentions

Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth
November 8, 2023, at 1:00PM
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Commission Members Present:
Brian Boyles (Chair), Chairman Brian Weeden (Chair), Michael Comeau (Vice-Chair), Brittney Walley (Vice-Chair), John Peters, Rep. Antonio Cabral, Sen. Nick Collins, Rep. David Vieira, Brona Simon, Kelly Bennet, Chairwoman Cheryl Andrews-Maltais, Elizabeth Solomon, Chairwoman Melissa Ferretti, Micah Whitson, Brigadier General Leonid Kondratiuk, Brenton Simons, Donna Curtin

Absent/Excused:
Michael Vincent Amato, Jim Wallace

Brian Boyles, 1:03PM
Call to Order, Roll Call of Commission, Introductory Remarks

Brian Boyles, 1:07PM
Provided Overview of Report Structure, including: Key Recommendations, letter from the Chairs, the history of the harm, historical context report, education framework, full survey results, meeting minutes; called for a final meeting on November 14, 2023, for review of final report; today's discussion will require discussion on legislative proposal, who takes the work forward, votes on the recommendations, edits for the legislation, and conversation on the next steps

{transcript from Teams meeting begins, edited for clarification}

Donna Curtin, 1:14 PM
A similar point of just a little clarification and it's a page 2, the third paragraph that begins with "the Commission appreciated the views of several of its indigenous members who expressed support for keeping the indigenous figure." To me, that would mean the same Indigenous figure on the current flag, and I'm just not sure that that actually conveys. I wondered if there might be some discussion. Is it AN Indigenous figure or is it the SAME indigenous figure?

Brian Boyles,1:15 PM
I think that's an important clarification and I'm happy to hear if anyone wants to express their views on that question.

Chairwoman Andrews-Maltais, 1:15 PM
Well, our position was to replace that Indigenous figure with the commonly-accepted imagery of Ousamequin from College Hill in Plymouth and there are no trademark issues with them, according to the folks that designed it.

Brian Boyles,1:15 PM
Thank you. And that's how I understood your letter, so that's a good clarification.

John Peters,1:15 PM
And I guess I would say that I made a comment about the sword to remove the sword.

Brian Boyles,1:16 PM
Great. And so does that mean that keeping that same figure that's on there currently would be OK by you?

John Peters,1:16 PM
It would be OK, but it'd be subject to discussion I would say.

Brian Boyles,1:16 PM
Any issue with using Donna's edit of an Indigenous figure as a way to keep that as a conversation that needs to happen in the future?

Michael Comeau,1:16 PM
I actually I'm a little bit late on this one because this is and this particular point I just wanted to, in thinking about it, since we passed the first recommendation, well that section that Donna brought our attention to as to the process, I think that the process the truth is was much more complex than we sort of give it the appearance of here and these recommendations and for reasons of brevity and concision, I think we have to do it the way we did it.

I just wanted to reiterate that that historical piece has been drafted I think should fill in any of the blanks that might be missing from that particular point of discussion.

Kelly Bennett,1:17 PM
Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I have a question on recommendation #3. Would we consider with the RFP Commission our priority given to a Massachusetts full time resident?

Brian Boyles,1:17 PM
I think that's a really great idea. Let me just read out what it is right now and then ask if anyone has any objection to your suggestion. A new coat of arms and seal should be commissioned through a public request for proposals that seeks a professional lithographer. This builds on the recommendations and presentation that we got from Micah Whitson sometime ago. Umm, I might start with you, Micah, if you think that there's logistically any, any, any downside to incorporating what Kelly has suggested?

Micah Whitson, 1:18 PM
I would only say that the downside is, is that if you're looking for the person who could perhaps best render the art, you may be limiting yourself. You know, different building state houses weren't architects that were from the state of Massachusetts. They were from reputable firms that were doing the best work at the time, so I think it's a great discussion consideration. I would ultimately encourage that we find the best person to create this art, and if that person happens to be in the Commonwealth, that's amazing. But I wouldn't limit it is just my opinion.

Michael Comeau,1:19 PM
Yeah, just a quick little wordsmithing a few sentences for a working group should be reporting to the secretary of the Commonwealth will be responsible. It's just missing that.

Elizabeth Solomon, 1:19 PM
I understand the thing between the Coat of Arms and the seal and how they are put together, but I don't think we ever explicitly discussed as a Commission. Replacing the coat of arms, we did talk about the seal and we talked about the motto and I know that there's a connection between this Coat of arms and the seal, but we never really discussed the coat of arms per se within the Commission. Realistically, in terms of what we actually discussed, so I understand the reasoning behind it, but we never discussed really the replacement of the coat of arms.

Brian Boyles,1:20 PM
I think this is a good clarification and certainly it's going to have implications and I feel like Vice -chair Comeau you were probably the best person to respond to it. I think I know if he answered, but I'd prefer it came from an expert.

Michael Comeau, 1:20 PM
I don't think there's a point of confusion on what we talked about and what our intent was. I think the mistake we made was in just in the sort of the terminology that we employed. And again, I think we mentioned this at the outset, but this discussion goes on the seal and the coat of arms have been conflated into a singular thing, right? And that's just how it's commonly referred to. If you look back at the legislation in the 1880s, that same misstep was made. So and we looked at the enabling legislation for this Commission, it said the seal of the Commonwealth. But again, the distinct pieces, and I think Kate Miller brought this up as a point of attention that we have to we have to, you know, highlight the seal is just again that circular sort of frame to the Coat of arms. The Coat of Arms has been, from the outset the issue or the element that is at issue here, right? The sword is in the Crest of the Coat of Arms.

It's a heraldic display and all of the offending characteristics that people take issue with are generally found with the end the coat of arms. So it's just been again our habit of calling the whole thing the seal and just conflating it, but I don't think that the I you know and I deliberations and in our approach and our understanding of what needed to be addressed, I don't think we've been off base at all.

Brig. General Kondratiuk, 1:22 PM
I agree with Michael Comeau’s interpretation. The Coat of arms, the seal, that and the and the flag is all you know, all interrelated. So once we once the seal is done, you automatically do the coat of arms. It's one of the same.

Solomon, Elizabeth, 1:22 PM
As I said before, the coat of arms is we're we have been talking it about it as one in the same, but in my deliberations I was not looking at it as the same. So I understand that because I do not think we should have a coat of arms period. So that's a whole different story and we never talked about that. That's why I bring up the issue of the coat of arms, because we have never explicitly talked about the coat of arms. We've only talked about the seal and from my perspective, having a coat of arms is problematic in and of itself. So I want to make that distinction. I don't want to go into the whole, you know, because we haven't discussed it, we do not have time to discuss it now. If we need to put in a coat of arms, then we need to make it explicit that that that we did not explicitly discuss the coat of arms and how it is a part of the seal. I don't know if I'm making myself clear, but I think it misrepresents actually what we actually agreed upon.

Brian Boyles, 1:24 PM
will note that in recommendation two, we did, I think include mention of the issue that some members felt around the coat of arms. So it just pointing that out, but I understand it doesn't settle the question.

Micah Whitson, 1:24 PM
Yeah, just to build off Elizabeth's point and it could be addressed in legislation. In my presentation, I called out a couple of states where the coat of arms and the seal are not the same and this the case of Alabama and South Carolina, they have a state seal but no coat of arms. But if our legislation draws that thread between all of those items, you could inside of that draft legislation, just making mention that these state seal doesn't have to feature the coat of arms necessarily, because currently it has to pull it through. But that is an option.
There are other states that don't use them, one in the same and I don't know the rationale for that. But we have it in in our laws, so that have to change.

Brian Boyles,1:25 PM
Thank you. And I do think that the draft legislation does try to get at this, but it may need to be adjusted if we decide to strike the Coat of arms out of this recommendation, I'm going to go back to you, Michael Comeau and then the vice chair, Wally.

Michael Comeau, 1:25 PM
Yeah, I think that Micah's suggestion is probably the only way to really do it because again, you know the conflation happens in popular culture. It's very clear in the enabling legislation in the 1880s that the seal and the Court of arms are distinct.So yes, if it is confused then probably the only way to undo that mess is in legislation separating them and saying it doesn't have to be in one piece. It doesn't. It doesn't have to include a quorums at all. If it's not a recommendation, but again within the enabling legislation of the 1880s, it very clearly defines, as does the Coat of mass regulations, with the seal, is what the Coat of arms is. So we just, you know, we just can't brush it aside. We'd have to sort of change it as Michael suggests, through legislation.

Brittney R Walley, 1:26 PM
I would just want to make sure that we remember some of the discussion from, I believe the last meeting, as well that we want to ensure that our recommendations keep within a reparative intention and impact. So thinking about the language that discusses these three things and thinking about what terms to put in there, keeping in mind that we want them to be related to each other if they're not the exact carbon copies of one another, just so that egregious imagery does get removed and things do not stay exactly as they are.

Brian Boyles,1:27 PM
It feels to me like striking coat of arms here and leaving seal keeps the same attention, and the recommendation and that clarifying this in the legislation is probably our best route.

Recommendation 4 reads "Massachusetts should dedicate more resources to educating the public about the indigenous history and cultures of Massachusetts, the history and usages of the current Coat of arms, seal and motto, the harm inflicted by the current seal and motto and the efforts to change the seal and motto." Again, we did approve an educational framework last week that responds to this recommendation, so I just want to make sure we take any questions about this one.

The last one, as I said, I think is going require some conversation as it is new and I think again as it responds to I think all of our understanding of what this Commission that we have served on has been able to do and was charge to do so.

I'll read it first.I think in the draft legislation there is more detail about who would serve on such a Commission.I think for the recommendations point I want to be able to prove that we do believe a working group reporting to the Secretary of Commonwealth is the best way to take this forward and I am looking at Vice chair Comeau because I know that we are assigning something here and if there's any feedback, we're happy to hear it. So I'll just read again;

“Recommendation 5 -- A working group reporting to the Secretary of the Commonwealth should be established to carry forward the Commission's recommendations to the completion of a new seal motto.” We do detail there as well as in that draft legislation. What that work would look like, I want to make sure here in the legislation that we're very clear, per the conversation we had last week, that we are under, no impression this should be an unfunded mandate, that this should be something that is attached to a staff position and a budget in order to make sure that this Commission has things that we certainly didn't have and that it's able to take action and have a reasonable timeline in order to take that action.

Michael Comeau, 1:30 PM
Well, with this recommendation, again, it puts the secretary in sort of a forward position.
I have forwarded to the Secretary’s attention the recommendations that we've put forward and the proposed usage of the Secretary, as sort of a lead agency in this whole effort, and it's my understanding the Secretary has no immediate objection to any of this and sees the rationale behind it. Of course, as always, as these things develop, the secretarial we'll need to consider, and have his input and at the appropriate time as things sort of take firmer shape. But I think there's no reason not to proceed with this as a possibility. At least you know at the at the present time.

Brian Boyles,1:31 PM
Thank you. I convey my thanks to him as well but please do let him know that we appreciate that. Any other comments on this recommendation? Vice-Chair Wally.

Brittney R Walley,1:31 PM
I would like to ask about the idea of such a group being allowed to meet generationally for two basic reasons. One, because I think we've learned a lot in this group together and we figured out how to respond to the fact that this has been 40 years in coming. That's a long time to struggle on. Culture changes and shifts, and I think that even if it's a group that just says they look at it and it's great, it just, it just considers the seven generations ahead of us and allows them to not struggle the way that we have had to do so to get to this point, so I want to propose the idea and have some discussion about that.

Brian Boyles,1:32 PM
So if I'm clear, the question you're raising is might we add to this recommendation that such a working group be convened? You're saying generationally.Do you have a thought about the amount of years we would say that just before we entertain any comment on it?

Brittney R Walley, 1:32 PM

Well, I think the average could be between 20 and 30 years, 25 years, something like that. We've waited 40 years to do this, so that's nearly two generations right there.

Brian Boyles,1:32 PM
This is a new idea, but I feel like it does respond to the experience of this Commission and the intention that I think I talked about at the outset. This work is ongoing. We will always need to be looking at our public iconography and symbols to make sure they align with our values, so I'm not advocating for it, but I do understand where you're coming from.

Donna Curtin,1:33 PM
I'm just wondering if the number F is along the lines of what and Vice Chair Wally is raising the ongoing review of the SEAL model and flag to ensure that these symbols continue to represent the values and aspirations of the residents of the Commonwealth? Is that something that needs to be flushed out a little more or is that is that kind of on point with what you were proposing, Britney?

Brittney R Walley,1:34 PM
I think at this point it reads to me that this process right now needs to be ongoing and that we're not in the final results stage, so, I think that's different from something that I was thinking of.

Brian Boyles,1:34 PM
I just want to acknowledge in the chat that Rep Viera has expressed his support for this concept.

Michael Comeau, 1:34 PM
I can certainly appreciate the idea that you know that there's this sort of baked in review at some point to sort of avoid some of the issues that we had. As Brittany said, it's been quite some time in coming, you know, I guess the real debate would then be, you know, what does that period of time? I mean, historians tend to look at things 50 year periods, so anything before that is maybe premature. You don't want to get into a position where you're just so constantly reading things or or reevaluating things that you never come to any sort of from conclusion. But the idea that it should be reviewed, I think, and the idea of generational is probably a strong one.

Donna Curtin,1:35 PM
Well just thought genealogically, I think 20 years is considered about the time of a generation. So it might be a number to think about every 20 years, I don't know if that's sufficient to the purpose.

Sen. Nick Collins, 1:36 PM
That does the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have an ongoing, you know, there's a national entity, but is there a state entity Commission that meets regularly?

John Peters,1:36 PM
Yes, we do have a Commission on Indian Affairs, assigned the staff. I have 7 Commissioners that I respond to. They're going on since 73.

Sen. Nick Collins,1:36 PM
Would it make sense to include that in? You know, as it relates to the working group, maybe that should be in partnership with if I'm looking at this every 20 years?

John Peters, 1:37 PM
I think the Commission is included in the future group.

Sen. Nick Collins,1:37 PM
So they'll have a seat on this in the group.

Brian Boyles, 1:37 PM
To clarify it in the draft legislation which we haven't gone into yet, there is a list of the representatives who could serve on this working group and that does include the Commission on Indian Affairs.

Chairwoman Andrews-Maltais, 1:37 PM
Well, I just want to be clear as well. The Mass Commission on Indian Affairs represents the interest of native peoples or Indian people who are not members of my tribe, Mashpee and or Nipmuck, and they represent the collective body, the perspectives of the collective body, but also in the enabling legislation for that. It also recognizes that the Commonwealth should be working directly with us, Mashpee as well as Nipmuck, on anything that has implications to tribes or Indian people.

Brian Boyles,1:38 PM
I appreciate that. And I think that in that draft legislation, we do also mention the tribal nations of having representatives in this group. To return to Vic-Chair Walley's question, we could add a clause here Clause G that a working group be convened every 25 years to do exactly this work above and do this review and I think that that would embed in the recommendation some of the things that are in that draft legislation. Does anyone have issue with that?

Brig. Gen. Len Kondratiuk, 1:38 PM
Yeah, I do. I don't support that. I don't see the need for it.

Brian Boyles,1:39 PM
To bring the issue back up or particularly for the amount of time we're talking about?

Brig. Gen. Len Kondratiuk, 1:39 PM
So they might have time we're talking about.

Brian Boyles,1:39 PM
OK. And is there another span of time you think would be more healthy?

Brig. Gen. Len Kondratiuk, 1:39 PM
I don't think it's up to us. You know, our work is going be done shortly.

Donna Curtin,1:39 PM
Well, I think sometimes having a mechanism whereby things can be reviewed and looked at appears in a lot of things like strategic planning and things of that nature that you sort of build in that process. So I don't know that we might, you know, necessarily want to set that aside, but I'm wondering if the mechanism isn't this working group because that really is asking something to be created and then have a lifespan beyond the other sorts of things that are on its agenda. And

maybe that Clause G could be specific to, you know, a recommendation that the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth Review the need, periodically, review the need for review. You know, every 20 years or so, I mean, that's not a terribly burdensome thing.It puts it on the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, which of course might have to go back and be something if the secretary would be willing to contemplate that. But that's the case for all of our recommendations, but just an idea that may be separated from the working group as something the committee would recommend. It would be useful for the Commonwealth to review these elements that are part of our public interface with our people and with the wider world on a periodic basis, rather than just leaving it lying out there for untold decades to pass.

Michael Comeau, 1:41 PM
I guess it really depends on how you know how strongly we feel about this, because again, the simplest way is just to put some sort of language in there that allows for the opportunity that the secretary may consider a periodic review as necessary type of a thing. Because again, I'm not going to speak for the secretary here without his compliance. But that is something that I think language like that allows for the opportunity, if the necessity arises, it doesn't compel us to do it. If there's no need, so that's sort of a, it's a wishy-washy middle ground, but I think it's probably an effective way to address it.

Brittney R Walley,1:42 PM
I think the opportunity to discuss it in our group is it's quite a big deal to historic to be able to be a native person and be in conversation in this way. I think that's really what I'm looking for is to think for generationally. It's just to make sure that people don't have to fight for 40 years to do something, but also I hope we, you know, see something really great and that, you know, however long the time span is, people can look at and go great, but it allows for the opportunity to think and discuss in the future. That's really, I think the core of what I'm trying to say. I don't have too much weighing in on me for the exact number of years or exactly how it functions. That's why I'm really glad we're having the discussion.

Brian Boyles,1:43 PM
I'd like to just add, I think at the end of this recommendation that the Commission recommends that the secretary's conduct regular reviews of the seal and motto to align them with the values of the Commonwealth. I think regular is about as good as I could do on it. It's a recommendation. I think it at least encodes it while and hopefully makes it so that people don't have to advocate for 40 years to get that. That's already a recommendation we've made.

Brig. Gen. Len Kondratiuk,1:43 PM
I don't agree. So if you want to take a vote or if not, if I'm in the minority. That's fine with me.

Brian Boyles,1:44 PM
My intention was to take a vote on all five of these recommendations. If I'm hearing you, then you wouldn't be able to vote for all five because of your objection to this edition.

Brig. Gen. Len Kondratiuk, 1:44 PM
Yeah, I, I'll, I'll reserve my opinion at the end. Thank you.

Brian Boyles,1:44 PM

OK. Thank you. Then I do want to see if the if there isn't any other conversation about the recommendations, I would call for some a motion to approve these five recommendations.

Brig. Gen. Len Kondratiuk, 1:44 PM
I do have a correction the title of the head of the National Guard is incorrectly stated. He is the Adjutant general, not the adjunct General ADJUTANT.

Sen. Nick Collins,1:45 PM
Yes, so on the motion umm, to the point of reserving rights, what would be official way to do that? Here to help me doing the same as the chair of the committee that would have to be taking a position on the legislation. That's why positioned today, I think there are some things I would say I came on later than most of the serving on this Commission as well as, you know, some information from the survey I thought that we would have asked around the removing of the sword given that the coat of arms became such a topic down the stretch. I thought that was something we should done but, either way, the position I hold is the chair of the committee is as it has to come in front of us at some point. If the change would be made then I don't think it's appropriate for me to be weighing into my public position and impact that way coming out of the gate. So just like the general, what would the mechanism be for me to go on record and reserving my rights.

Brian Boyles, 1:46 PM
Well, to be just so I'm clear-- what I'm asking for is just the first vote on these recommendations. We are going to look at that legislation. While I know that you weren't, as you said, part of the earlier conversations and you do have a role, are you saying you don't feel comfortable voting on the on the five recommendations?

Sen. Nick Collins, 1:46 PM
Yeah, I will reserve my rights on these as well as the overall, yeah.

Brian Boyles,1:46 PM
Great.Thank you. Anyone want to move on approving the five recommendations?

Solomon, Elizabeth,1:46 PM
I so move.

Brian Boyles,1:46 PM
Do we have a second?

Donna Curtin,1:47 PM
I will second.

Brian Boyles,1:47 PM
I'm so sorry. That was Elizabeth, and it's second by Donna Curtain.

Michael Comeau (Guest)1:47 PM
Yeah, I vote in favor of them again, you know, with the carousel that I think that general’s exceptions needs to be noted.

Brian Boyles,1:47 PM
Yes, Vice-Chair Wally?

Brittney R Walley,1:47 PM
Yes.

Brian Boyles,1:47 PM
Vinny Amato.
John Peters.

John Peters, 1:47 PM
Yes.

Brian Boyles,1:47 PM
Cheryl Andrews-Maltais?

Chairwoman Andrews-Maltais, 1:47 PM
I'm abstaining.

Chairwoman Melissa Ferretti - Herring Pond Wampanoag, 1:48 PM
I'm updating.

Brian Boyles,1:48 PM
Brona Simon?

Brona Simon,1:48 PM
I'm abstaining because I missed the past several meetings due to lack of notification by email, so I need to do get I have to play some catch up here and watch all of the videos of all the meetings I missed.

Brian Boyles,1:48 PM
And a certain apologies, Kelly Bennett?

Kelly Bennett, 1:48 PM
Yes.

Brian Boyles,1:48 PM
Brenton Simons?

Brenton Simons1:48 PM
Yes.

Brian Boyles1:48 PM
Rep Cabral?
Elizabeth Solomon?

Rep. Antonio Cabral, 1:48 PM
I'm sorry, but I was in the in the Chamber.

Solomon, Elizabeth, 1:48 PM
Yes.

Brian Boyles,1:48 PM
Rep. Cabral?

Cabral, Antonio - Rep. (HOU),1:48 PM
We are in session, so I don't know what we're voting on.

Brian Boyles,1:48 PM
We're voting on just the five key recommendations.

Cabral, Antonio - Rep. (HOU)1:48 PM
Just the recommendations?

Brian Boyles,1:48 PM
I'll give you a minute. Rep Viera I believe is also in Chamber. I'm going to come back to you at Cabral. Donna curtain ?

Donna Curtin,1:49 PM
Yes.

Brian Boyles,1:49 PM
Chairwoman Ferretti?

Chairwoman Melissa Ferretti - Herring Pond Wampanoag,1:49 PM
Yes.

Brian Boyles1:49 PM
Jim Wallace?
Brig. Gen. Kondratiuk?

Brig. Gen. Len Kondratiuk, 1:49 PM
No.

Brian Boyles,1:49 PM
Micah Whitson?

Micah Whitson, 1:49 PM
Yes

Brian Boyles,1:49 PM
OK, Rep. Cabral I'm just going come back to you one more time to see if we can hear you.
Ok, the the motion passes. We are now going to move on to the draft legislation. I want to thank Vice-Chair Walley and Kate Miller in Rep. Cabral’s office for doing the work.

Brian Boyles,1:50 PM

Now we're moving on to the draft legislation. I would remind us again that everything we are doing is only recommending.As I said at the outset, I think it's very important to understand whether this is aligned with the recommendations we just approved. And I think I will proceed in a similar way as I just did it and work through the clauses that are in there. I will start by asking is there any questions sort of the origin of this or the? The nature of it as a recommendation that we are making, I think it's important to know that you know, really they say it will have to take it forward.

Sen. Nick Collins,1:51 PM
Yes, just a question. Even though my vote will be the same, I'm trying to get the intention of the legislation cause the legislation gives me the sense that it's creating sort of a defacto legislature and executive authority. So with respect to making the determination that a future date, you know, so that that part of a little bit an uncertain about and would be a empowering legislation in a way that I don't think was the task of the Commission to. But again, what the Commission votes on here, it remains to be seen, but I think that that's my interpretation and if someone has another please, you know, help me out here that looks that the language as drafted would give authority to make a recommendation and execute with the passage of this language. There's a lot of power to give up, but elected body that would be temporary nature.

Brian Boyles,1:52 PM
Are you referring to the body? This current Commission or the body that we're trying to create through the draft legislation.

Sen. Nick Collins,1:53 PM
Yes, the body appointed body in the draft legislation.

Brian Boyles1:53 PM
Understood.

Sen. Nick Collins,1:53 PM
Yeah, that, that part.

Brian Boyles,1:53 PM
OK, does anyone have a different interpretation or any response to that question?

Brian Boyles,1:53 PM
I think what we're going to do is just getting feedback on the legislation. I think that there's a lot to be discussed there.We had done anything like this in previous meetings, so at the outset of the meeting, what I said was I wanted to take feedback on it in order to try to create a final draft we could improve next week. So one question I'm hearing then for Senator Collins is whether we are really through this legislation giving an unelected body this power to actually make the change.

Chairwoman Andrews-Maltais, 1:54 PM
I'm not even clear that there was a recommendation for us to make to draft legislation, or was it a recommendation for this body to recommend new legislation, but simply, certainly not to draft it because we are not the Commonwealth legislators.

Brian Boyles,1:54 PM

I'll just read the passage from the establishing legislation “the Commission shall submit a detailed report with his proposals and recommendations, along with drafts of legislation necessary to carry out its recommendations.”

Chairwoman Andrews-Maltais,1:54 PM
Sounds clear enough to me then thank you.

Donna Curtin,1:54 PM
I think you've just made the point perfectly, Chairman Boyles. Thank you. That was my understanding, was that what we were doing is just trying to propose, and this is a proposal. We're not, you know, where we, we can't obviously make this legislation come to pass. It is submitted with our recommendations as a way to say here's some of the steps that would go about making these recommendations possible.

Brian Boyles,1:55 PM
Understood. I just want to say it sounds to me like we're clear that this Commission certainly can draft legislation that that itself is not in question. Are we from my correct about that?

Rep. Antonio Cabral, 1:55 PM
You are correct. Now maybe we have different interpretations of the draft of the language. Certainly you can propose another working group, but eventually the working group, if it was to prepare legislation, the working group would not be the ultimate decision maker of any changes that would have to come to the legislature. So if it's not reflective then we need to fix the language on that.

Brian Boyles,1:56 PM
Just to confirm that I'm understanding, in any draft legislation we should designate who this working group is going to make its final recommendation to and that that acting on that will still need to be the legislature's responsibility.

Rep. Antonio Cabral, 1:56 PM
Yes.

Elizabeth Solomon, 1:56 PM
I have two questions. One, there are two documents that were sent out, the draft proposal summary for the legislation and the actually the legislative wording, and I'm wondering which one we are going to be looking at or you know which one we're going to be going through - just so I know what to be looking at. The other one, the other one is just wanted to get a sense of the process that was gone through in terms of developing the specific the both the recommendations and the draft legislation because it seems that there are some things in the draft legislation that we're not explicitly discussed within the Commission.

Brian Boyles,1:56 PM
Sure. Would you be willing to identify the things you're talking about? Because I think this is an effort to clarify things in this legislation.

Elizabeth Solomon, 1:57 PM

Yes, we have at no time actually agreed that we would have make it a recommendation to remove, on its own, the sword, elbow, and the arm, and I know we've discussed it, but we have not agreed to that as part of the Commission. And so I'm wondering where that came from?

Brian Boyles,1:58 PM
As I understand that, I think that and I think this is a, this is a clarification and attention.
In this draft, we are saying that we want to go forward with our first recommendation, which is to create a new seal and that we would amend this language in order to have a body that would recommend, with that final design is, but we also have this clause in here about addressing immediately the challenge that we've identified around the sort, correct. I don't know if vice chair Wally or Kate Miller anyone wants to shed light on how that was, how that was inserted.

Kate Miller, 1:58 PM
I would just say that this is my attempt to summarize everything that I've heard in these conversations. As I've been sitting here listening to you, I have tried put it in legislative language and give you some ideas of what your options are, this is not intended to be the end all, be all. It's just some of the things that we can do to help you reach these objectives. It's up to you all to decide. Do we want to move forward with striking out the language on the sword and the arm right now, or do you want to wait till later? This is all this is.

Brian Boyles,1:59 PM
Thank you. And I think that looking at this draft as a menu of options to align with the recommendations we just passed as the best orientation here.

Rep. David Vieira, 1:59 PM
Thank you. So on #1, there's the first recommendation is that attempt through the section one of the draft legislation. I think it kind of puts the cart before the horse where our recommendation is been that that we're looking at a new one and if the new one is dramatic, is taking the Indigenous figure off or changing what's around it, whatever it is, we're recommending something new, but there's nothing to replace it yet. And so let's just that if we would put in now, I think should look at establishing the working group to finalize the recommendation of heading into a new direction that we're all saying the new direction. But at the initial point to put language in that says the seals gone and we don't have a new seal. Clearly our recommendation is we want a working group to get down to the detail level of the options of what a seal could be that we could move forward and get approved legislatively. I just don't know if it's right for us to go into state statute now and strike that language without something specific as a seal or a model to replace it with.

Brian Boyles, 2:01 PM
I think that's a very fair point. Vice-Chair Comeau?

Michael Comeau, 2:01 PM
I'm going to seek the counsel of my colleague General Kondratiuk on this because he’s more expert than I, but the sword itself is heraldic element of the entirety of the coat of arms and it does seem a kind of nitpicking individual pieces of that right now, and it may be as a representative, I was saying, you know, the cart before the horse here, but just kind of taking out individual elements seems to be, I mean, this whole thing was started off as it was composited as a Frankenstein approach. I think we're moving things independently. Maybe a similar sort of you know, sort of resolution to that. If I can start resolution, I'd be curious to see what the General

thinks about, so focusing on individual pieces of the entirety of the heraldry that composites the current coat of arms.

Brig. General Len Kondratiuk, 2:01 PM
If I may, I agree with the Representative and with Michael Comeau. You know, we're not here again to nickel and dime the seal here in the in the legislation. So that's the way I feel about it.

Chairwoman Andrews-Maltais, 2:02 PM
I have to respectfully disagree. The entire point from, at least from my years working on trying to change the seal, has been to remove that sword and that over the head of the native person, because that is what's been the most offensive component of it to us as native peoples as well as the language that accompanies it and from our position, we had said that if nothing else, that is the single most critical piece pieces that need to be removed. We can live with the rest, and as our as our position indicated, we prefer to keep a native and preferably Ousamequin's image on there. But the sword in the arm and the motto is what has brought us to this place in in people referring to 40 years, it's way more than 40 years.

Brenton Simons, 2:03 PM
I thought we already had a consensus that we would remove the crest. The sword is the crest of the coat of arms, which is a component of a coat of arms. I thought in our first term we'd already as a group essentially decided that. Do we need to really reiterate that vote?

Brian Boyles, 2:03 PM
I do not think so. I think that we decided to start with a new seal.

Brenton Simons, 2:03 PM
OK, well, my recollection was that we discussed the crest and that there was almost uniform agreement that it that should be terminated.

Brian Boyles, 2:04 PM
So just to be clear, I think you are right that everyone that we have talked to and almost everyone here has expressed that that is the most harmful symbol. What we have recommended is moving forward with a list of symbols as possibilities for the next iteration, and that that includes this question what Chair Andrews-Maltais, just raised. I do tend to agree with Rep. Vieira at this stage that focusing more on who's going to take the work forward and not at this point trying to resolve issues that we have not been able to resolve, is the best strategy to be able to complete something. I don't think that that waters down at all the harm that we have pointed to when it comes to the Crest.

Rep. David Vieira, 2:04 PM
I just want to clarify because I'm not sure my concern was quite understood and for Chairwoman Andrews-Maltais, I am with you on that. What I'm saying is, this is a part of a formal legislation right now without the alternative, right? So if we make that the law, we say we're gonna do that, but we don't have anything and who knows how long it will take the working group to bring it and to get it approved. And so we are clear that's our intent by putting that group to get there. I'm just a little worried. Do we have to go out and start changing things on letterhead until we have the new one? Because the law already removed what existed, and so it's a logistical,

technical thing of how it flows in legislation. I'm still with you on the initial vote that I voted for year ago.

Chairwoman Andrews-Maltais, 2:05 PM
Yeah, but to your point, we don't know how long it's going to take. So therefore, with this being ancillary to when they're doing the printing of anything new, you know, being able to have an immediate removal of that component I think would be helpful because again, if we're sitting here and talking about this now COVID hit, so we got another extension that we had the extension of the year and then we have a working group. And if that takes two to three years down the road, we're still having that. And who knows what kind of design might come up? If anything, that's why you know if we had the at the end of the day of all the work and energy and efforts that were put in by everybody to get to this point and we find that the most offensive thing is still going to continue to be there for an unknown period of time.If there's a way of getting that removed more expeditiously than we should, but I see your point not wanting to go piece meal. But again, we know the wheels of government turned very slowly, and it's taken us a long time to get here now. So I just want to make sure that we're not losing an opportunity, especially because we don't know even if it will pass. You know, so just taking the best shot at everything, I guess.

Brian Boyles,2:07 PM
Thank you. We have a couple of hands raised. I just want to propose something. As I said at the outset, I think giving enough time determining who that working group needs to consist of is really important in order for it to be even a more representative group than the one that we have had for the last two years. And it does feel like, in this conversation, that much of the rest of this legislation can't really happen or be effective without that group being put into place. I will take these next couple questions, but my intention is to move on to that and to come back in a week and say is this really something we're going put into a legislative draft or is it more specificity in the recommendations?

Micah Whitson, 2:08 PM
Thank you. Just wanted to touch on that last point that Mississippi moved so quickly because they, in their law, said the flag can't fly any longer, and then had to reckon with, well, what do we do? We don't have anything now and everything has to be changed - and I think that that really sped along the process. I think there's wisdom in both waiting until you have something right and perfect and validated embedded by everyone. I think there's something else to say. Strike it out, and then you've really got to move forward on it. So I think time was a really powerful forcing function in that state moving forward because the legislation was chosen before a design was. Thank you.

Brian Boyles,2:08 PM
So essentially, they set a deadline by which there could be no flag unless they made a decision. Is that correct?

Micah Whitson, 2:08 PM
That's correct. They said the flag has to come down and in order to get it on the ballot there was a six-week timeline so that to print out the ballot, to get the people to vote on it. But that's what was driving it and had they not made that, they would not have had a flag until a special election, which could have been years away.

Sen. Nick Collins, 2:09 PM
OK, I will show that. OK. I believe in the public that may not be on this Commission, but I didn't get the vote in this previous session. The vote that was taken to start from scratch the seal and the motto was before my time and I'm not so sure that's where the public is. I think they are in overwhelming numbers. I imagine that wasn't asked. For that reason, in the survey about the sword, which is so offensive. I guess people can make the assumption that folks were on the Commission and who made it up before. I feel the same way, but I think that if we're going to publish something and again, you know, that's up for the body base as a member of the legislature will be looking at that and others I think seeing that is meaningful, but understanding of the folks who were on this Commission had have been feel that that's clear.

Brian Boyles, 2:10 PM
I appreciate that. I hope that the document we put forward reflects the nuances and complexities of the opinions of many people in Massachusetts and acknowledges that it's hard for us to know what most people think

Rep. Antonio Cabral, 2:11 PM
Yeah, I mean, I'm just sitting here and listening and I think we're making too much to do.This is simply a recommendation. It's simply a draft legislation recommendation. The legislature does not have to do anything with this if they choose not to. It's simply a proposal, nothing more than that. I think if that's what we want to do as a Commission, have in addition to the recommendations, a possible proposal that's OK. But I think people are getting bogged down on because this is not going to be legislation necessarily enacted by the legislature. This is simply proposed legislative language to accomplish some of the recommendations. Simple as that.

Brittney R Walley, 2:12 PM
Thank you. So yes, to respond to what Representative Cabral is saying and noting the time and also the experience that Micah has brought forward, what we haven't really touched upon before, we keep moving, is that there is worked into here somewhat of a time pressure, which I know we've all been subjected to during this whole process. And we didn't mention that really when we were discussing all of this. So I think that that's something important. I would like to think this reads as certain things are struck out, but then there is the pressure. Otherwise, there's nothing.

Brian Boyles, 2:12 PM
I hear that clearly, I think that there's a question for us before we submit these final recommendations, if there is a way for us to add a timeline like that creates that type of pressure. It's certainly something to think about, but also it seems like hard to work into legislation, but it do acknowledge that it is in this draft. Vice-Chair Comeau?

Michael Comeau, 2:13 PM
That was just a little bit further, when we talk about the you know the sword and element well, it's a part of the motto, right? The idea of the device modifies the motto out there on seal sort of truncated statement on the bottom, so you can't have one without the other. That ties to my point earlier about trying to sort of cherry pick pieces. It makes it very, very difficult.

Brian Boyles, 2:13 PM
I appreciate it. And I think that dilutes a lot of the recommendations that we have made.

Brenton Simons, 2:13 PM
I would just quickly say, Michael, that's not my interpretation. A motto can be different from a Crest. They don't have to be related at all.

Michael Comeau, 2:14 PM
No, they don't have to be related, but in this particular instance, I think they are related, though I agree right, they don't have to be related for anything moving forward, it could be separated, but unfortunately, the public record shows that they were created to do that, so.

Donna Curtin, 2:14 PM
They may be related, but their impact isn't necessarily equivalent. Visual imagery is something that people see and respond to immediately. Reading a Latin phrase is something that a lot of people are just not gonna be able to absorb. So I do think it is possible for us to highlight the removal of the visual imagery that communicates this long term harm as an immediate step that we feel is important because that's what people see and I think then the language could remain and to be dealt with through the working group as a larger part. So it is cherry picking, but it is taking a rotten cherry and removing it because this is something I think throughout this process we've all recognized that that particular image is among the most harmful, and removing it without further delay seems to be something that I think we have generally agreed as an important objective of this group.

Collins, Nick (SEN), 2:15 PM
If I just may respond to that as well, as the language and I know that we feel like 10,000 people who speak only English or as accessible here. I just think that's not an accurate way to go. People who speak Spanish as a first language. Portuguese Cape Verdean, Creole, Haitian Creole, Italian all have Latin in the basis of their language, so I'm sorry for those who didn't take Latin or understand Latin. I'll speak a romance language, but outside of the people who only speak English, that is a very accessible language. So I want to be mindful of that.

Brian Boyles, 2:16 PM
Thank you. With the time remaining, I would like to look at the list of possible representatives on a working group. I think that again, the intention here is to try to make something inclusive, to put it into the hands of people, for the most part who are in government. While I appreciate Rep. Cabral's point about who makes the final decision, I do think that that's important and to ensure that Indigenous participation continues to be the way forward around this issue. So you can see in that clause and who is named. Then the question is there, is there anyone not at the table that you feel should be given your experience on this Commission?

Elizabeth Solomon, 2:16 PM
Yes, as I noted in when we were talking about the report from the survey is that the survey itself was not representative of the constituencies that make up the Commonwealth. And so I would really encourage that in addition to Indigenous representation, that there be some kind of, and I mean we have to carefully word, representation of on the committee should actually represent the demographics of the Commonwealth.

Brona Simon, 2:17 PM

Thank you. I'm concerned that there's not enough continuity with people like you, Brian Boyles, who has LED us through these years. And yet your agency is not one of the agencies on this list. So all of a sudden it seems to me that new agencies are being put on this new task force without that kind of continuity. So I have that concern. I also have a concern that if the Secretary of State is the leader of this task force, why the governor is making the appointments of the experts and I also have a question at instead of the Secretary? and I also have a question about the governor's appointees, being experts in the subject matter because that is so vague, I'm really concerned, knowing how the governor's appointment office works, that it we may get ornithologists, so we'll get the correct chickadee. We may get botanist, so we'll get the correct Elm tree. We'll get an ichthyologist, so we'll get the, you know, correct cod fish. So I think that the subject matter needs to be fleshed out and I really look to the native membership of this Commission for advice on the subject matter.

Michael Comeau, 2:19 PM
Yeah, I'm going reinforce with what my colleague brought says. As far as the Secretary, having the authority to have oversight of the appointed experts because again, he'll be carrying the weight of the burden here, I think so. I think that should be something that would be left to his discretion.

Sen. Nick Collins, 2:20 PM
Seems like the most comfortable place to live with the Secretary of State.

Michael Comeau, 2:20 PM
Agreed.

Brian Boyles2:20 PM
Thanks. So I think what I've heard so far is how to ensure that this is representative of the people of Massachusetts, to improve on the survey and to improve even on this group, how to ensure continuity and the right type of expertise. And if it is going to land with Secretary of Commonwealth, how do the appointments work then? Is that with him, or do we still need the involvement of the Governor?

Elizabeth Solomon, 2:20 PM
I know who the Secretary of the Commonwealth is, but I don't know a lot about, you know, he's been in, in, in the position for decades, which is a good thing. Not a bad thing, umm, and I don't feel like I can speak to whether he is the appropriate person to be making the recommendations. It's not like one like I say it's good, bad or otherwise. I just don't feel like I can speak to that at this point because I don't know enough about his work. And the reason I kind of talk about this is that that we have a tendency to, for people, to nominate folks that they already know. And I'm very concerned to make sure that we have really good representation across different constituencies across different levels of knowledge, across different opinions, so whoever is going to be part of this group so that we actually are able to move forward in a way that really is inclusive of everyone who needs to be included. And that's not to say anything about the Secretary of the Commonwealth, but realistically want to have some some checks and balances in place to make sure that we are not just looking at political appointees and appointees that come from an inner circle of folks that that are known to whomever is making the recommendations.

Donna Curtin, 2:22 PM
Yes, thank you. Along those lines, just sort of thinking of our list and the tendency to add endlessly, but I see this in some ways as a historical process and so looking for agencies that might be able to speak to that. And of course, Mass Historical Commission comes under the Secretary of the Commonwealth But then I would definitely like to follow up. I was thinking of maybe they should be named and maybe there is an educational agency as well that might be named and I don't know what that would be because obviously reaching people, communicating these ideas and sort of the educational framework that Elizabeth has created to there might be an educational agency. But I will definitely want second the inclusion of Mass Humanities, because I think that is a group that brings many of these different components that we've been discussing together. Set aside Brian, I think that Mass Humanities brings us to many of the themes and concerns, you know very deeply in its work. And I don't know if that's appropriate to mention it, but I think it's definitely something that we should discuss because I think that would be strength in this group immeasurably.

Rep. David Vieira, 2:24 PM
So just a couple of thoughts, one for the existing organizations listed in the draft that commissions. And the Office of Disability, the sometimes those appointments are are done technically by the governor and they give like a list of potential candidates from their area, so I don't know if there was any gubernatorial appointments, if it was sort of drilling down to that, but the expert matter thing and Donna, you just mentioned a couple of agencies, another one I can think of is like Mass Cultural Council. I'm sure our Native American organizations have outside organizations that you can think of that aren't just members of your tribal structure. And so if we're going to, say experts, and if we can define a member from and if it's Mass Humanities, it doesn't have to be the executive director necessarily. If he's had enough of us, it it? No, I'm just joking. But it could be, you know, a member of the board or a member that's working on any of the project. Right? So, but I think in this legislation that's just, say, a group of experts and whether it's the Secretary of State or the governor, experts in what, so that's drilled down to a pool of that and then I'm fine with the secondary making the point of the governor, I don't care. But I also think that on the on our Indigenous Members, if there are other organizations that are experts in the art culture history piece that groups that I don't know of that I'm sure out there, if there's somebody that we should be recognizing as well as we talk about Mass Historical, Mass Humanities, Mass Cultural, all those traditional agencies on our end.

Brittney R Walley, 2:26 PM
Thank you. I did want to echo a similar concern about the idea of experts. I think a lot has already been said, but I wanted to put this out there that as an artist myself, I know that there is an extreme amount of talent in the native art world in our Commonwealth and so that's another thing to add to that list of, you know, all the experts on fish and bird anatomy. So I wanted to point that out there because yes, I do believe you know. Everything that was just said points exactly to that concern of mine. So thank you very much of yours. And I also have the concern about time.

Brian Boyles2:27 PM
That's a great question and I want to read into the record my formal endorsement of Vice-Chair Walley's artwork as well.

Kelly Bennett, 2:27 PM

I just want to 2nd Chairman Walley's acknowledgement of artists. We're here talking about an image, and it's essential that somewhere on this group has to be an artist, and particularly from the native community. I think we would fall short if we failed to have one of those seats not be filled by an artist.

Brian Boyles2:27 PM
Thank you, so we just have a few minutes left just to restate and we'll schedule a meeting for November 14th to sign off on the final report. It seems that the big outstanding thing we have is to come down on this list. I will reach out to the Commission with the list that we have in the draft, as well as the names that have come up so far and hope to be able to kind of focus that in for when we meet on the 14th, I do think that. We don't want to build a giant commission.
I think we want to align the work of the next group with the recommendations we're making and hopefully that helps us, but I would end by just expressing my gratitude for the expertise all of you have brought to this. I think the fact that we are already looking ahead is a humble thing to do, but the expertise and the wisdom has been on this Commission for the last two years, I think has been outstanding and will be hard to replicate. We should try to find expertise specific to the task that they will have at hand, because we've certainly done a lot of work here.Then I'll ask for a motion to adjourn.

Brittney R Walley, 2:29 PM
I moved to make that motion.

Micah Whitson, 2:29 PM
I'll second it.

Brian Boyles, 2:29 PM
Alright, Vice-Chair Walley; 2nd by Micah Whitson; all those in favor say aye.

Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth
November 14, 2023, at 1:00PM
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Commission Members Present:
Brian Boyles (Chair), Michael Comeau (Vice-Chair), Brittney Walley (Vice-Chair), John Peters, Rep. Antonio Cabral, Sen. Nick Collins, Rep. David Vieira, Brona Simon, Kelly Bennet, Brenton Simons, Donna Curtin, Jim Wallace

Absent/Excused:
Chairman Brian Weeden (Chair), Michael Vincent Amato, Chairwoman Cheryl Andrews-Maltais, Elizabeth Solomon, Chairwoman Melissa Ferretti, Micah Whitson, Brigadier General Leonid Kondratiuk

{taken from transcript, edited for clarity}

Brian Boyles, 1:03PM
Call to Order, Roll Call, Read public notice and agenda

Brian Boyles, 1:06PM
Mentioned that the objectives for the meeting include: making final edits to the report, reviewing the list of suggested member for the advisory committee to take the work forward in its next phase, and approving the final report today so it can be submitted to the Governor and the Clerks tomorrow. Given the discussion at the last meeting, this will not include a proposed draft of legislation. The Chairs will reach out to legislative allies after the report is submitted and support efforts at drafting legislation; thanked Commission members for their time and wisdom.

Brittney R Walley, 1:07PM
Expressed gratitude to everyone putting their efforts into this work.

Michael Comeau, 1:07PM
Expressed thanks for the opportunity to work with this group; It was a it was a very interesting and important task.I think we undertook it's very diverse group, of course a lot of different perspectives and different opinions and whatnot.And I think that that's healthy and I appreciate the respectfulness that everybody had during the course of our discussions.We might not have been seamless, but I think we always worked together well as a group and I thank everybody for the opportunity.

Brian Boyles, 1:08PM
I want to thank the two of you and Kate Miller. I think I've spent more time with the three of you than anyone outside of my immediate family over the last couple of years, and I have to say that I like you about as much as them too.

Brian Boyles,1:08PM
Detailed the segments of the report, including the introduction letter, the key recommendations, an overview of the work, the survey results, the educational framework, the brief history of the

seal and motto put together by Michael Comeau and Brig. General Kondratiuk, and attachments; opened up discussion.

Rep. David Vieira, 1:09PM
Asked in relation to Recommendation #5 and the makeup of the working group, the definition and the second paragraph talks about the Secretary of the Commonwealth serving as co-chair and then it says to include leadership of indigenous tribal governments within Massachusetts. Did we discuss or decide to make a specific recommendation that this working group should be co-chaired by 1 Indigenous Member, then one non as we did with this Commission?

Brian Boyles, 1:09PM
Replied that did not come up in the conversation.

Rep. David Vieira, 1:09PM
Made the MOTION to have that type of leadership structure for this Commission, I'd like us to consider putting it in our recommendation that a working group have the similar leadership style that we used here

John Peters, 1:11PM
Replied that it would depend on the outcome of the conversation on the design, but it is always good to have Indigenous representation as that co-chair, and particularly as it relates to the educational framework

Rep. David Vieira, 1:11PM
Was there a discussion as to what the co-chair title meant then in that recommendation?

Brian Boyles, 1:11PM
Just to respond, we did not have a conversation about who the other co-chair would be. From my perspective, I think adding to our recommendation that a co-chair is one of the Indigenous members of the Commission would be an easy thing to add in there. I think to John Peters is point, the best way I can see to make sure we address that the open question around representation in the seal, is we prioritize Indigenous representation and leadership in that conversation.

Rep. Antonio Cabral, 1:13PM
Agreed that it would be appropriate if we make a recommendation that the Secretary of State should be equal co-chaired with an Indigenous member.

Rep. David Vieira, 1:13PM
Mentioned that when we had the Early Ed Civic Engagement and Learning Special Commission, one of our recommendations was to create a working group around projects and curriculum. Senator Moore and I then went and made a presentation to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and DESE created the working group without legislation. Based on our recommendations and then brought back their working group results, which then fed into the legislation that we passed on civic education. So I could see if the if the secretary of the Commonwealth, since he's the keeper of the seal, really wanted to get this rolling, we could go and make a presentation, or the chairs could go and make a presentation, about that

recommendation and actually begin that work prior to legislation happening.

Rep. Antonio Cabral, 1:14PM
I don't know if I could support that allowing the Secretary of State to convene a working group without the legislature having said that. I would not support that.

Brian Boyles, 1:15PM
I think these are good conversations to have. The question of how we take this working group forward is a big one and I think that we did want to make sure we address that list of possible names on there too. We do not have legislation in front of us to put forward to create this working group. However, we could work on that after we submit the final report, but I do want to say that's not something we're going to present and approve today.

Michael Comeau, 1:15PM
You know, in presenting this to the Secretary, as we've crafted the proposal, he's in agreement with the idea that he would co-chair and it's my understanding that he wouldn't have any particular issue with who might be the co-chair he had to serve with him, or his designee. So again, I think he'd leave that to the discretion and the wisdom of the of the Commission now to make recommendations.

Rep. David Vieira, 1:16PM
I'd like to make a MOTION that after the word co-chair along with an Indigenous tribal government cochair; SECONDED by Rep. Cabral.

John Peters, 1:16PM
I'm without either one of those representatives from the Indigenous tribes if that's what you're referring to - either Mashpee or Aquinnah.

Donna Curtin, 1:17PM
I was just wondering if we could read the full sentence. I don't have that page right in front of me just to see how it follows, because I know that the next clause is about the inclusion of Indigenous leadership.

Brian Boyles, 1:18PM
This whole passage, if that's helpful, says that the next group, “would be representative of the diversity, expertise, and backgrounds of the people of Massachusetts. Membership in this working group should include the Secretary of the Commonwealth, who would also serve as co-chair and include the leadership of the Indigenous tribal governments within Massachusetts.” So the amendment would then read “who would serve as co-chair, along with an Indigenous tribal government co-chair, and include leadership of Indigenous tribal governments.”

Brittney R Walley, 1:19PM
Actually, the question that was asked just answered it, but I also appreciate that from the beginning of our Commission and so I'm glad to see us talking about it now.

Michael Comeau, 1:19PM
Yeah, I mean, I take a John Peters’ earlier point that if things went a particular direction then maybe the framing we are discussing now isn't essential, but I think it's very important to have

this amendment in as it's been proposed because again what we don't want to do here is repeat the steps that happened back in the 1880s, right? So I think it's just it makes good sense to insulate ourselves against that possibility regardless of what the final product is. I think we need full inclusion and to make sure that we get the very best possible expertise in the way recommendation.

Brian Boyles, 1:20PM
If there is no other discussion with this change and then I will take a Roll Call vote to approve it.
Yeas – Boyles, Comeau, Walley, Bennett, Cabral, Curtin, Simon, Simons, Vieira, Wallace
Neas –
Abstentions- Peters
Reserve Rights-
Not present – Weedon, Amato, Andrews-Maltais, Ferretti, Kondratiuk, Collins, Solomon, Whitson

Brian Boyles, 1:22PM
Is there anything in the rest of the report that anyone wants to touch on or amend or question before we focus ourselves on who is going to be carrying the baton forward?

Donna Curtin, 1:23PM
I'm just one other word choice on, page 26, in the educational program recommendations, under the K12 student portion of the targeted audiences, it mentions the "development of mandatory curriculum materials. It's use of the word "mandatory" here. We obviously want this program to be in, but I wondered if we wanted to discuss the use of mandatory because mandatory sometimes ties hands in a way, so it's similar to the conversation we were having about the Secretary. What do we feel about the process going forward? Maybe we need that word mandatory in there because this is really important and we want to emphasize that, but I thought it would be worth just a discussion -- and then I would like to just mention that my name is misspelled on page 20 with the a curtain like a drapery, but it's just tin if that could be fixed. no problem.

Brian Boyles, 1:24PM
That's an apology from Brian with a Y and I think this is a good question.Mandatory do people have any feeling about that term? Unfortunately, Elizabeth is not here to speak to it, but we did approve the language already. I will say from my perspective, leaving that language in there I think was the intention of the strength of our recommendation. So I'm for leaving in there unless anyone else wants to wants to talk about it.

Rep. David Vieira, 1:25PM
I hate to bring it up without Elizabeth being here, bu I'm just wondering if the word "modules" in mandatory curriculum modules. To Donna's point, about being so very specific versus mandatory curriculum "standards." I would think and, and maybe Brittany or John, you could help me with this, that perhaps some of the history on the Indigenous side might be presented a little differently in certain areas based on the tribal makeup in that region. I know Elizabeth enlightened me to the differences in the different views between two of the Wampanoag tribes themselves, the Mashpee that I represent, and other uh tribes of the Mashpee nation. I don't know if maybe it's the curriculum modules versus curriculum standards that that tightens us up.

John Peters, 1:25PM
As I think about standards, I love the modules are there. There are different histories in the Commonwealth and, I brought this up before in other places, but when you go to the flag room at the State House and look at all of the different towns and their flags, some of them do have native representation there and I always thought that some of that education should be provided to those particular towns as to what their history was with the native people that was there. And yes, there are differences between the Wampanoag and Massachusetts, and I think part of this history that may come out in another forum at a future date. But, I don't know if modules is the appropriate term, it may be, but I don't have an answer to that question.

Brian Boyles, 1:26PM
I guess my interpretation is the module may allow for the flexibility because it is a statement of learning standards. If, I'm understanding modules right, there may be multiple created in order to respond to the to the question that you're raising and the John replied to.

Donna Curtin, 1:26PM
Yes, I think there are very specific things that are meant in in educational frameworks versus standards versus modules, so I think Elizabeth used that word very deliberately, and I think you're right, Brian, to point to some level of flexibility and actually the fact that it's referring to modules as mandatory is an easier thing and maybe takes away. I just didn't know if that we felt that put too much of a burden on our recommendation.The word mandatory didn't have all kinds of implications because people have to then follow through and make sure that that's being brought across the board. I think that is the intention of what we have been discussing and certainly what Elizabeth presented in that document - so I'm comfortable with the word mandatory. I just wanted to see if there was anything else that flagged as putting too great a burden on what we're recommending that might then actually hinder it being adopted and used, but I think modules is the appropriate word and if we get into standards or frameworks, we're looking at a much, much larger process of getting these things actually into practice. I would say I'm comfortable with the language as it is and if there's no further concern or discussion about it, I withdraw my comment.

Donna Curtin, 1:28PM
Just one more thing and I'm not sure if we're going to discuss it later, but the introductory letter by the chairs and vice chairs is absolutely compelling and necessary and right from that first paragraph you have brought people's attention to what's I think been, you know, both the driving force that has brought this Commission into being and that has really influenced a lot of our discussions in in a very positive and open way. I thank you all for putting that tremendous amount of work into this document. It clearly shows you've done a lot of work for the Commission going forward, but thank you for that.

Brian Boyles, 1:29PM
If there are no other parts to review, then I would suggest we come back to what I think Rob Cabral actually suggested that the working group should be called an Advisory Commission. I'm certainly comfortable with that language change, unless we need to talk it through, but I think the real question is "are we suggesting the right parameters for it?" It's a pretty long list of names that we included in the final report draft and I can drop that list into the chat just to make it easy for everyone too.

Rep. Antonio Cabral, 1:29PM
Yes, it should be called advisory rather than working group because it will be advisory regardless if it's gets to the legislature or not. The other question that I had is regarding the inclusion of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination. Their mission is investigate discrimination claims. I understand what the Commission was trying to do – to ensure there is diversity on the board and issues of inclusion are discussed – but, I'm not sure if the Commission Against Discrimination is the appropriate agency to really play that role on the on the advisory group.

Brian Boyles, 1:31PM
I think that's a helpful thought given that you're someone who knows all of the commissions quite well. We were looking to ensure that there was a diversity of views and representation and we were looking to find folks within government because we felt like that could give it a stronger presence in moving it forward. Both of those things have other options, I guess, but just to make sure we're looking at it through that lens. So if there are other ways to get it to those two issues, whether it's commissions that should be listed here, or other ways to speak to it, you know, I think that's our intention.

Rep. David Vieira, 1:31PM
So to pick up on referrals, I thought perhaps the ACLU, which is an advocacy group, well known a lot of political clout in the Commonwealth to look at issues of discrimination versus of a regulatory commission like MCAD.

Rep. Antonio Cabral, 1:31PM
The NAACP is another organization where the mission is diversity and making sure everybody's included. It now depends if this groups wants to include on or both of those organizations,

Brian Boyles, 1:32PM
I could be wrong, but I think that the NAACP is really broken into regional chapters, so I don't know that there's an overarching NAACP of Massachusetts, but I totally could be wrong about that.

Donna Curtin, 1:32PM
I love to see this list has been expanded, particularly, the inclusion of the educational agencies and also the final sentence emphasizing the need for educators and artists, I think is tremendously helpful.
I believe all of the other offices are actually sort state or quasi-public entities or they have some sort of status under the state, so if you start including outside agencies and organizations, that might be a little tricky because you're naming a couple of outside private nonprofits and not others. I believe the idea is that this advisory group or working group would be building a larger process for more public input going down the line. And that's perhaps where you would do outreach to other types of organizations, but I just wondered if that might sort of muddy it a little bit if you begin to bring in basically external organizations that have their own identity and are private.

Brittney R Walley, 1:33PM
Just a logic question because I am for inclusion, but we do know we might not to exceed 19 Members, so I'm not sure if we need to think about that as well thinking through this.

Michael Comeau, 1:33PM
We're going to be sort of restricted in the number anyway and I guess the hope and expectation would be that it would sort of the broader based appointees that we're considering. They will drill down more granular expertise as necessary, so I think that it is wise to keep it more broader based and then you allow the group itself to determine the needed expertise. The advisory group would bring in outside expertise rather than having appointees because, again, we can't predict the future entirely. We have to give them that flexibility to sort of identify the appropriate authorities as necessary.

Brittney R Walley, 1:35PM
I have an unrelated suggestion not to the list, but just to the second sentence in #5. I'm actually wondering maybe if Donna Curtin can help us through the grammar of it, because that seems to be something that has been really helpful. I'm just stuck on the flow of the clauses. All of the points makes sense, I just don't know how to make that sentence a little less wordy.

Brian Boyles, 1:37PM
I probably could take a pass at that before we submit the report. I don't think there's anything, that's going to change in the in the intention of recommendation.

Rep. Antonio Cabral, 1:38PM
Made a MOTION to change the name from working group to Advisory Commission and remove the Mass Commission Against Discrimination from the list: SECONDED by Rep. Vieira.

Donna Curtin, 1:38PM
Is there a difference between a Commission and a group? Because we've very deliberately didn't call this a Commission.

Rep. Antonio Cabral, 1:39PM
You can call it advisory group rather than advisory commission, but commission is a little more formal, that’s all.

Rep. David Vieira, 1:39PM
Traditionally a working group is an executive function and commissions are usually legislative functions. So we have a process in the House where by a resolve rather than a bill, can establish commissions like this Commission and sometimes we direct departments to create a working group and that was what I was mentioning that we had done with the civics.

Brian Boyles, 1:39PM
And if I'm hearing you right, then if it is a commission, this is something we will have to take legislation forward to carry out rather than a working group which could be convened by someone in the executive office. Is that right? CONFIRMED by Reps Cabral and Vieira

Brian Boyles, 1:40PM
Conducted a ROLL CALL VOTE on the MOTION; APPROVED
Yeas- Boyles, Comeau, Walley, Cabral, Vieira, Peters, Curtin, Bennett, Simons, Wallace
Neas-
Abstentions-

Reserving Rights-
Not present – Collins, Kondratiuk, Ferretti, Andrews-Maltais, Amato, Simon, Solomon, Whitson

Brian Boyles, 1:43PM
Any other discussion around this list or the report before I call for a vote to approve the final report?

Kelly Bennett, 1:43PM
Yes, on recommendation #3 - I wish Micah was here – the word lithographer is very specific and I am hoping is was chosen with purpose, but I can't help but wonder if the term 'lithographer" is limiting in some capacity or if that language was used based on language from other states.

Brian Boyles, 1:44PM
I want to say that I went back and forth with Micah to confirm that.I think that has to do specifically with the skill set of lithographer to do that, but I will admit I'm not expert here.

Kelly Bennett, 1:45PM
A lithographer does have a specific skill set, but if I was an illustrator that didn't have lithography skills but had a good design. Are we limiting our ability to have a good design based on choosing a lithographer only? I only wonder because, if someone creates a great design, one can take that design to a lithographer to then execute. The artist Edmund Garrett was an illustrator. He did engravings and so forth, so a good artist is often able to do a range of things within their work.

Brian Boyles, 1:46PM
This is why we need artists and arts folks on the Commission. I think changing it out to illustrator was the intention, so I'm OK making that change, I don't think we'll lose anything in the impact.

Brittney R Walley, 1:46PM
I'm all for the transdisciplinary use of art and artists, but yes, I am wondering how we can really make the relationship work just because we've talked so much about the functions of a seal and what they what, what good ones are like.It should all be able to translate in one color if it's, you know in cement on a bridge versus on paper or something like that. So I just want to make sure that whatever we write those particular skills, there are highlighted in some way. I'm afraid we'll lose something if we don't make it specific now.

Brian Boyles, 1:46PM
I guess my thought is that the report carries quite a lot of information about that which we are passing forward, but I could certainly go back through the overview to make sure that these things are distinguished, but again, I'm open if we still want to make that change.

Rep. David Vieira, 1:47PM
I guess I'm going to attack in the opposite direction and say if we strike the words for a lithographer from the sentence, it would say that the secretary of the Commonwealth shall issue a request for proposals to design a new seal based on so that we are not pigeonholing into one discipline. When this RFP comes out, they'll be a process to establish the call for the proposals and in that we can make sure that the knowledge, skills and ability of those that respond to the

RFP meet the needs of the task. So without making a motion, I'll hear some comment first, but maybe we just strike out four a lithographer so it reads requests for proposals to design a new seal.

Michael Comeau, 1:47PM
No, I think that's a sensible recommendation. It broadens things quite a good deal and of course scope and content within the IRFP itself can define the multiple disciplines that we might be sort of leaning towards. I think that's just the simplest and cleanest way to do it.

Donna Curtin, 1:48PM
In the header, the bold sentence on three that would have to be changed as well to unless you wanted to keep it. That seeks a professional designer so that the word professional is included there, which just suggests a level of skill that's being sought.

Brian Boyles, 1:48PM
I could change that recommendation from lithographer to designer and probably cover our bases.

Rep. David Vieira, 1:49PM
Mad a MOTION to that we strike in paragraph 3, the words for a lithographer and in the title the word lithographer and replace it with designer; SECONDED by Rep. Cabral; APPROVED by VOICE VOTE; no dissent, no abstentions.

Brian Boyles, 1:50PM
Does anyone have any other updates they'd like to consider? If not, I would take MOTION to APPROVE the final report of the Special Commission, so MOVED by Donna Curtin; SECONDED by Brenton Simons

Brian Boyles, 1:50PM
Called for a ROLL CALL VOTE; APPROVED
Yeas- Boyles, Walley, Comeau, Bennett, Cabral, Curtin, Peters, Simon, Simons, Vieira
Neas- Collins, Wallace
Reserve Rights-
Abstentions-
Not Present- Weeden, Amato, Andrews-Maltais, Ferretti, Kondratiuk, Solomon, Whitson

Brian Boyles, 1:51PM
OK, the motion passes. The final report has been approved. Thank you all so much. I said at the outset, will be submitting this report tomorrow. My only remaining work is just to make sure that I have all of the minutes and that it is formatted a little bit more elegantly. Anything else for discussion today before we wrap up?

Rep. Antonio Cabral, 1:51PM
I just want to remind you that you also have to file a copy with the with the committee on state administration.

Brian Boyles, 1:52PM
This has been a powerful experience. I want to thank you all for what you brought to the table. We've been together for quite a while. The respect I feel for you has only grown, but the respect

that you've shown for each other, I think, has modeled how I hope we move and work together in public spaces all around the Commonwealth. So thanks for doing me the honor of allowing me to share these meetings. I want to thank again, Co-Chair, Weedon, Vice-Chair Walley and Vice-Chair Comeau and Kate Miller and all of you for doing this work together. I will continue to be in touch as we are asked to do work on as a consequence of our report, and I will be reaching out to C-chair Weedon and some of our legislative allies around any legislation we may want to take forward. Could I get a motion to adjourn?

Rep. Antonio Cabral, Antonio, 1:53PM
Made MOTION to ADJOURN the Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto; SECONDED by Sen. Collins; APPROVED by a VOICE VOTE; no dissents, no abstentions

Rep. Antonio Cabral, 1:54PM
That is just want to congratulate everybody as well in you guys who have done awesome work. Everybody in the Commission has really dedicated lots of time and certainly the leadership of the chairs and the vice-chairs was very important for us to continue working on this and the report is well put together Brian. So thank you again for my part. This Commission deserves a lot of credit for all the work that it has done so far. I know it's an issue that can be touchy, can be sensitive, and I think was handle it quite well without, you know, not really offending anybody.

Brian Boyles, 1:55PM
The motion passes.

FULL LISTS OF SYMBOLS AND MOTTOS

The Commission members responded to a survey asking for their suggestions on appropriate symbols for a new seal and appropriate terms for a new motto. The survey was conducted November 8 to 18, 2022.

Symbols

- Banner with motto replaced by a listing the Tribal Nations of Massachusetts, Wampanoag, Nipmuc, Pocumtuck
- Blue Hills
- Capital Dome
- Cedar tree
- Chickadee
- Circle around the image with selected inspirational/aspirational terms, maybe separated by significant dates: 1621 (Treaty of Peace), 1770 (First Shot), 1776 (Independence), 1788 (Statehood), 1863 (MA 54th Regiment became active), Other significant worldwide recognition dates Massachusetts was known for
- Clasped hands
- Coastline
- Coast with sun rising in the east
- Cod
- Colonial figure
- Cranberry
- Eastern White Pine
- Elm Tree
- Fauna
- Feather
- Flora
- State Shape
- Hills
- Indigenous person
- May Flower (blossom)
- Mountain
- Native American
- Native American symbol (to be determined)
- Ocean
- Ocean/nautical
- One image per County of an industry, natural or recognizable wildlife elements indigenous to or adopted by Massachusetts as repeat elements of a border around the edge of the flag.

- Pine tree
- Quill pen
- Red Tail Hawk, state bird
- Rising Sun
- Scripted Massachusetts Constitution
- Seashore
- State Berry: Cranberry
- State Bird:-Black Capped Chickadee
- State Flower: Mayflower
- State Marine Mammal: Northern Right Whale
- State Shape
- State Tree: American Elm
- Tree
- Turkey
- Waterways/riverways
- White Birch
- White Pine
- White star
- Wild Turkey

Terms

- Commonwealth
- Commonwealth of Masachusetts: For the good of all
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- Courage
- Culture
- Education
- Equality
- First
- for freedom, justice, equality
- For the Common Good
- Freedom - Equality
- From our histories, we move forward
- Gratitude
- Hope
- Innovation
- Justice
- Liberty
- Nature

- Opportunity
- Peace
- Peace, Justice, Equality
- Promise - Hope
- Reciprocity
- Resiliency
- Respect
- Respect for all is our common wealth
- Seek
- Service, Justice, Equality
- Striving to _____
- We seek Peace, Justice & Equality for All

July 14, 2022

Special Commission Relative to the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street
Boston MA 02133

Re: Position of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, a Federally Recognized Sovereign Tribal Government

Good Morning Co-Chairmen Weeden and Boyles and Commissioners,

In reference to the design elements of the Seal, Motto and Flag of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts being considered for removal or revision, please be advised that the following is the official and formal position of the duly elected Tribal Council of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah; a Federally Recognized Sovereign Tribal Nation.

While an entire redesign is the intent of the Seal Commission, our Tribal Council feels very strongly that certain design elements need to be removed, other elements need to be retained and other elements need revisions. We are calling upon the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Special Commission Relative to the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth to make the following changes and incorporate them into any new design:

1. Totally remove the sword and motto in Latin
2. Keep the image of the Indigenous person, and replace it with the generally accepted image of Ousamequin as presented on Coles Hill (Plymouth)
3. Remove the downward facing arrow

Our Ancestors, the Wampanoag People provided aid and assistance to the English Pilgrim settlers in these lands. It is our desire and intent to not lose that historical imagery or the fact that our assistance played a critical and central role in the establishment of this country; from its founding roots to what it has become today.

In addition to respecting our Tribal Nation and recognizing the centuries of harm inflicted upon our People, whether intentional or unintentional, the result is still the same. The historical trauma and emotional distress that the current iteration and imagery represents, has harmed our People, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who reside within the Commonwealth, including any Indigenous Peoples who see the image. It triggers the knowledge of the atrocities that were perpetrated against our Ancestors, and resurrects and re-inflicts that pain on every generation of our People.

This is the perfect opportunity to demonstrate how a teaching moment can have a transformative impact. We call upon you to incorporate the elements listed above into any new design; to honor and respect the standing and position of our Tribal Government and to recognize the contributions of the Wampanoag People in the founding of this Country.

We would be happy to discuss further. Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation in this important matter.

In Balance, Harmony and Peace,



Chairwoman Cheryl Andrews-Maltais

MASHPEE TOWN SEAL

DRAFT PRESENTATION

November 15, 2021



THE START

- A citizen's petition was filed by Brian Weeden to replace the Town of Mashpee Seal
- The petition appeared on the May 6, 2019 Town Meeting warrant as Article #32
- The article passed unanimously to give direction to the Board of Selectmen to lead the project to change the Mashpee Town Seal

THE START

- In a 12/12/19 memo to the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, Rodney Collins made the following recommendation:
  - Board of Selectmen establish an ad hoc advisory committee for the purpose of preparing a recommendation for a new Town Seal
  - Such Committee would consist of one Selectman, who would act as Chair

THE START

- The Board of Selectmen voted to appoint the Town Seal Committee as follows:
  - David Weeden, Selectman - who will serve as Chair of the Committee
  - Terrie Cook, Town Administrative Assistant – who would also act as recording secretary for the Committee.
  - Evan Lehrer, Town Planner
  - Kathy Mahoney, Library Director
  - Patty DeBoer, School Superintendent
  - Joan Tavares-Avant, Historical Commission member
  - Brian Weeden, Tribal Council representative as appoint by the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Council

THE COMMITTEE OBJECTIVE AND PROCESS

- To plan, review, design and recommend a draft Town Seal to be presented to the Board of Selectmen
- The Board of Selectmen will discuss the draft Town Seal and will decide if the Board wishes to place an article on a Town Meeting warrant for approval of the proposed Town Seal by the voters

INITIAL ACTIONS TAKEN

- Designed a survey which was used to solicit feedback from all Mashpee residents to help guide the design of this new Town Seal
- The town manager initiated an RFP for creative agencies to design the new proposed Town Seal

INPUT ACTIVELY SOLICITED

Town of Mashpee
Town Seal Committee
16 Great Neck Road North
Mashpee, Massachusetts 02649

Mashpee Town Seal Redesign
Community Survey

The Town Seal Committee was established by the Board of Selectmen following the May 2019 Town Meeting upon successful petition to redesign the Mashpee Town Seal. Today's Town Seal is not reflective of Mashpee's history or and is seen as a symbol reflective of the genocide of Native People. The Town Seal Committee, in order to propose an updated design that recognizes and honors the Town's history, its culture, and that which makes Mashpee unique, seeks your input.

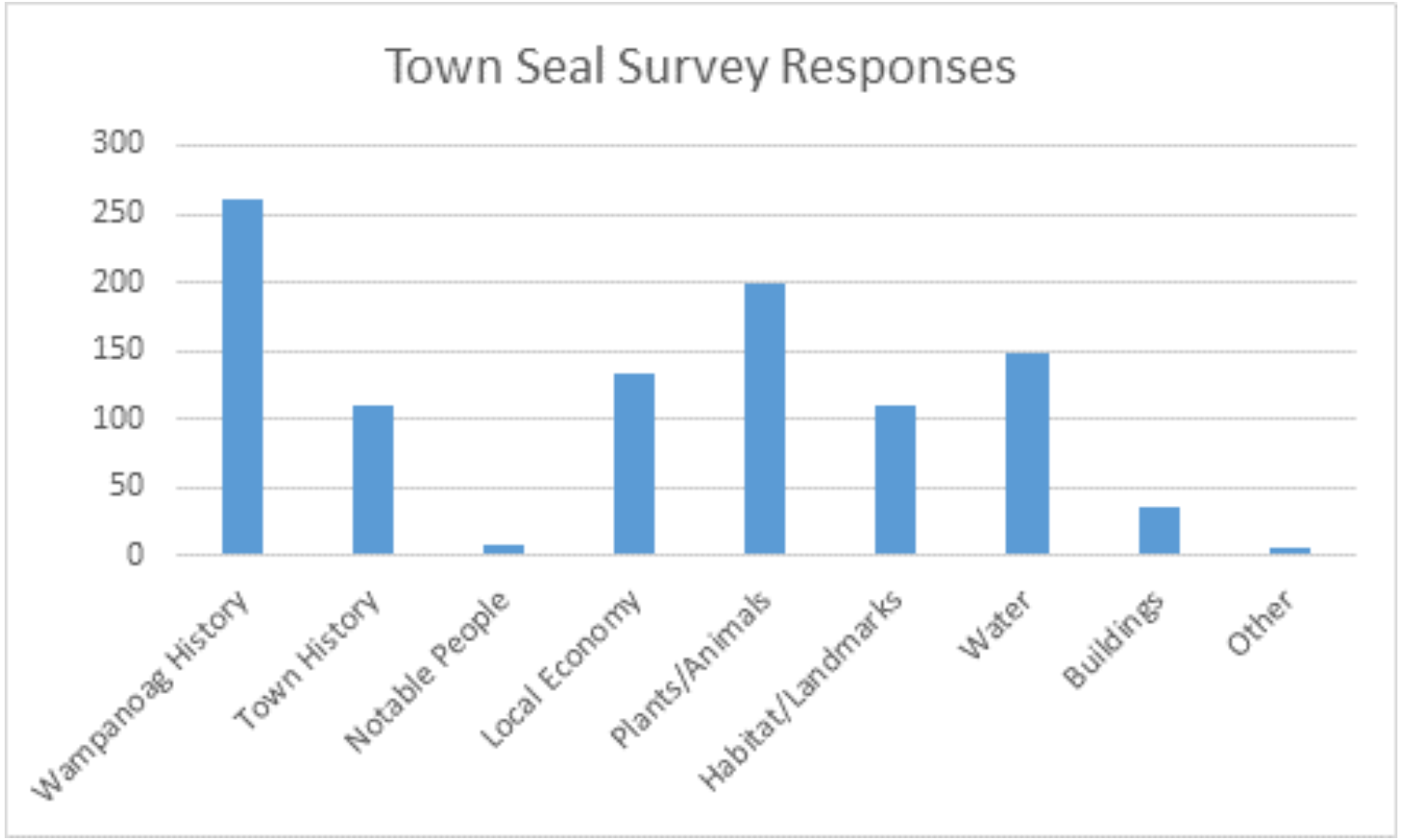
Please choose your top three (3) priorities from the list below as the most important symbols to depict on the new Mashpee Town Seal. Please elaborate on your choices using the space provide on page 2.

	Wampanoag History/Symbols (Wampum, Wampum Belt, Eagle feather, Wetu)
	Town History (post 1870 incorporation of the Town)
	Notable Person or People (Use space on Page 2 to define who and why)
	Local Economy (Shellfishing, Cranberries, Herring Fishing, Hunting)
	Native Plants and Animals (Shellfish, Turtle, Brook Trout, Pine Tree, White Cedars, Herring, Eagle, Hawk)
	Wildlife Habitat/Landmarks (Popponesset Spit, Salt Marsh, Cedar Swamp)
	Water/ Waterbodies (Mashpee Wakeby, Mashpee River, Popponesset Bay, etc.)
	Notable Buildings / Architecture (Oakley Country Store/Okrey Trading Post, Attaquin Hotel, Indian Meeting House, The Commons, Town Hall)
	Other (please use the space provided to elaborate on the next page)

Town of Mashpee
16 Great Neck Road North
Mashpee, Massachusetts 02649

Please elaborate on your responses in as much or as little detail as you deem appropriate using only the space provided below:

TOWN SEAL – RESIDENT SURVEY RESPONSES



QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Totals are:

Wampanoag History	260
Plants/Animals	200
Water	148
Local Economy	134
Town History	111
Habitat/Landmarks	110
Buildings	35
Notable People	9
Other	6

RESULTS OF RFP FOR CREATIVE AGENCY

- Pierce Cote Advertising, a Cape Cod-based design firm, was selected to help in the design of a new Town Seal
- Pierce-Cote began work with the committee, May 2021

OBJECTIVE

To ensure that the following according to the Town Seal survey are incorporated into the design:

- Wampanoag History/Symbols
- Native Plants and Animals
- Water and Water Bodies

PROJECT STEPS IN CREATION OF NEW PROPOSED TOWN SEAL

Pierce-Coté Advertising:

- Held brainstorming roundtable with Town Seal Committee
- Developed value proposition
- Discussed Town Seal Committee mandates
- Developed initial concepts
- Focused on design preferences
- Finalized design

KEY CREATIVE DIRECTION PROVIDED

The current seal is to be changed as it is a:

- Reminder of Oppression
- Non-Flattering Depiction of Native Americans
- Offensive Design of Arm and Sword over Native American

DIRECTION

- **Wampanoag History**
  - Praying Indian Town
  - Vested Interest in the Environment
  - Reliance on Shell Fishing, Especially Quahog
  - Can Speak for Water Ways and for Those who Can't Speak
  - Endured Changes Around Them
  - Stewards of the Land
  - Appreciation of Natural Resources and the Environment
  - Working in Concert Together
  - Mashpee, the Place of Great Waters

DIRECTION

- **Wampanoag Symbols**
  - Sun – People of the First Light
  - Corn – In Tribal Logo
  - Stars
  - Quahog Shell
  - Wampum Belt
  - Pipe
  - Eagle Flies Highest – Closest to Creator and Sun, Great Hunter
  - Round Dance is Welcoming
  - Circle Means All People Are Equal
  - Greeting the Sun – A New Beginning, A New Start
  - Respect for All Living Beings
  - Eagle Feather Used in Ceremonies

DIRECTION

- **Plants**
  - Red Cedar
  - White/Swamp Cedar
  - Cranberries
  - Coastal Plants
- **Animals**
  - Deer
  - Beaver
  - Fish
  - Whales
  - Birds
  - Eagle
  - Turtle
  - Rabbit

DIRECTION

- **Water**
  - Popponesset Bay
  - Waquoit Bay
  - Shoestring Bay
  - Mashpee Pond
  - John's Pond
  - Santuit Pond
  - Mashpee-Wakeby Pond (Largest Body of Water)
  - River Systems Connect to Ocean

DIRECTION

- **Mashpee in One Word**
  - Community
  - Welcoming
  - Environment
  - Connected
  - Beautiful
  - Tribe
  - Caring
  - Unity
  - Dynamic
  - Respectful
  - Better Place

VALUE PROPOSITION

The Town Seal is to clearly communicate that Mashpee is a welcoming and caring community which connects and honors the tradition of the Wampanoag Tribe as stewards of its land and beauty, to the town moving forward in unity to greet the next day.

CLIENT MANDATES

Do's

- Environmental Theme
- Body of Water
- Culturally Sensitive and Accurate
- Needs to be Understood
- Updated and Modern
- Honors Tradition
- Timeless Design
- Sunshine and Light
- Bringing Together in Harmony
- Moving Forward
- Clean Lines
- Recognition of Homeland of Wampanoags
- Include Representation of Women (with a Child)
- Greeting the Sun
- Original Spelling of Town of Mashpee
- Wampanoag word for "Welcome"

CLIENT MANDATES

Don’ts’

- Show Hostility
- Use Latin
- Buildings
- Listing Barnstable County

DESIGN
CURRENT SEAL



DESIGN
PROPOSED SEAL



DESIGN
PROPOSED SEAL



- The border represents the Wampum beads, showing single white beads in the Mashpee Wampanoag purple
- The rising sun represents both a new day, a new start while also holding the meaning of the Wampanoag tribe being the “People of First Light”
- The Wampanoag tribe also hold symbolism in the eagle, flying closest to the sun and creator
- The Mashpee river was chosen to represent connection to something larger
- “Welcome to Mashpee” is written in the Wampanoag language to honor the past while welcoming the future of Mashpee
- Colors were chosen to represent harmony, unity, and the beauty of Mashpee

DESIGN
PROPOSED SEAL



THANK YOU

Pierce-Coté
A REGAN COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY

Thoughts on Seal, Motto (and yes, flag)

May, two thousand twenty two

Presenter's Note

I didn't grow up in Massachusetts, but I got here as quickly as I could. I've lived in the Commonwealth for 15 years and have children who were born and raised here. I own a postage-stamped size lot of Massachsuetts. I love it here. I think most of us do.

But I don't have much outside of sports team logos to show it. As residents, we don't have a communal icon to rally around. Visitors want that same thing to have as a memento of their visit to America®. This typically comes in the form of a flag. Think Texan pride in showing (and remixing) theirs, and people who come back from the Lowcountry with a palmetto belt.

Our flag is our biggest opportunity to cement the state's visual identity. The seal and motto are less visible, and require more expertise to land. But 'we' often are thinking about the flag when talking about the seal. Continuing to do so muddies the waters - I don't know of any states who have crowdsourced a seal or motto. That's asking for overall disappointment. We should clarify where the flag will fits it, so we can seperate that portion, and continue on with our charge.

That said, I couldn't leave the flag out of my thinking, as it is an important part of this overall exercise. I'm excited to present some thought starters and see where they will lead.

Massachusetts - Matchy matchy



Coat of Arms



Seal



Flag

Alabama - A bit of everything



Coat of Arms (Historic)



Seal



Flag

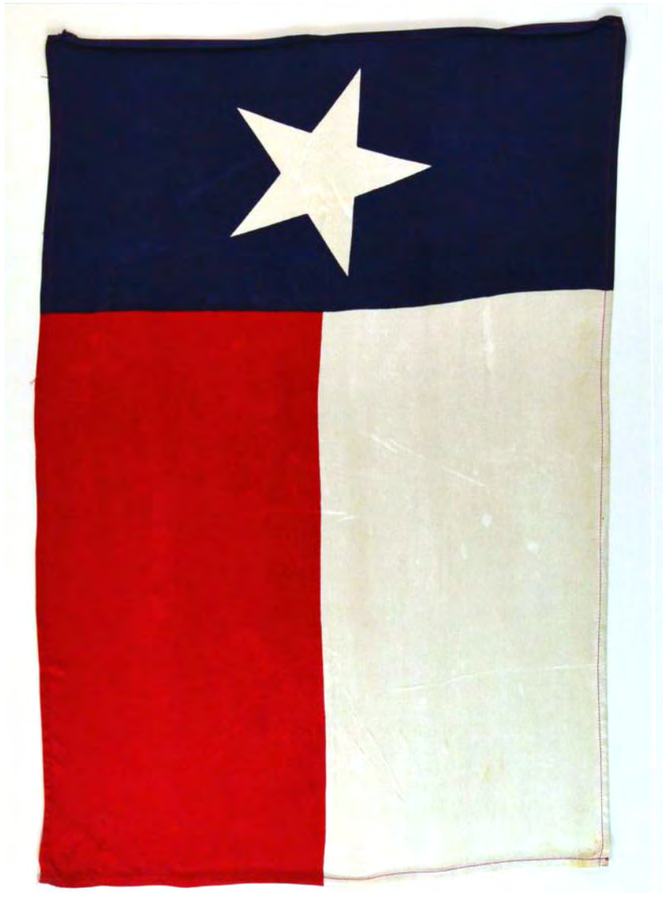
Texas - Variations on a theme



Coat of Arms



Seal



Flag

South Carolina - 2 out of 3

Coat of Arms



Seal



Flag

South Carolina - A tree by any other name



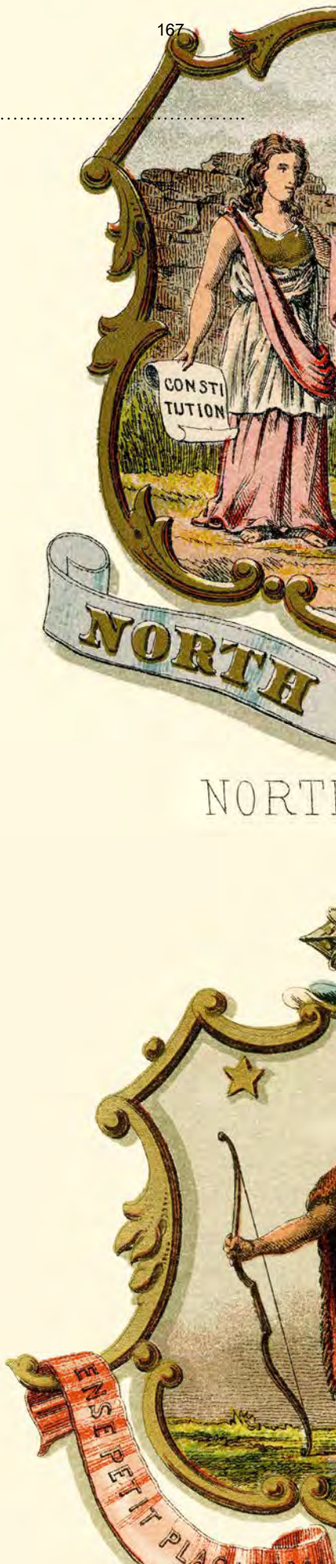







SPERITY.


IN GOD WE TRUST


CONSTI
TUTION
NORTH

NORTI


VIRGINIA
SIC SEMPER TYRANNIS


DIRIGO

NE PETIT PLACIDAM

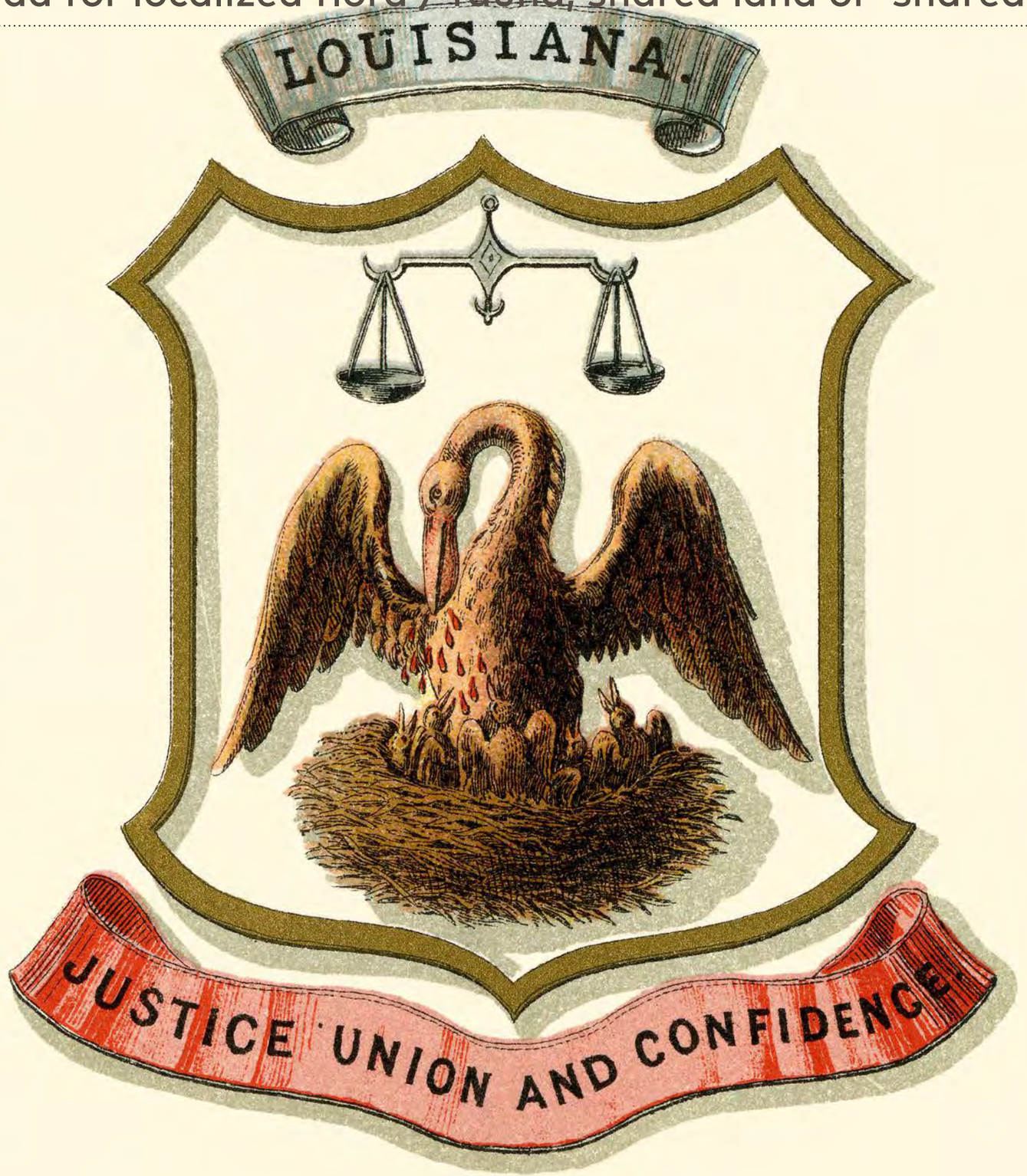
Seals - Opting Instead for localized flora / fauna, shared land or shared ideals



TENNESSEE



TEXAS





COLORADO



UTAH

Flag - Don’t put same burdens on both pieces

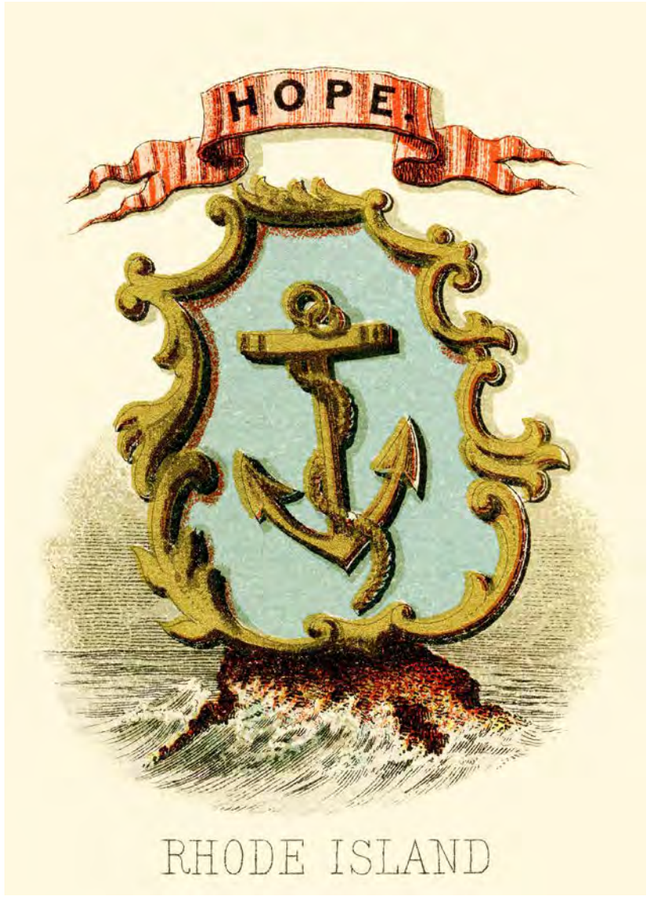


Seal - Expert

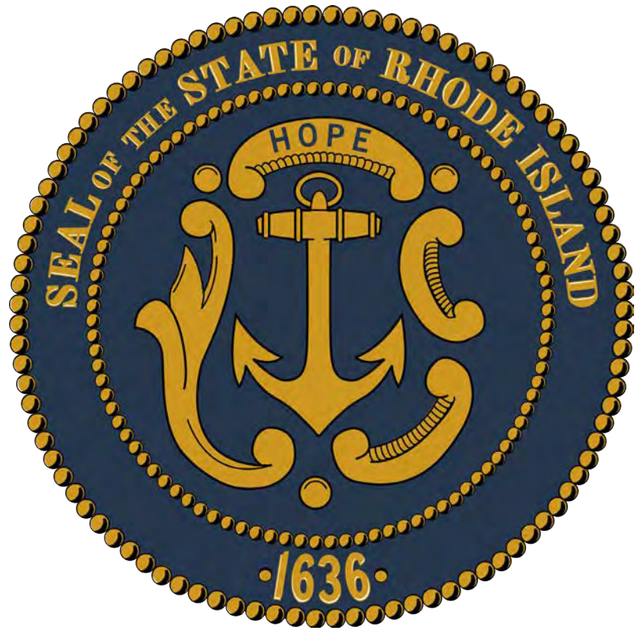


Flag - Novice

Great Example - Simplicity in motto, imagery tethered to place



Coat of Arms

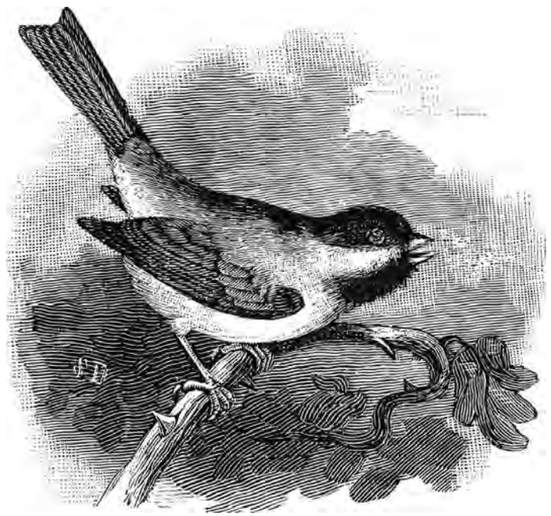


Seal



Flag

State Symbols



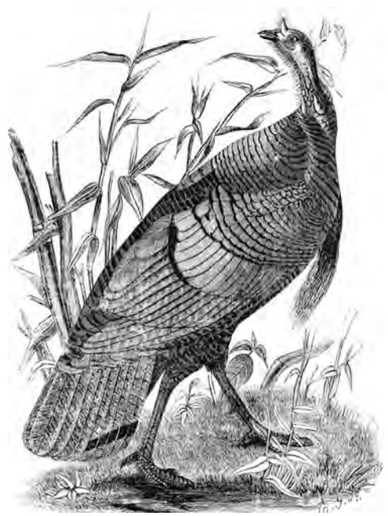
State Bird

Chicakdee



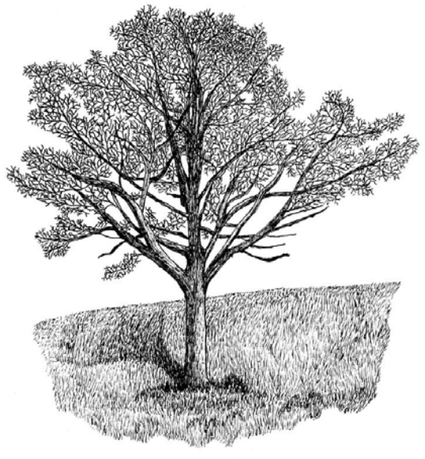
State Berry

Cranberry



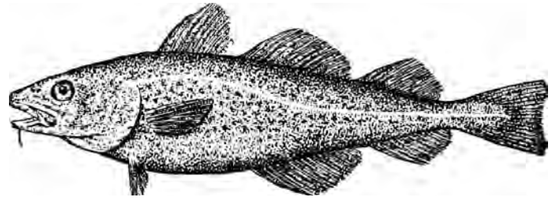
State Game Bird

Wild Turkey



State Tree

Elm



State Fish

Cod



State Flower

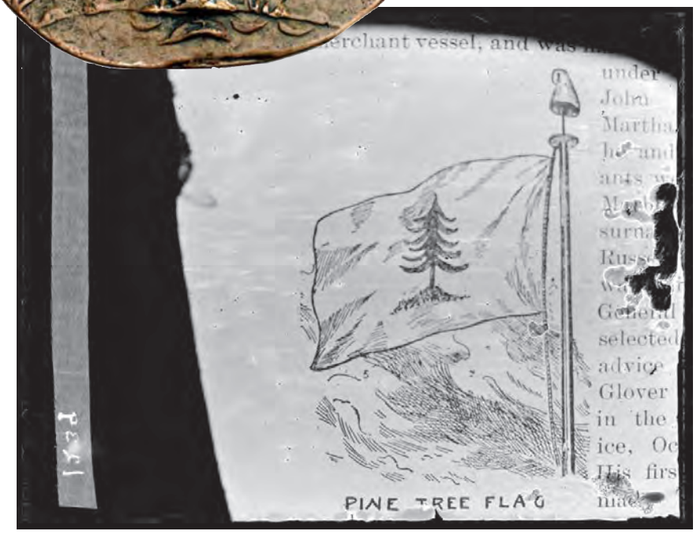
Mayflower

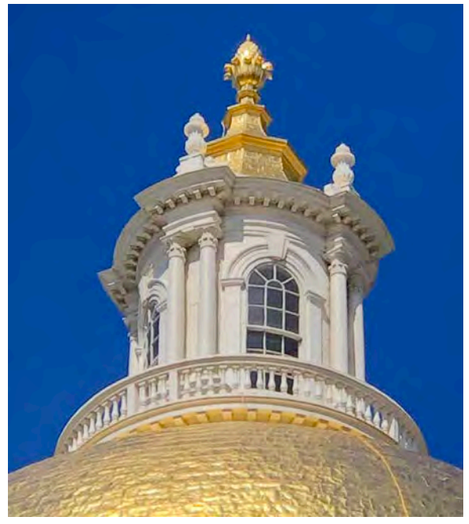
State Symbols















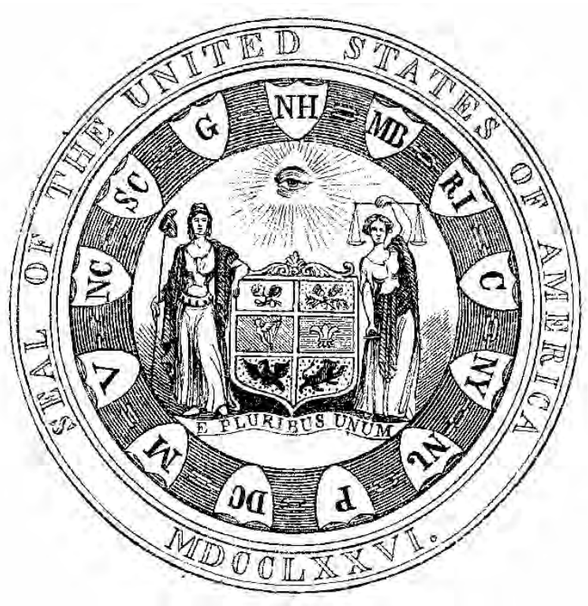
The first man and woman, they were made of stone. The Creator decided that the stone man and woman weren't going to work because they didn't love each other enough. And so the creator started from scratsh and made the first and and woman out of pain tress and (saw) that they did love each other enough and so they were granted life year long. That's why pine trees stay green.

— Creation Story as told by Nitana Hicks,
Mashpee Wampanoag

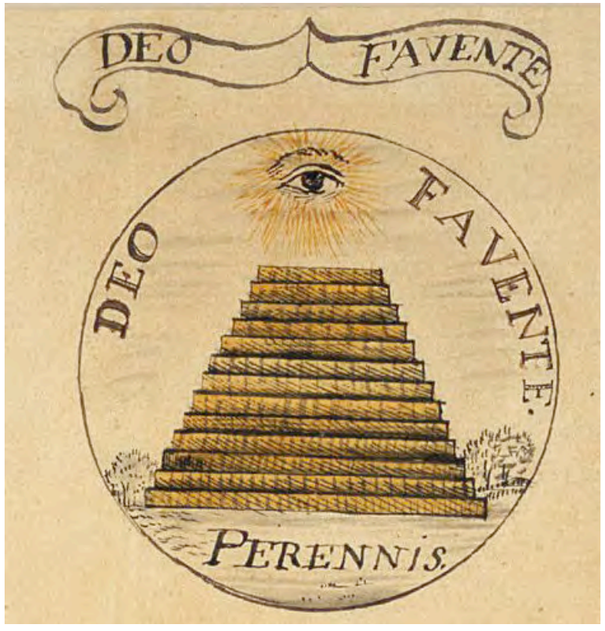
A Reminder

Seal design itself can take considerable time. The US Seal took six years, three committees, and the contributions of fourteen men before the Congress finally accepted a design. Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson & John Adams were among committee members.



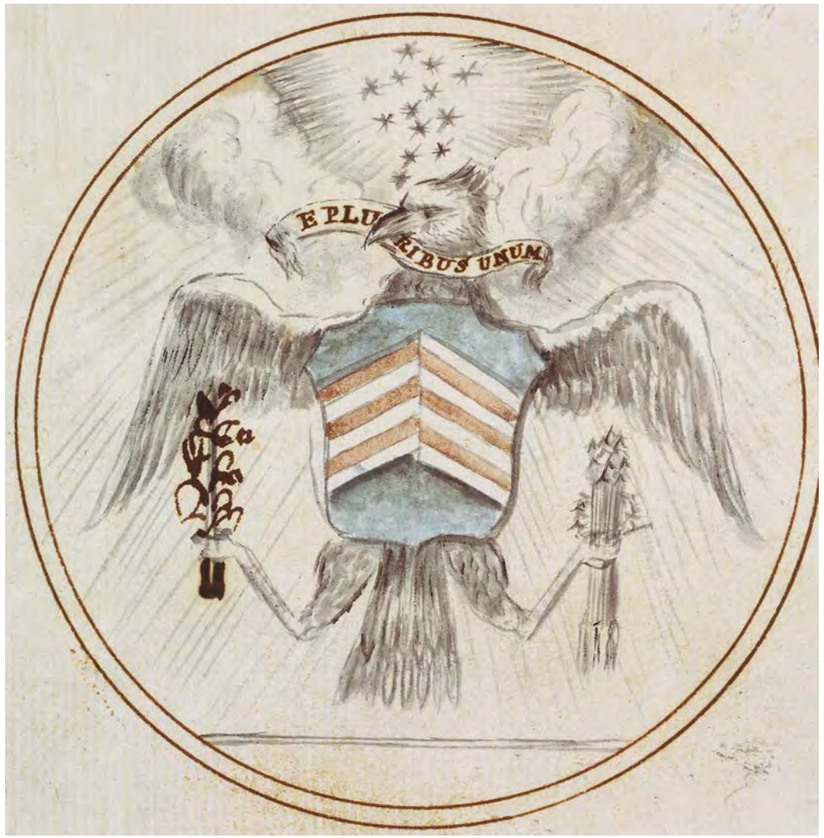




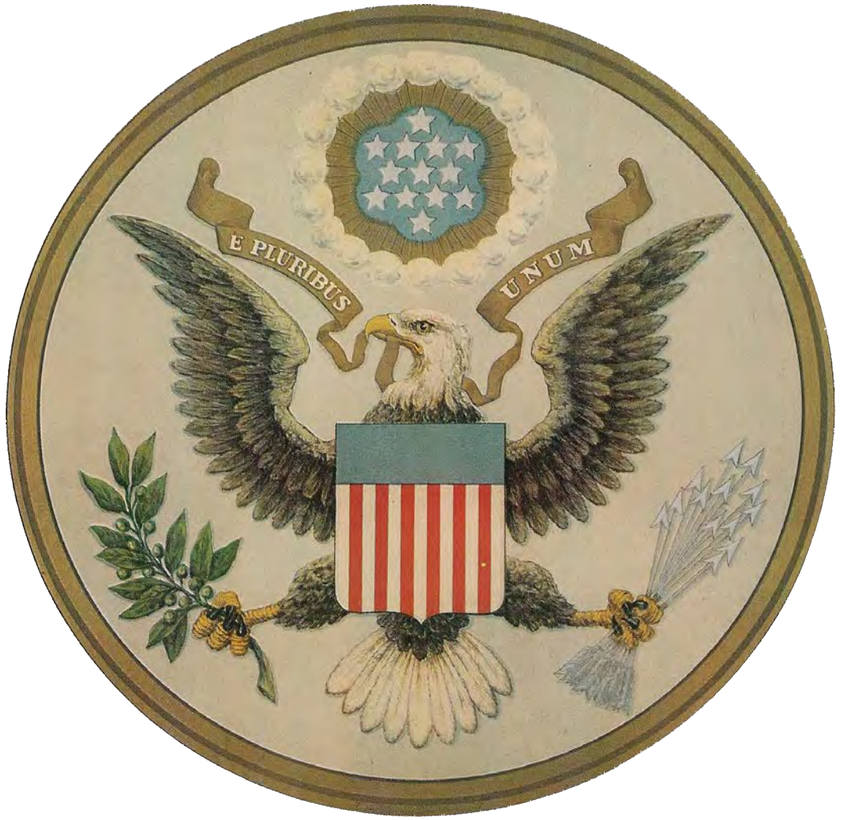


Iterations

From Sketch To Reality



Sketch

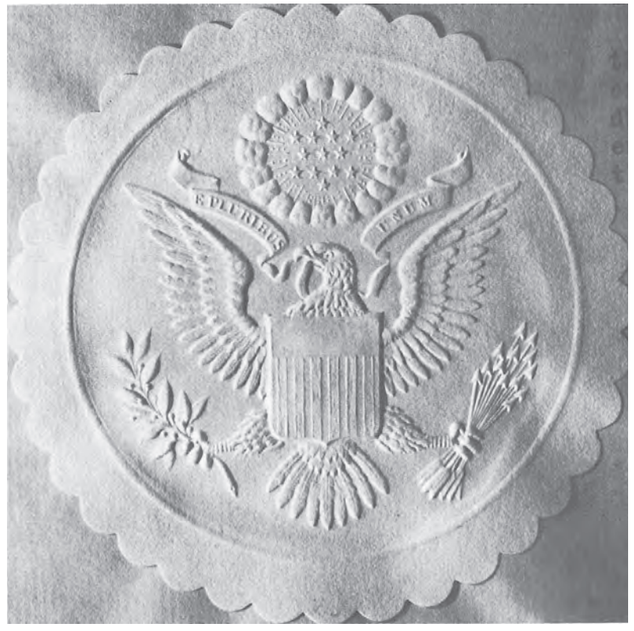


Final

Iterations for various mediums

Iterations











Iterations for various mediums

Mottos

Less Strong

Fatti maschii, parole femine (Md.)

North to the Future (Ak.)

The Crossroads of America (In.)

In God We Trust (Fl.)

Sic Semper Tyrannis (Va.)

More Strong

Live Free Or Die (N.H.)

Equal Rights (Wy.)

Hope (RI)

Eureka (Ca.)

Dum Spiro Spero (S.C.)

Mottos



Motto

Friendship

A Recommendation

Motto

- Two Options Presented by Commission
- Lawmakers decide

Seal

- Commission decides contents
  -Should it include motto?
- Expert illustrates / iterates two options
- Lawmakers approve*
- Experts in their fields render for other applications

*This will require all new flags, either updating with new seal, or creating fully different ones.

A Recommendation

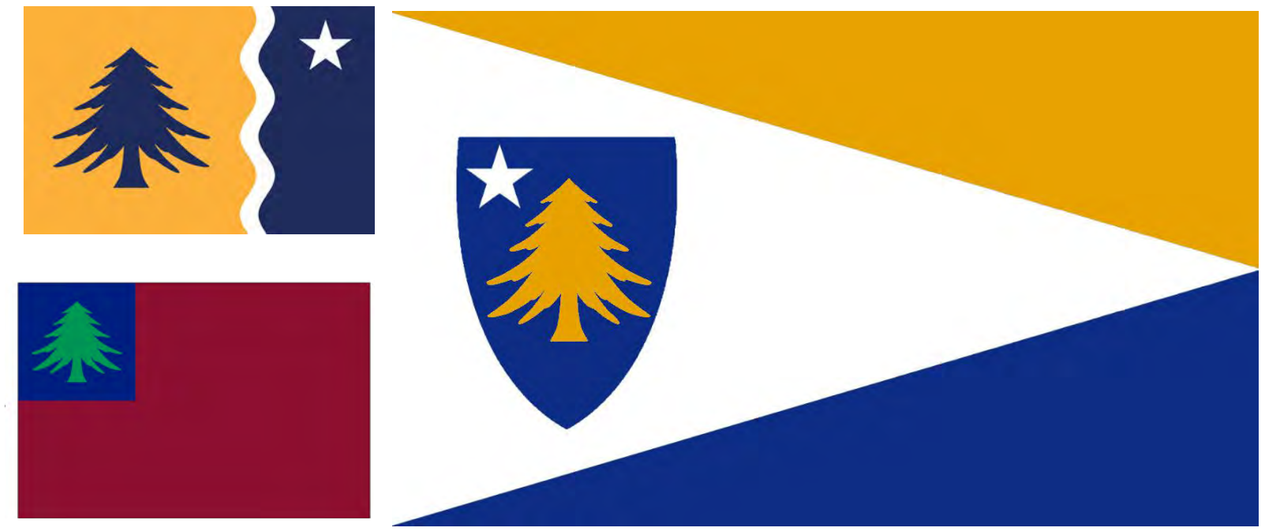
Flag

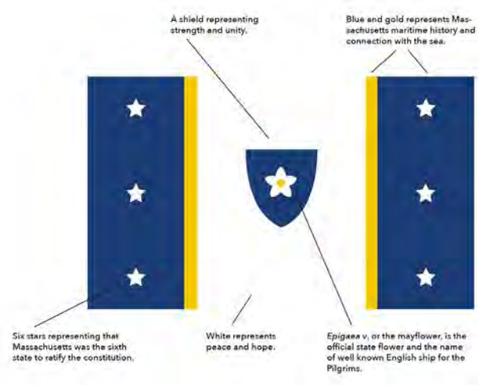
- Current Commision suggestes
a. Expanding charge to include flag or
b. Seating new flag commission

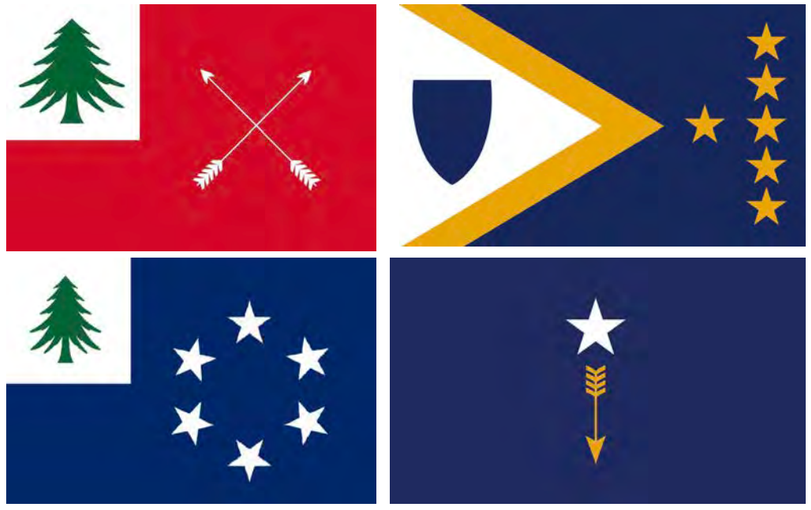
- Any element that should

be included for consistency goes into brief

- Invite public submissions
- Vet with vexilloligical specialists
- Narrow via non-binding polls
- Present options to legislature







Actual explorations of creators already excited about a new flag.