

Denise: Please post. Thanks.

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jessica Brumsted <JBrumsted@leg.state.vt.us>
Subject: Fwd: conference call
Date: April 2, 2018 at 8:50:22 PM EDT
To: Maida Townsend <mftownsend@comcast.net>

Begin forwarded message:

From: Chief Donald Stevens <chiefdonstevens@comcast.net>
Subject:
Date: March 28, 2018 at 12:10:35 PM EDT
To: Jessica Brumsted <JBrumsted@leg.state.vt.us>
Cc:
Reply-To: Chief Donald Stevens <chiefdonstevens@comcast.net>

Jessica,

Here are some points to consider. My main concern is that the Abenaki will be either left out of the process or any decisions around issues that face us. I also want to invoke the special sovereign Government to Government relationship that is afforded to Indian Tribes that is not afforded to other minority populations. This would ensure our voices are heard and we could not get pushed out by populations who will increase in Vermont as time goes on. We cannot just "import" people to Vermont from elsewhere. If anything, we fight extinction every year because we do not have the ability to "self-declare" as a people. We are a minority within a minority. Even the Black Lives Matters movement is trying to have Indians not be considered "people of color" because they use it to identify themselves.

So back to S.281:

1. This commission is to provide education and how to combat/mitigate disparities against minority populations. How with this be paid for and how will this be carried out? Since we know our history, I assume we would be part of that education.

2. The council or commission does not look like it is made up of any minority people because not many serve in the departments sitting on the council/commission. Also most of those departments already have paid employees that can sit on a commission. If our people are asked to sit on this council or commission, how can people get compensated for participation. Most of us have to work and do not have any full time employees to represent our interests or national funding sources?

3. Part of this council is to recommend any staff necessary for administration and operational duties? How is this paid and who makes the determination of who is represented.

4. The Civil Officer position looks like it is hired with a sunset date and can be removed by the council. My fear again is that if it is not a permanent position, people who depend on employment would not want to go into a "contract" job because of the uncertainty of the position. I also do not see this issue ever going away and would need someone always. You would want to make sure that if a minority person is put in that position, that they would represent all minorities and not ignore our voices. Ultimately, it would be better to have our own representation like they do in Maine since we do have the government to government responsibilities.

Sorry for the long note and feel better soon!

Waolowzi (Be Very Well),
Don Stevens, Chief
Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk - Abenaki Nation
www.abenakitribe.org

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