

Change the State Flag and Seal

Resolve Providing for the Creation of a Special Commission Relative to the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth

H.2776 (Rep. Sabadosa), S.1877 (Sen. Lewis) • malegislature.gov/Bills/191/SD1495

Help to Change the Massachusetts Flag and Seal

An image of white supremacy since 1629. →

In 2018, four Franklin County towns: Orange, New Salem, Wendell, and Gill, voted at June town meeting to support a bill to create a commission of Native American representatives and state legislators to recommend changes to the state flag and seal. The Mass Commission on Indian Affairs has been supporting this bill for the last 34 years.



Original Massachusetts seal (above) from 1629 depicts a Native American saying: "Come over and help us"

Take a closer look at the symbols in the current state flag and seal.

Illustrator Edmund Garrett used a Frankenstein approach to designing the "ideal Native American" image for the Massachusetts flag and seal. His design was formally adopted by the legislature on June 14, 1898.

"The bow is an accurate representation of one taken from an Indian shot and killed in Sudbury in 1665."
-Edmund Garrett

Garrett patterned the belt after the red flannel belt of Metacomet (King Philip), housed in the Peabody Museum in Boston. Metacomet was a leader in the first Native war of resistance against English colonization. His severed head was impaled on a pike and displayed in Plymouth for more than 20 years as a war trophy.



The sword is modelled on Myles Standish's broadsword, borrowed from the Pilgrim Hall in Plymouth. Standish was the military commander for Plymouth Colony, known for killing Native Americans.

The face came from a photograph of Thomas Little Shell, a Chippewa chief from Montana. Garrett called him "a fine specimen of an Indian".

Proportions for the body were taken from a Native skeleton dug up in Winthrop.

The downward pointed arrow indicates a 'pacified' Native American.

The Latin motto begins: "By the sword we seek peace..."



The resolve would appoint a commission to redesign the State Flag, Seal and Motto. Info: changethemaassflag.com

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