



The North American Indian Center of Boston

**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
September 27, 2018

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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North American Indian Center of Boston Responds to "SHIVA 4 SENATE"

The campaign committee "SHIVA 4 SENATE," largely funded by candidate contributions, has circulated the slogan, "Only a REAL INDIAN Can Defeat the Fake Indian." The slogan with accompanying image of Senator Warren in an eagle feather headdress has been received by the intertribal community of Massachusetts as offensive. The campaign has maintained a website including a store which sells: bumper stickers, buttons, car magnets, t-shirts, and other paraphernalia that repeats the slogan. An editorial cartoon by Montana-based Ben Garrison is available on a t-shirt. In caricature, Senator Elizabeth Warren tagged as "Pocahontas" along with Governor Charlie Baker and former Governor Mitt Romney are depicted drowning in a swamp as President Donald J. Trump watches with a hand on Dr. Shiva Ayyadurai's shoulder.

In response to Dr. Ayyadurai's participation in the "Boston Free Speech Rally" on August 19, 2017; a coalition of South Asian Americans voiced their outrage. The Dalit American Coalition, The Alliance for Justice and Accountability (AJA), South Asia Solidarity Initiative (SASI), and Alliance of South Asians Taking Action (ASATA), strongly condemned Dr. Ayyadurai as a "right-wing provocateur" and a "fringe candidate." In their statement the coalition stood in solidarity with "black, brown, indigenous, queer, white ally, trans, and gender non-conforming folks who will bravely be protesting and protecting our communities." The coalition spoke to the US Settler colonial state and its "violent history" which they found "deeply resonant." Many in their communities immigrated to this country "to seek reprieve from caste apartheid, Hindu Fundamentalism, and Islamophobia."

Regardless whether "SHIVA 4 SENATE" is successful in electing its candidate or not, the signage and language of its campaign perpetuates the antagonism between the United States and the extant Indigenous nations within its borders. Before the Declaration of Independence referred to many of our nations as "merciless Indian Savages," the Boston Indian Imprisonment Act of 1675 ordered the arrest of all American Indians entering the city. The law was not repealed until 2005. The Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934, established a mechanism for greater political and economic self-governance for "Indian tribes." For the purposes of rebuilding tribal lands, *Carcieri v. Salazar* in 2009 defined an "Indian" as persons of Indian descent who are members of any recognized Indian tribe under federal jurisdiction as of 1934. This decision affects both federally recognized tribes of Massachusetts, all federally recognized tribes of

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Maine, the federally recognized tribe of Rhode Island, and both federally recognized tribes of Connecticut.

What it means to be a "real Indian" in the United States impacts the sovereignty of each of our nations. To be a "real Indian" impacts our human rights to continue free from the legacy and cycle of violence. The language, imagery, and tactics employed by "SHIVA 4 SENATE" have no place in politics or public discourse. The North American Indian Center of Boston stands in solidarity with our intertribal community members and condemns the actions of the "SHIVA 4 SENATE" campaign.

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