

**PRESS RELEASE FROM LEGISLATOR  
KATE BROWNING**

**MEDIA ADVISORY  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
AUGUST 26, 2009**

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**SUFFOLK COUNTY NATIVE AMERICANS RECOGNIZED**

*Browning Creates Advisory Board Seeking Official Native American Office*



**Mastic, NY-** County Legislator Kate Browning (WF-Shirley) was successful in gaining the unanimous support of the Suffolk County Legislature to establish the county's first Suffolk County Native American Affairs Advisory Board, with the goal being the establishment of the county's first Office of Native American Affairs.

"This legislation is motivated by a host of important concerns," said Legislator Browning. "We want to improve communication and foster good relations between Native American governments and the government of Suffolk County. Also, many Native Americans in Suffolk County do not live on our two reservations, and they may not get information about certain benefits for which they may be eligible. Lastly, I would like to see every Suffolk County resident gain a better understanding of the traditions and culture of Native Americans, who are the original inhabitants of the land that is

now Suffolk County.”

While the primary objective of the Native American Affairs Advisory Board is the establishment of an Office of Native American Affairs, it also has a host of other goals, which include:

- Promoting educational outreach on Native American history and culture on Long Island, particularly in Suffolk County.
- Improving cultural understanding between the Native American community, Suffolk County government and Suffolk County residents.
- Providing resources and referrals for Native Americans seeking benefits available to members of Native American Nations in Suffolk County, including educational and health care resources.
- Creating a database containing accurate historical and cultural information about Native Americans on Long Island;
- Advocating on behalf of the Native American community in Suffolk County;
- Creating a voice for Native Americans in Suffolk County, where constructive dialogue can take place and transparency can be established between tribal governments and the Suffolk County government.

The Suffolk County Native American Affairs Advisory Board shall consist of thirteen (13) members that include: a representative from the County Legislature, a representative from the County Executive’s office, a representative from the Suffolk County Office of Minority Affairs, a representative of the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association, a representative of the Department of Health Services, and seven (7) representatives of the Native American community in Suffolk County, which include the Shinnecock Nation, the Unchachogue Nation, the Montauk Native people, and representatives living off the reservations.

The Board shall submit a written report on its findings and recommendations on the creation of an Office of Native American Affairs to each member of the Suffolk County Legislature and the County Executive no later than one hundred eighty (180) days from the formation of the Board.

The Poospatuck and Shinnecock tribes have reservations in Suffolk County and both are separate nations with independent tribal governments.

“Native Americans have been residents of Suffolk County long before our government was formed,” stated Browning. “We need to make sure they have a voice in Suffolk County and that we are actively working with them on important issues. These are governments operating independently of us, and a working relationship is needed to foster a positive dialogue between the two.”